

# DECLARING GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Gospel Sermons and Writings)

by

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## DEDICATION

The book is dedicated to Brother Terry Horn of Knoxville, Tennessee who has held up the author's hands in every good work over the last decade. May he receive a prophet's reward for his help and assistance.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Waddey was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1938. He was baptized by George Prosser in 1955. Parker French encouraged him to become a preacher. One year after his conversion, he preached his first sermon at the Blackmon congregation near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He is married to the former Reba Duncan and is the father of four daughters, Lourene, Lesia, Rebecca and Rachael.

His schooling was received at the College of Evangelists and Itawamba Junior College. Most of his education was gained from his own study and experience. In his twenty years of preaching, Brother Waddey has served churches in Mississippi, Colorado and Tennessee. Evangelistic work has carried him into sixteen other states. He has made nine overseas trips, visiting mission works in eighteen countries. He has done evangelistic work in eleven foreign nations. Over the years he has spoken at a number of special lectureships at Christian Colleges, Schools of Preaching and congregations.

Since 1968, John Waddey has worked with the Karns congregation of Knoxville, Tennessee. Annually that church hosts a World Mission Workshop. He has planned and directed that program since moving to Karns.

Each year the author conducts several revival meetings. He is an officer of the Teenage Christian Camp. He has engaged in four public debates and a number of radio and television talkshows where controversial subjects were discussed.

For eleven years Brother Waddey conducted a weekly radio broadcast. For several years he wrote a weekly news-

paper column. Through the Rocky Mountain News of Denver, Colorado, over 50 million copies of his lessons were circulated. His articles are carried in the *Firm Foundation*, *Gospel Advocate*, *Words of Truth*, *Christian Echo*, and other brotherhood papers.

In 1970 he assisted the Karns elders in establishing the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions and continues to serve as a teacher in it.

In addition to his evangelistic duties, our subject is president of the Tennessee Volunteers for Life, a pro-life group fighting the abortion evil. He is also a member of the board of directors and the executive committee of the National Right to Life Committee. He writes and speaks extensively on the related issues of Abortion, Euthanasia and Suicide.

This is the twelfth book from John Waddey's pen. For previous titles see the list of the author's other works.

## OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

*Searching the Scriptures.* 2nd Edition (cloth)

*Christianity vs. Liberalism.* (cloth)

*The Great Commission and You.* Sermons on world evangelism, suitable also for class use. (paper)

*Growing in Grace and Knowledge of Christ.* (2nd Edition)  
Sermon outlines on Christian living, basic Bible doctrines suitable for studies with new converts. (paper)

*Sermons on Saints and Sinners.* Sermon Outlines on Bible Characters. (paper)

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*Outlined Introduction to the Old Testament, Volume 1.*  
Author's class notes and materials on Genesis through Esther. (cloth)

*A Child of the King and Other Sermon Outlines.* (cloth)

*Preaching To Preachers About Preaching.* (cloth)

*Liberalism, The Deadly Enemy of the Church.* (cloth)

*Character Cameos from the Bible.* More sermon outlines on Bible characters. (paper)

## INTRODUCTION

Having known John Waddey for several years, it is with great pleasure that I have the privilege of introducing this another book from his pen. In a world filled with books, it is refreshing to see one that will build up rather than tear down the moral fiber of our country and, truly, the world. Brother Waddey has a background of preaching experience both here and abroad that qualifies him well to author this book of sermons. His wide travels and preaching among mission points around the world has given him an unusually clear concept of the problems and challenges involved in proclaiming the everlasting gospel to all the world.

His work with the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions at Karns is made all the richer because of this vast experience. Godly men who will know both the Word of God and how to proclaim it are being trained in this school.

This book of sermons on such a wide variety of subjects is one that will truly benefit every reader. It will make an excellent and encouraging gift choice for almost any occasion, and deserves a place in the libraries of all preachers and churches. I pray for a wide circulation of the book.

L. T. Gurganus, Jr.

Minister of the Gospel

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Ours is a changing world. Most of us would never have dreamed twenty years ago just how much a society could change in so short a time. In those years the space age has evolved. The civil rights movement changed the social face of America. The computer came into its own and now threatens modern man's dignity with its instant recall. A moral revolution has swept through the western world, leaving values and people broken and bewildered in its wake. Unbelief has emerged from the shadows and now arrogantly struts through the streets of the cities, attacking the believer's faith. Even God's church has seen unprecedented threats to her doctrine and morals develop in this generation.

The challenge is clear. The gauntlet is already thrown down. The devil and his allies are laying siege to the camp of the saints. Either we rise in the strength of Jesus, attack with the Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17) and drive Leviathan back into the sea or we shall be driven into the caves of the hills to cower in fear before our enemies.

The Lord's church cries out for strong, Biblical preaching and teaching. Congregations are languishing where leadership has not the courage to face the issues of the day. The world is marching swiftly into hell for lack of a clear light to follow. The truth still makes men free. (John 8:32.) The gospel is yet God's only power to save. (Rom. 1:16.) It is still God's good pleasure to save men from sin's ruin by gospel preaching. (I Cor. 1:21.) It is a challenging age in which to serve as an evangelist. The opposition is great but the rewards are many.

Most of the following lessons were preached first at the Karnscongregation where the author has labored since 1968. Later they were put in print and offered to various brotherhood publications. Response from interested brethren has been rewarding. They are now put into more permanent form with the prayer that they will declare their message for years, even after the author has left this earth's realm.

I must again thank Brother J. C. Choate who has encouraged me to prepare these materials for book form, and who has graciously made possible their publication.

It is the author's hope that fellow preachers will make free use of the lessons and help in the great battle before us.

John Waddey

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June 1, 1981



## A STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

There are some who write but say nothing. Only a few authors have something to say and deserve to be heard. Their articles are both positive and negative. They are critical in many instances, but constructive. They condemn sin but exalt righteousness. They are the "prophets of Israel" crying out against the corrupt elements of our time. How we need such men, and what a dreadful thought should their pens ever be stopped.

As with faithful gospel preachers, so with those who are faithful Christian writers. They are often attacked, condemned, and rejected. Even in the church, there is always someone who feels compelled to bring such a person down. Unless the preacher or author agrees with him, or at least does not take issue with him on some point, then he takes it upon himself to oppose, fight, and remove that one and replace him with someone he can manipulate and control. And far too often, and to our shame, he succeeds.

I have often wondered why this has to be. Why should anyone want to oppose one because of his preaching and writing as long as it is the truth? If it is the truth then it is God's will and cannot be changed. Even if it is rejected, whitewashed, or ignored, it is still the truth. Wouldn't it be better for one to decide to correct his life so that it will measure up to God's standard rather than to oppose it and the one who teaches it? If one is not willing to do that, then it is not going to help matters to find someone to condone the sin that is in that person's life. In that case it would be better for him to quit acting the hypocrite, leave the preacher alone, and forget religion until he is ready to obey God.

All of the foregoing is to say, let the preacher preach and let the author write. God has commanded it and we need it and the world needs it. Don't try to stop him but pray for him and encourage him. Don't blame him or find fault with him when he speaks as the oracles of God. He is only doing what he must do.

John Waddey is one of those preachers and authors who dares to speak the truth. This present work is a good example of that. I love and appreciate him for it and I hope you do too.

This particular book is filled with material that deals with doctrinal, moral, and social problems and needs of our day. Please join with Bro. Waddey and me and help us to give this book a wide circulation for the good it will do.

J. C. Choate  
131 Moulmein Road  
Singapore 11  
June 16, 1981

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## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT BAPTISM?

No doctrine of Christianity has been discussed more than baptism. No subject has promoted as much disagreement. It is strange that men argue most and loudest about matters they have never thoroughly studied. Careful research in God's word would answer the question and end the debating. Let us consider now some obvious Bible teaching about Christian baptism.

### 1. Baptism is a Command of Christ.

After his resurrection and just before his ascension, Jesus commissioned his apostles to "Go. . .into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mk. 16:15-16.) The Book of Acts of the Apostles demonstrates that they took this commission seriously and went forth teaching men the gospel and commanding them to be baptized in water as Jesus directed. (Acts 10:47-48.) Strange that in the face of this crystal clear statement, thousands of religious teachers boldly assert that baptism is nowhere commanded in the Bible.

### 2. Baptism is the Duty of Every Responsible Man and Woman.

Remember that in his final commission Jesus commanded "Go. . . preach the gospel to the *whole creation*" and baptize all that believe. (Mk. 16:15-16.) Matthew's account of the same charge says, "Go. . .and *make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them. . .*" (28:19.) When Peter responded to the urgent question of the men of Jerusalem as to

what they had to do to be right with God, he told them, "Repent ye, and *be baptized every one of you*. . . ." (Acts 2:38.) Does this leave room for any exception? Every citizen of planet Earth, capable of hearing the gospel and understanding it, is under a sacred responsibility to be baptized.

### 3. Baptism Cannot Be Administered Until Certain Conditions Are Met.

"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God. . . ." (Heb. 11:6.) Nothing can be done acceptably to God without proper faith and trust in the Father and His Son. Baptism is no exception. Note that it is "He that *believeth* and is baptized" that shall be saved. (Mk. 16:16.) No one is a proper subject for baptism until he has been instructed in the gospel and come to believe in the Savior. (Rom. 10:17.) Another prerequisite before baptism is repentance. God commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30.) Peter says we must repent and then be baptized. (Acts 2:38.) Repentance is a change of heart that results in a change of life. Until the candidate has made up his mind to turn away from sin and disobedience, he is not ready for baptism. This being the case, how can a new born infant be qualified to receive baptism? The babe has never heard the gospel. He could not understand or believe it if he had. The truth of the matter is, the whole concept of infant baptism is built upon a misunderstanding of sin and baptism. Centuries ago uninspired men dreamed up the unfounded theory that infants inherit Adam's sin and thus are born sinners, therefore they need baptism to save them from Adam's sin. Ezekiel forever kills this theory by saying, "The soul that sinneth it shall die: the Son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. . . ." (18:30.) Sin is not an inherited thing, it is a personal disobedience. (I John 3:4; Jas. 4:17.) Today most churches have given up their view on infant damnation but the tradition of baptizing babies still prevails. It is totally unauthorized by God.

#### 4. Baptism Is An Immersion in Water.

While both Catholics and most great Protestant bodies have practiced baptism by sprinkling or pouring water upon the head of the candidate, the Scriptures plainly show true baptism to be a burial in water. Philip the evangelist and the eunuch both went down into the water for the baptism. (Acts 8:37-38.) Twice Paul describes the baptismal experience as a death, *burial* and resurrection. (Rom. 6:2-5; Col. 2:12.) This demands an immersion. Jesus spoke of baptism as being like a *birth*. (John 3 : 5.) But in birth one comes out of the womb, so in baptism one must come *out of water*. John reports that John the Baptizer "was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." (3:23.) To sprinkle or pour water upon a person could be effected anywhere, even in a desert, but immersion demands much water. A linguistic study of the word would solve the matter in a moment for every honest soul, for the ancient meaning was "to dip, to plunge, to submerge." It was commonly used by the manufacturers of cloth to describe the act of dying a bolt of material. The entire piece had to be "baptized" or immersed beneath the tinted water to properly color the material. See Thayer's Greek English Lexicon.

Our Methodist friends are broad-minded enough to recognize our stand on immersion and thusly they grant their prospective members their choice of either affusion or immersion. But Paul is not so broad-minded for in Eph. 4:4-5 he declares that there is but "one baptism" even as there is but one God! The baptism Paul preached and practiced was like a burial. (Col. 2 : 12.)

#### 5. Baptism is Essential To The Sinner's Salvation.

The purposes of baptism are twofold: to secure pardon



from sin and fellowship with God. Note that Paul says we are “baptized into Christ.” (Gal. 3:26-27.) Christ himself says that men are baptized “into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:18-20.) To be baptized into the name of is to be baptized into the person the name represents. Thus we come into fellowship and communion with the Holy Godhead through baptism. I Cor. 12:13 teaches that we are “baptized into one body.” That one body is the church of Christ. (Col. 1:18.) So baptism puts one into the right relationship with God in His heavenly kingdom, the church. (John 3:5.)

In addition we are baptized to wash away our sins. (Acts 22:16.) Peter speaks of baptism “for remission” or forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38.) Jesus himself said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mk. 16:16.) Notice how that each time baptism precedes forgiveness of sins. Perhaps the plainest declaration of the matter is found in I Pet. 3:21 which says, “baptism doth also now save us.” I ask the champions who deny immersion, if God had desired to tell the world that all people had to be baptized in water to be saved, how else could He have put it to make it clearer?

We hasten to add that water does not save a sinner, nor do we of the church of Christ so teach. The blood of Jesus saves us when we are baptized, by God’s command. All agree that salvation of the soul is by the blood of the Lamb of God. (Rev. 7:14; I John 1:7.) The question is when and where does salvation occur. Luke pinpoints the answer in Acts 22:16, “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. . .”

## 6. There is Just One Baptism Today.

We would briefly note that water baptism is the only baptism available to man today. According to Paul in Eph. 4:4-5, there is but one *baptism*. Therefore, there is no Holy

Spirit baptism for the Christian else there would be two. Only two examples of spirit baptism are found in the New Testament. It was connected with the opening of the doors of the kingdom of God to Jews and Gentiles. (Acts, Chapters 2 and 10-11.) It was never a command to be obeyed, nor was it administered by men. Nowhere are men taught to seek for it. It filled a definite role in the initial founding of the church but did not continue. Remember there is "*one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism!*" (Eph. 4:4-5.)

#### 7. Should I Be Re-baptized?

Sincere souls who have received sectarian varieties of baptism often ask upon hearing this type of lesson, "Should I be re-baptized?" You have clearly seen what Bible baptism is. Anything called baptism that differs from that is not really true baptism. One may call an ape a man, but that does not make the creature human. So, calling sprinkling baptism does not make it so. In Acts 19:1-6 we read of twelve men who were improperly baptized; when Paul the apostle discovered this they were baptized a second time for the proper reasons. They had even been immersed but for the wrong reason. There is only one true baptism. To receive anything else is not baptism at all.

Have you received the one baptism of Jesus? If you have had some other kind of baptism than that authorized by the Lord you need to follow the example of those twelve men of Ephesus. If you have never obeyed Jesus, would you do what Saul did? "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on his name." (Acts 22:16.)

## THE MANY SIDES OF BAPTISM

To many people baptism is seen only as an initiation into the church. Others only know baptism “for remission of sins.” The truth is, baptism is much wider in its scope and blessings. It is much like the many facets of a finely cut diamond. Notice just some of the meanings of baptism.

1. Baptism is like a *birth*. Jesus said in John 3 : 5, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” A birth is a “coming forth” into a new relationship. Just as an infant comes forth from his mother into the world of light, so the obedient believer comes out of the waters of baptism a new born babe in Christ, I Pet. 2:2. His Christian life has just begun. This new birth puts him into the kingdom or church of Christ, Matt. 16:18-19. Just as one is born a citizen of the United States of America, so one must be born a citizen of the kingdom of Jesus. Only an immersion in water and a coming forth from the water can adequately depict a birth. This sprinkling or pouring can never do. It is important to remember when interpreting metaphors and analogies that we never press more than the main point of comparison. Many foolish points have been wrung from this teaching by teachers who did not remember this rule. The water is not our mother, the Holy Spirit is not the sire, nor do you have spiritual life before baptism. The one simple point is, we must come out of the water of baptism into the kingdom, even as the baby comes out from the womb into this life.
2. Baptism is like a *burial* and *resurrection*. Paul writes that sinners must die to sin, then be buried with Christ

through baptism into death, in order that they might be raised up to walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:1-4. The conversion experience simulates the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Everyone who is saved demonstrates his faith in the Christ who died and rose for him by his baptism into Christ. It is a proclamation to the world of the crucified Christ as their only hope of pardon.

When seeking to understand such figurative expressions as death, burial and resurrection in salvation, we must never mingle or confuse other figures with these. Great confusion results when one tries to mix the illustrations of the new birth in John 3 with this of Romans 6. Each must be understood and explained separately.

3. Baptism is like the *purification and preparation* of a bride for her wedding. In Ephesians 5 Paul speaks of the loving relationship of Christ and his church under the figure of a man and his bride. He tells us Christ gave himself up for the church "that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." 5:25-27. Among the ancient peoples, great emphasis was placed upon the cleansing and purification of a bride before being presented to her husband. See Esther 2:12-13. So each person who becomes a member of Christ's bride, the church, must be purified by the washing of water (baptism) and the Word. Should anyone dispute the "washing of water" being baptism, we ask, is there any other use of *water* in the gospel, regarding salvation, church membership and Christian worship?
4. Baptism is like the ritual of *circumcision*. Under the

Abrahamic covenant no male could be a member of the holy nation unless he had been circumcised. The removal of that tad of flesh from the infant's body identified him as one of God's spiritual sons, Gen. 17:9-14. Today, everyone, male and female, must undergo a circumcision of the heart in order to be a child of God. This Paul explains in Col. 2:11-13, "In whom (Christ) ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism. . . ." Baptism is similar to the act of circumcision in that God *cuts off* and removes the old sins of the heart when we are buried with Christ. God, not a physician, administers the spiritual surgery when we are baptized to wash away our sins.

5. Baptism is like the *purification rites* of the Jews. Those living under Moses' law were continually faced with the problem of ceremonial defilement and uncleanness. Touching any dead body or having any running sore or skin disease and a host of other things rendered them impure and disqualified them to enter the worship assembly. A ritual of purification was set forth that included the blood of sacrifice and the washing of the body with water, Lev. 15:13-15. So in this age the unclean sinner comes before God's great priest Jesus, having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience and having his body washed with pure water, Heb. 10:19-22. I am confident that this refers to Christian baptism for the only use of *water* in the New Testament salvation; church or worship is baptism, Acts 10:47. When we are washed in the waters of baptism, the blood of our sacrifice, Jesus, is applied to our conscience, giving us a clean and good conscience before God, I Pet. 3:21.
6. Baptism is like *giving life to the dead*. The sinner is dead in

his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), being separated from God by them, Is. 59:1-2. God only can give new life to those dead in sin. It is "not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. . . ." Tit. 3:5-6. To *regenerate* is to make alive again. *Renewal* has the same basic meaning. When does God do this for sinners? When they are "*washed*"! But in baptism we wash away our sins, Acts 22:16. When we are baptized in water it gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38. So we are made alive from our death in sin by God when we are baptized.

7. Baptism is the *entrance initiation* into the church of Christ. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body," I Cor. 12:13. But the one body is Christ's church, Col. 1:18. Water baptism puts us into the one true church at the same time we are having our sins forgiven. This is when the Lord adds us to the church, Acts 2:47, K.J.V.
8. Baptism is a *union with Christ*. It puts one into Christ. In it one is clothed with Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." "For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death . . .," Rom. 6:5. The context shows this to be in baptism.
9. Baptism is like the *flood of Noah's day* in that it separates the righteous and the wicked. The flood waters destroyed sinners upon the earth at the same time it floated the ark to safety. "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism. . .," I Pet. 3:21. The water of baptism stands as a distinct line separating the saved and lost. All the saved have experienced baptism. All who have not are yet in their sins.

**How beautiful are the many sides of Christian baptism. May we ever respect this holy ordinance of our Lord and unashamedly preach it to every creature, Mk. 16:15-16.**

## CHRIST, THE CHRISTIAN'S FOUNDATION, THE SINNER'S HOPE

No structure can stand without an adequate foundation. Religion is no exception to this principle. No building or institution is stronger than its foundation. Paul writes, "Howbeit the *firm foundation* of God standeth. . . ." (II Tim. 2:19.) What is the firm foundation of our Christian religion? The same author forever settles the issue in his first letter to the Corinthians, ". . . other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (3:11.) Thus Jesus the Son of God is forever the exclusive foundation upon which all things relating to true religion rest.

### 1. Christ is the Foundation of our Personal Faith.

In John 8:24 the Lord told the Jews, ". . . *except* ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." We ask, just *what* must the sinner believe about Jesus? From Matt. 16:13-17 we learn that Jesus led Peter to confess that he was "The Christ, the Son of the Living God." Upon making this confession he was blessed by the Lord. Paul writes in I Cor. 15:1-4 that the gospel message is based upon the death, burial and resurrection of Christ in accordance with ancient prophecy. He reminds them that in becoming Christians they had received this, stood upon it and been saved by it. No less is expected of mankind today. Except we believe that Jesus was the Messiah come down from his Father, God; that he suffered, died and was truly resurrected from the grave, we will die in our sins. Our salvation then rests upon our faith in a living saviour, not in one who lived long ago but died like Buddha or Zoroaster. Our faith is in the reigning King, not just in a system of religion. If the Lord had not been raised,



then our faith would surely be in vain. (I Cor. 15:14.) So with those first evangelists we proclaim to all dying sinners, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved . . . ." (Acts 16 : 31.)

## 2. Jesus is the Foundation of the Church.

Having paused near the city of Caesarea Philippi, a city founded upon a great ledge of solid rock, Jesus asked his disciples who men thought he was. Peter enunciated their common faith that he was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus declared that upon that rock of truth. . . i.e., his personal deity, he would found his church. (Matt. 16:13-18.) It was not to be built upon Peter whose name meant "pebble", as Rome asserts, but upon the Master's Godhood. Using a slightly different imagery, Paul writes that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone." (Eph. 2:19-22.) In his example, the first stone laid, the primary stone upon which the first corner is raised and rests is Jesus Christ. Any church or religious institution with any other foundation than the Savior is of no value to those who take membership in it. (I Cor. 3:10-11.) Every sincere soul wishing to please God and be saved must ask what is the foundation of his religious institution. If a church was founded by any individual or group of men other than Jesus, its foundation is faulty and it will fall even as a house built upon the sand. (Matt. 7:26-27.)

## 3. Christ is the Foundation of our Doctrine, Worship and Practice.

He has all the authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18.) His authority has replaced that of Moses. When Peter would have shown equal honor to Moses the lawgiver, Elijah the prophet, and Jesus, God spoke from heaven saying,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.” When he dared to look up he saw only Jesus. (Matt. 17:1-8.) Today the words of Jesus are our foundation. His new covenant has replaced the old law. Jeremiah had predicted the day when God would make a new covenant with men. (31:31.) Christ has given us that new covenant which is better than the old, containing better promises. (Heb. 8:6-7.) Now that we have the new, the old covenant is nigh unto vanishing away. (Heb. 8:13.)

As disciples of Jesus we look only to him for our authority in religion. We reject the doctrines and commandments of men, which the Master said make only for vain worship. (Matt. 15:9.) We cannot rest upon the traditions of our relatives for they too are only men and can be wrong. Paul had once been strong for the traditions of his fathers but left that behind when he turned to Christ. (Gal. 1:14-16.) We listen to the will of God’s Son regardless of the opinions of the majority. The voice of the people is not the voice of God. The majority has traditionally followed the broad way that leads to destruction. (Matt. 7:13.)

#### 4. Mary’s Son is the Foundation of Our Morality.

The letter to Titus reminds us that “the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that denying ungodliness wordly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.” (2:11-12.) To be a Christian means to live a godly life, abstaining from the moral wickedness of the world about us. We daily witness a world floundering in indecision and confusion as to what is or is not moral. They cannot even decide upon the most heinous of deeds such as sexual perversion, drunkenness, drug abuse, and destruction of marriage. The Christian however steadfastly follows his divine example, Jesus, and accepts his moral guidelines which

are timetested and universally approved. Laws alone, even principles of conduct, are sometimes difficult to comprehend or apply. But an example is much easier to follow. We are taught to look to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith as we run our earthly race. (Heb. 12:1-2.) He left us an example and we should follow his footsteps. ( I Pet. 2:21-22.) Christ teaches us that the old moral code is still the best one. “. . .he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Rom. 13:8-9.)

## 5. Christ is the Foundation of Our Hope.

Christianity is a religion of hope. We confidently expect to be raised from the grave. We firmly expect to live with Our God in glory. But it is our faith in Christ that gives us this assurance. “Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1.) “For in hope we were saved. . . .” (Rom. 8:24.) Paul wrote, it is “Christ in you the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27.) Because our Jesus is God’s Son, because he rose from Joseph’s tomb, because he ascended back into heaven before eyewitnesses, to reign at God’s right hand, because he now has all power in heaven and earth, we can accept all his promises without doubt or reservation. “Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions,. . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3.) No wonder Paul called it “that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ,” which we look for. (Tit. 2:13.)

## 6. Christ is the Sinner's Only Hope.

Every sinner needs to recognize that without Christ, he would be without hope. (Eph. 2:11-13.) But now that Christ has come, all men, even the most wicked, can be saved from doom. (I Tim. 1: 15.) But the sinner has no options for "in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) Today Jesus is the merciful saviour of all men who will turn to him in trusting obedience. A day is coming when he shall judge that world in righteousness. (Acts 17:31.) Today sinners can have full pardon and receive the blessed hope. In that day of judgment all who are found in their sins will die therein, never seeing the joys of salvation in heaven. (John 8:24.)

Surely Jesus is the Christian's sure foundation and the sinner's only hope. When he appears in the clouds will he be your hope or your doom?

## **THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST\***

Human history has been changed when an insignificant man or woman linked his life with the Lord of heaven and earth. Little people became great when they came under his Lordship. Paul wrote that God highly exalted Christ: that every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess Jesus to be Lord. (Phil. 2:9-11.)

Practical man asks what is so important about this? What is in it for me? For the individual it is a matter of salvation. "Beuase if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10:9.) For the municipality: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Ps. 127:1 KJV.) For the nation: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." (Ps. 33:12 KJV.) The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God." (Ps. 9:17 KJV.) In every facet of life recognition of Christ's reign is vital.

There are four classes of people with varying attitudes toward the Lord Jesus.

1. Some neither call him Lord nor do according to his will.
2. Others call him Lord but do not obey his commandments.
3. A few do not own him as Lord, yet they live their daily lives by his precepts.
4. True Christians both honor him as Lord and are careful

to do as he directs.

For those who do follow Jesus, his Lordship means that he has complete and absolute authority in every phase of their lives. (Matt. 28:18.) The very term "Lord" implies power and authority. It is hoped that every soul who reads these words will crown Jesus as the Lord of his life so that he in turn may crown him with life eternal. (Matt. 10:32-33.)

1. Jesus' Lordship is seen in his *preeminence*. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church. . ." (Eph. 1:2-22.) Christ precedes all others in priority, exceeds all others in superiority and succeeds all others in his finality. He is master of the mighty, captain of all conquerors and leader of all legislators. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

In Colossians, Paul pays homage to Christ. He is the image of the invisible God: The first born of all creation; the head of the church; the first born from the dead. In all things he has the preeminence. (Col. 1:15-18.) To the Romans, Paul declared Christ to be the lord of both the dead and the living. (14: 7-9.)

2. His Lordship is seen in his *ownership* of all things. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." (Ps. 24:1.) "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." (John 1:3.) Not only were all things created through him but also *unto him*. (Col. 1:16.) Sinful men have always challenged his ownership. He did not put his signature on the

sunset yet it is his. He did not imprint his seal on the meadows but they are his. He did not carve his initials on the mountainside but he owns them. He took no patent on the flight of birds or copyright on their songs but his they are. He did not put his brand on the cattle or a thousand hills but they are no less his. (Ps. 50:10.) He is lord of all because he made all. Even every rebellious human being on this terrestrial ball is his. "He himself giveth life to all" and "in him we live, and move, and have our being. . . ." (Acts 17:25, 28.) In a special way, the Christian has been bought with a price. (I Cor. 6:19-20.) Christ is Lord!

3. His Lordship is seen in his *power*. He has all power (authority) in heaven and earth. (Matt. 28:18.) He has creative power. (Col. 1:16.) He has saving power. (Matt. 11:28-29.) He has power over death and the grave. (John 10:17-18.) He has power over all of his enemies. (Rev. 19:11-18.) He has power to destroy this material world. (II Pet. 3:10-12.) Men have been trying to wrest away his divine power for generations. Their names are gone and forgotten. Christ is yet their world's best known and best loved name. If man tries to destroy Christ with fire it will die at his feet and refuse to burn. If they try to destroy him with water he will walk on it. (John 6:19.) If they try to destroy him by destructive winds the tempest will lick his hand and lie down before him. (Matt. 8:26.) If you seek to condemn him by law you will find no fault in him. (I Pet. 2:22.) If an empire tries to destroy him it will be broken in pieces. If you seek to destroy him by death he will break the bars and come forth from the grave. (Matt. 16:18.) If you reject him you will be haunted by his words, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man will open I will come in and sup with him." (Rev. 3:20.) Jesus is Lord. His name stands synonymous for free-healing, friendly help and full-salvation. His name is like honey to the

taste, harmony to the ear and health to the soul. It brings hope to the weary heart. (Acts 4:11, 12.) His birth is man's significance. His life is an example. His cross is our redemption. His resurrection is our hope. Christ is Lord.

4. Because Christ is Lord, *I shall not want.*

David expressed the *provision* of the Lord for his people in his twenty-third Psalm. I shall not want for *rest* since he makes me to lie down in green pastures. Nor shall I want for *refreshment* since he leads me by still waters. *Forgiveness* is mine because he restores my soul. He *guides* me in paths of righteousness. I will not want for *companionship* for he is with me even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. *Comfort* is never lacking because his rod and staff comfort me. *Sustenance* is always available because he prepares a table before me. Never will I want for joy, he anoints my head with oil, my cup runs over. I shall not want for anything in *this life* for surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Neither shall I want for anything in the life to come for I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps. 23:1-6.)

5. The Lordship of Christ demands a *coronation* in every human heart. My knee must bow, my tongue must confess Christ as Lord. (Phil. 2:9-11.) My ego must be crucified, driven from the throne of my heart and Christ enshrined therein. (Gal. 2:20.) The apostle who wrote these lines proclaiming the lordship of Jesus walked all over the pagan world turning thousands of homes into chapels. Every street corner was to him a pulpit from which to proclaim Christ as Lord. He even succeeded in lighting the lamp of the Gospel in Caesar's household. (Phil. 4:22.) He permeated the Roman Empire with the



Lord's Church and then, chained in Nero's dungeon, he conquered Rome by writing letters.

This insignificant Jew when empowered by the Lord turned the world upside down. (Acts. 17:6.) His message was Christ is Lord and every soul must submit to his reign.

Every man is mastered by someone or something greater than himself. Christ alone deserves the place of majesty in our life. (Matt. 22:37.) We all need a strength stronger than ourselves. We need a helper to overcome the strains and stresses of life. We need Christ as our Lord. Will you not bow your knee and confess his holy name this very hour?

\* I am indebted to an unknown radio preacher for the heart of this lesson. J.H.W.

## THE GREATNESS OF THE CHURCH

The church of Christ is the greatest institution the world has ever known. It is a divine institution and we should never think of it in terms of an ordinary worldly thing, nor should we act toward it as such. The church is Christ's Kingdom on earth over which he reigns. (Matt. 16:16-18.) One cannot be loyal to Christ without being loyal also to his kingdom, the church. Christians and the world need to appreciate the church more. We will now notice some characteristics of its greatness.

### 1. The Church is Great Because of Its Founder.

The founder is a most important factor in the merit of any organization. He sets it in order as to its functions. He gives it a code or standard of operation. His wealth and mentality furnish the life-blood of the institution. An organization will usually reflect the spirit and ideals of its founder. Jesus founded the church. (Matt. 16:18.) He did all of these things for his church. It is our obligation to reflect his divine spirit and ideals in the life and conduct of the church. Paul exhorts us to "have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. . . ." (Phil. 2:5.) Again, he writes, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1.)

### 2. The Church is Great Because of the Price Paid For It.

Most worldly concerns were founded to enrich the founder. Even many churches began for this purpose. The Lord's church was not established for financial gain. What could the Creator want to extract from the work of his own

hand? (See John 1:3.) His purpose for the church was to benefit lost mankind. He purchased the church with his own blood when he died the accursed death on Calvary. (Acts 20:28.) To give us the church he humbled and emptied himself of his equality with the Father and became a servant of men, willing even to die for humanity. (Phil. 2:5-8.) He taught mankind that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35.)

### 3. The Church is Great Because of Its Relation To Christ.

There are several ways of comparing or describing the church. It is the spiritual body of which Christ is head. (Eph. 1:22.) It is the bride of Christ. (Eph. 5:22, 32.) The church is the kingdom of Christ and he reigns as its only king and lawgiver. (Matt. 16:18-19.) It is his army and he is our captain and leader. (Heb. 2:10; II Tim. 2:3-4.) The church is his family, for they do the will of his Father in heaven. (Matt. 12:50.) There is a certain honor that comes from intimate association with great people. How much more honor is there to the church to be so wonderfully associated with King Jesus. While we ponder this point, ask yourself, "Can I be saved out of Christ's kingdom; out of his army; out of his family?" The obvious answer is no. But since to be in his church is to be in all of these, to be a member of his church is to be saved.

### 4. The Church is Great Because of Its Mission.

The great purpose of the church is to save lost men from sin and damnation by winning them to Jesus. It is charged with preaching the gospel to the whole creation. (Mk. 16:15.) It helps sinners reform their lives and be translated into God's kingdom on earth. (Col. 1:13.) It prepares men for heaven. (Eph. 4:11-15 ; II Pet. 1:10-11.)

Christ's church is not a political power like Catholicism,

nor is it an economic power like the Latter Day Saints church. It is not war-like like Islam. Rather, the church evangelizes, telling all men the good news about Christ and salvation. It serves the unfortunate and keeps Christians in faithful service. (Eph. 4:11-12.) As a great beacon light it holds forth the word of life to a world lost in the darkness of sin and error. (Phil. 2: 15-16.)

#### 5. The Church is Great Because of Its Blessings.

James tells us that every good and perfect gift comes down from God. (1:17.) These blessings are available to humanity, within the church. There are certain privileges and blessings available to men in America. You may read of these blessings in a book or hear of them from others, but you will not receive them until you enter in. So with the church. You must become a member to enjoy the benefits. Salvation in heaven awaits faithful members of the church. (Eph. 5:23.) Every spiritual blessing is available in Christ, i.e., in his church. (Eph. 1:3-7.) There are such wonderful privileges as sonship to God, fellowship and brotherhood with all other Christians. Communion, prayer and providential care from God are yours. There are great opportunities to serve God and your fellow man in the greatest institution on planet Earth, as we work to make the world a better place in which to live. Really, there is no way to adequately measure these rich blessings.

#### 6. The Church is Great Because of the People Who Compose It.

They are called Christians because they strive to be like Christ. They are called saints because they are the ones who are dedicated to God's service. They are in the world, yet they do not live like the sinful world. (John 17:14.) True Christians are honorable, humble, generous, pure, well-in-

formed, truthful, faithful, benevolent, devoted, diligent, and loyal. No, they are not perfect, nor are they angels. But with God's help they are daily growing into the image of Christ by the renewing of their minds. (Rom. 12:1-2.) What great joy it is to be a part of God's family on earth.

## 7. The Church is Great Because of Its Ultimate Goal.

Paul taught the Ephesian Christians that Christ is the savior of the body (the church) and that he will one day present the church to himself in glory. (Eph. 5:23,27.) In I Cor. 15:24, the same writer says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God. . ." John in a glorious vision saw the new Jerusalem, the church, in the presence of God in the heavenly paradise. (Rev. 21:1-4; Heb. 12:22-23.) Throughout eternity the church of Jesus Christ will reign in holy triumph with the loving Father, the Victorious Son and the Holy Spirit.

We should realize that it is a matchless privilege to be members of the greatest organization the world has ever known. Prophets predicted its coming. Kings and holy men desired to see the day. The rich and the poor, every devout God-fearing soul, even publicans and harlots, have eagerly sought to enter into the church of our Lord. We who are so privileged should constantly watch lest we by our conduct or speech shame or stain its holy reputation.

All men are invited to seek refuge within its sacred precincts. If you will but let God wash away your sins, He will add you to His church. (Acts 2:47, I Cor. 12:13.)

## OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHURCH DISCIPLINE

God has appointed a method of discipline for the church to save erring members from damnation and to preserve the spiritual body from disintegration and loss of public reputation. Compare II Thess. 3:6, 14-15; I Cor. 5; Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 3:10. When elders faithfully administer this discipline, one of two responses may be seen in the subjects of the discipline. They may realize their sin and sincerely repent or they may refuse to repent and resort to any of a number of schemes to escape the force of the action. Herewith are some observations and recommendations to a congregation where a case of discipline is in progress.

1. Sometimes those who are disciplined seek a following of sympathizers rather than repent. Do not encourage such, it will make you a partaker in their sins, II John 11.
2. They may launch a vicious attack against the character of the elders and/or preacher or whoever actively participates in the administering of their discipline. Do not lend your ears to attempts to discredit the leaders of the congregation by such who have been disciplined. They think this will offset or undo their discipline. The leadership is not on trial, rather the impenitent brother is being dealt with according to God's will. Also, Paul admonishes us, "against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses," I Tim. 5:19. Remember that you are not obligated to listen to such charges whether in person or by phone. The faithful Christian will politely refuse to give the party even a moment of attention if such is attempted.

3. Do not allow the person who has been disciplined to entice you to ignore the regulations of disfellowship. . . some will make special efforts to enforce their fellowship upon you. God instructs, "with such a one, no not to eat," I Cor. 5:11. Have nothing to do with him until he repents.

4. Sometimes the disfellowshipped seek to weaken the impact of the discipline by trying to force a "compromise" deal upon the elders. This cannot be allowed. Jesus said that sinners must repent or perish, Lk. 13:3.

5. Sometimes the withdrawn from brother or sister seeks to intimidate the congregation and its leaders by threats of trouble, disruptions or other pressures that might be applied, thinking to make them back down. Such sinners have been known to even threaten law suits, or violence. Still, we must obey God regardless of the "consequences" sinners might threaten, Acts 5:29, 40-42.

6. The impenitent often will point out the failures or problems of other Christians suggesting that they have been unfairly treated. Do not allow this to side-track your judgment. Remember two wrongs can never make a right. Granted, others may have their problems and yet have an humble penitent attitude and want to do better. The person disciplined not only sinned, but refused to repent when shown his wrongs and then exhibited a rebellious attitude toward the church, its elders and the scriptures.

7. Sometimes, the one disciplined will demonstrate an extra sweet and smooth disposition and seek to leave the impression that he is really the good, innocent member and the elders and congregation are persecuting him. See Rom. 16:17-18. In reality he is attempting to deceive those who do not realize his true motive and thus use them for personal advantage.

8. Do not allow yourself to be the crack in the walls of the congregation into which the rebellious brother might drive a wedge of discord. A shrewd person will manipulate a brother or sister for their own selfish purposes to escape the force of their discipline.

9. If any charges are made or questions are raised that you do not know how to answer, do not seek to argue the point with the erring brother; rather get in touch with your elders and they will gladly discuss and answer these matters for you.

10. Demonstrate your loyalty and support to the Lord, the Scriptures, the church and your elders by cooperating fully in the implementation of God's ordained discipline for His kingdom. Only good will come when God's people faithfully practice Christian discipline. Erring Christians will be salvaged if there is any "desire to be saved" in their souls.

Remember, discipline is an act of the church and is only effective when the congregation as a whole cooperates with the elders in the action. We count not the sinful brother or sister as enemies, but as erring Christians who have stubbornly refused to repent. It is because we love their souls that we enforce God's discipline, II Thess. 3:6, 14-15. It is with the sincere prayer that their souls will be saved in the day of the Lord, I Cor. 5:5.



## **WHAT A CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING IS AND IS NOT**

Few who have been in the kingdom very long have been fortunate to escape the trauma of the church business meeting where chaos reigned and the general atmosphere was a lack of decency and order. The results are tragic and wide spread. Ungodly conduct, offended souls, alienated brethren, and even divided congregations are the fruits of such. This means sin was committed by some, maybe even by all.

Faced with this kind of situation, many brethren just do not attend the meetings, feeling they are worse off if they participate. Some churches with elders just cease to have them unless an emergency forces it upon them. But some churches without elders have not much choice. The congregation's business has to be conducted somehow.

Some good ideas for maintaining an orderly productive meeting:

- Have a definite time limit and adjourn on time, through or not.
- Have a chairman who knows parliamentary procedure and insists on all following that due procedure.
- Have an agenda and require all items to be placed on the agenda ahead of time. Those not on it will not be discussed.
- Never allow one man or a small group to consume an undue portion of time.
- Take time to inform and educate brethren as to what a business meeting is for; its true purposes and goals.

## WHAT A BUSINESS MEETING IS *NOT*

- It is not a gripe session so that one can unload his frustrations on a captive audience.
- It is not a time for preaching and lecturing.
- It is not a time for purely personal matters. . .such as disagreements between individuals.
- It is not a time for politicking for one's special friend or interest.
- It is not a time for highly controversial matters.
- It is not a time for small talk about irrelevant matters.
- It is not a time for sarcastic "cuts" and remarks.
- It is not a time for private conversations while others are talking.
- It is not a time for a one-man show, where one windy brother dominates.
- It is not a time for negative brethren just to peck at and pick apart existing programs.
- It is not a time to solve and work out all the details of a matter.
- It is not a time just to get in your two cents worth whether you have anything worthwhile to add or not.
- It is not a time for speculative guesses, warnings of imaginary dangers or unthought-out ideas off the top of one's head.
- It is not a time for hot tempers and loud emotional words.
- It is not a time for judging a fellow Christian's motives. (Rom. 14:10.)

## WHAT A BUSINESS MEETING *IS*

- It is a time for discussing God's business in a decent and orderly manner. ( 1 Cor. 14:40.)
- It is a time for constructive ideas and suggestions for the good of the kingdom.

- It is a time for level heads, cool tempers and self control.
- It is a time for words of soberness, rather than emotional and exaggerated assertions.
- It is a time for careful, courteous listening as others present their views.
- It is a time for exhibiting the best Christian manners and behavior. “Be ye kind one to another.” (Eph. 4:32.)
- It is a time for treating others as you want to be treated. (Matt. 7:12.)
- It is a time for volunteering for service. (Tit. 2:14.)
- It is a time for solving problems, not generating them.
- It is a time for sketching and outlining major plans and programs or problems, the actual details will have to be worked out later.
- It is a time for cooperation and teamwork.
- It is a time for speaking and acting in a way that will edify those present and the whole church. (I Cor. 14:25b.)
- It is a time to love and respect your fellow Christian as you love yourself. (Matt. 22:39.)
- It is a time for counting others better than yourselves, and not looking to your own things (Phil. 2:3-4); for crucifying self (Gal. 2:20); denying self (Matt. 16:24); and for taking heed to thyself. (Acts 20:28.)
- It is a time for prayer and seeking God’s guidance.
- It is a time for seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33.)
- It is a time for few words and those, wisely spoken. (Prov. 25:11.)
- It is a time for avoiding strife. (Prov. 20:3.)

Solomon said that “by men of understanding and knowledge the state thereof (of a kingdom, business, or church. J.W.) shall be prolonged.” (Prov. 28:2) Would the Lord be proud of your conduct in a business meeting of his church? Does your participation help to build a better congregation?

May we all resolve to turn these business sessions into something productive that we would be glad to invite the Lord to!! (Yes, I am fully aware that he is ever with us and knows all that is said and done. The question is, do those brethren know this who exhibit such un-Christian behavior in church business meetings?)

## **WHAT CHURCH BUILDINGS ARE AND ARE NOT**

Most modern people cannot conceive of a congregation without a “church building.” Far too many present-day Christians have a similar problem.

More money is spent on church buildings than any other one item in most congregational budgets. A fair share of all of church quarrels and splits have involved buildings either directly or indirectly.

Precious little teaching has been done to clarify in people’s minds just what the relationship of church buildings is to true Christianity. Perhaps the thoughts herein contained will help us all to have a clearer understanding of this matter.

### **Church Buildings Are Not. . .**

As with many other knotty issues it is often wise to study by antithesis, learning what a thing truly is by first observing what it is not.

1. A church building is not a church. When Jesus promised to build his church (universal) he certainly did not have in mind an edifice of wood or stone. (Matt. 16:18.) Nor was the church of God at Corinth ( I Cor. 1:2) a building. Rather, it was “even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” The very meaning of the Greek term *ekklesia* is “a called out body of people.” Long before any church buildings were owned or built, God’s church, i.e., his saved people on earth, met and functioned. From the Roman Catholics, Protestants borrowed the concept

that the building is somehow the church. But it is obviously an idea foreign to the Scriptures.

2. The church building is not the exclusive place where Christians might worship acceptably. Wherever God's children assemble to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) is acceptable to Jehovah. Jesus taught the woman of Samaria that true worship would not be restricted to any geographical locale in the Christian age. (John 4:21.) Stephen affirmed that the Most High does not dwell in temples made with human hands. (Acts 7:48.) Our God, being omnipresent, is not localized and our worship can be offered from any point. Some pious souls argue that a group of Christians could not worship acceptably while camping in the mountains. What then of a group on a ten-day ocean voyage, could they worship aboard ship? What of the traveling businessman who finds himself in a strange foreign city on the Lord's Day. Could he not worship in his hotel room? The answer is a resounding YES. And while we agree that it is right and good to meet with an established congregation at the appointed hour of worship if at all possible, we must never seek to limit acceptable worship to a *church building* assembly. If all other things are done scripturally with proper motive, then worship is acceptable no matter where offered.
3. Church buildings are not intrinsically holy. Here again we deal with a concept borrowed from our denominational neighbors or perhaps from a mistaken equation of church building with the Hebrew Temple. Remember the building is in no way the church. Rather it is a convenience built by men for their comfort and use. For some three hundred years the early Christian functioned completely and more successfully than ever since, without church buildings. They met in homes, on

the porches of the Jewish temple, in rented or borrowed halls and schools and in times of persecution in caves, mountains and catacombs. When Paul scores the Corinthian Christians for despising the church by eating a common meal therein, he speaks of their assembly for worship, not a church house which they did not have. ( I Cor. 11:17-22.) It is still wrong to mix a common meal with the Lord's Supper under any circumstances, but it has never been wrong to eat a fellowship meal in a church house. This has been a troublesome question that has hurt many congregations when well-meaning but misinformed brethren demanded that church buildings be used *only* for worship and Bible study and caused trouble if they were used for anything else. Since church buildings are non-Biblical conveniences made by Christians so they will have a suitable place to meet, those who build them have the right to use them for other congregation-related activities that are otherwise right and good. It is strange to hear a man condemn using the building for a fellowship meal or a bridal shower and then proceed to use it for the marriage ceremony of his daughter or the funeral service of his father. Both marriage *ceremonies* and funeral *services* are matters of our culture and not acts of worship or service ordained of God. Then too we could mention the inconsistency of opposing the cooking, eating, and drinking facilities in a building while making use of the water fountain and toilet facilities. They stand or fall together.

4. A church building can never be an acceptable substitute for soul winning. Too many unthinking saints believe that if they provide a comfortable meeting place and capable preacher, they have fulfilled their obligation to the lost of their community. They fail to remember that Jesus said "Go teach" (Mk. 16:15); he did not say "build a house and let them come if they will"

5. Similarly a church house can never be a valid excuse for not engaging in world-wide evangelism. Hundreds of missionaries have heard the tired excuse from the leaders of churches across the land, "We have a building project; sorry we can not help." Building buildings is of secondary importance to saving souls! Only in judgment will we know how many souls were lost because brethren let church buildings keep them from their sacred responsibility to preach the gospel to every creature. (Mk. 16:16.)

### Church Buildings are . . .

Having observed what meeting houses are not, now we notice a few points on the positive side.

1. A church building is a permanent advertisement that a group of God's people worship and work in that neighborhood.
2. It is a symbol of the faith, loyalty and conviction of brethren past and present who are determined to serve God in that area.
3. It proclaims our belief in the existence of the living God and His crucified and resurrected Son.
4. It reminds the world that there is in their midst a group of people who live soberly, righteously and godly. (Tit. 2:12.)
5. It says to the poor and suffering that help is available (Jas. 1:27) from those who meet therein.
6. A meeting house is a beehive of activity for God's workers, a center of operations for His army. It houses a



school for education in the wisdom of God. It makes it convenient for the saints to assemble together for worship, exhortation and teaching. (Heb. 10:25.)

7. Someone might ask, if church buildings are not found in the Bible, how can we justify using the money given to God to build them? Since God commands the congregation to assemble for worship, then obviously some suitable place must be found. (Heb. 10:25.) Any command of God to do something automatically authorizes the necessary tools with which to fulfill that command. When a congregation is small they might meet in some member's home. But a large congregation demands a large facility. This can be rented or purchased. In terms of money there would be little difference in rental price or mortgage payments. In fact, purchasing a building is cheaper in the long run since an equity is steadily built up for each payment made. Under Moses' Law the temple was built and maintained from the gifts which the people gave to God. Lacking any teaching to the contrary we conclude that the principle is still valid today.

Having seen what our meeting houses are and are not, let us use them to the glory of God. May we use them to their fullest potential. Let us not be judgmental of brethren who use them for wholesome activities not contrary to God's will. Always remember that the church is God's people, never a structure of wood and stone.

## AVOIDING THE DITCHES

The highway of holiness has dangerous ditches on both the right and left hand sides. Whether we wreck on one side or the other is of little consequence. The results will be fatal in either case. Moses warned Israel "Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left." (Deut. 5:32.)

From the earliest ages God's people have been plagued with the two extremes of liberalism and legalism. The great challenge of every Christian and congregation is to maintain a balanced position between these two Satanic perversions of God's way.

### 1. What is Legalism?

Legalism is an unwholesome attitude toward religion. It is a blind zeal or law with no thought for the spirit or intent of it. Paul was a minister of the new covenant, "not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (II Cor. 3:6.) Legalists have a greater concern for rules than for people. When Jesus healed the poor invalid at Bethesda the legalistic Jews showed no sympathy for the man. Rather, they persecuted Jesus because he broke their uninspired rules about Sabbath keeping in so doing. (John 5:1-18.) The Lord taught that, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. . . ." (Mk.2:27.) Legalism worships the law more than the law-giver. Traditions are gradually elevated to equality with God's law in the legalistic mind. He is obsessed with details and numerous insignificant matters while casually overlooking serious matters of major importance. Pharisees who were

legalists were scrupulous to tithe even their garden herbs: mint, anise and cummin. Yet they had little interest in weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faith. (Matt. 23:23.) They major in minors, while minoring in major things: With the legalist, there is always the disposition to make additional rules to reinforce what they perceive to be God's law. The Pharisees of Jesus' day were classic legalists. They bound "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders; but they themselves would not move them with their finger." (Matt. 23:4.) James tells us that "*One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he is able to save and destroy.*" (4:12.) When man sets himself up to criticize and judge his brother he has ceased to be a doer of the law and is condemned.

## 2. What is Liberalism?

It too is an attitude toward Christianity, the liberals have a low view of Scripture. They deny the miracles of the Bible. They question the full, complete inspiration of God's Word. Especially do they reject the Bible as the final authority in religious matters. In liberalism there is always a willingness to place human wisdom above the revealed wisdom of God. Liberals feel that they can select the portions of the Bible which they choose to accept and follow. We are describing a frame of mind that does not feel obligated to do all that God says to do.

A variety of liberalism is seen in the Lord's church today. It is a movement away from doctrinal preaching. It substitutes subjectivism for objective Biblical authority. It shows a willingness to fellowship denominationalism, i.e., it compromises truth with error. The Pentecostal movement is of this kind. The Sadducees of Christ's day were liberals.

Each of these philosophies can be seen in the following

illustration. Most cities have an ordinance forbidding the firing of a gun in their limits. There are some who totally ignore this law and do what they wish. If they want to shoot their weapon they do so with no concern for the right or wrongness of it or the danger it poses. This is the liberal. Another neighbor may feel obligated to obey this law. He does so not because he sees the rationality of it and agrees that it is dangerous to shoot a gun near so many people. He conforms for fear of punishment, or to prove he is better than others. He chafes under the restricting law, but it is his grim duty to obey and so he does. This is our legalist.

### 3. The New Anti-ism.

For the last fifteen years skirmishes have been fought with teachers of liberalism within the Lord's kingdom. Today, however, we are witnessing a new problem on the right of the spectrum of faith. A new brand of anti-ism is emerging from the caldron of controversy.

Observation has taught this scribe that there must be at least four ingredients present to produce an anti movement. 1 ) There must be a condition to react against. This must be a major problem that poses a real threat to the well-being of the church. Anti-ism is always a violent reaction to a threat of liberalism. 2) There must be specific issues to take a strong stand on in defence of conservatism. Nearly always these are spurious issues. 3) There must be a personality to rally around. Every such problem has its champion. While the question may be discussed for years, it will not become a divisive issue until some preacher or group of preachers begins to agitate it to the point of division. 4) There must be an organ of communication by which to spread their negative views and vocalize their cause. Every anti movement has its religious journal. The anti located preacher group had Leroy Garrett's *Bible Talk* and Carl Ketcherside's *Mission*

*Messenger.* The anti cooperation brethren had *The Gospel Guardian*.

Today the reaction is against the dangerous errors of Pentecostalism and denominationalism in the church. The issues are presently being forged. Among the points that seem serious enough to cause a rupture in relations are the following:

- A) The Holy Spirit. For a hundred and fifty years brethren have had different ideas about how the Spirit indwells the disciple. Never in the past was this made a test of one's faithfulness so long as he did not believe in or teach the direct operation of the spirit or the present availability of miracles. Today however the situation is changing. *Some* (not all) brethren who maintain the Holy Spirit cannot actually indwell the Christian are increasingly hostile to brethren who disagree. Those who understand the Scriptures to teach the indwelling of the Spirit are condemned and shunned. Exaggerated charges and assertions are made against those who do not see eye to eye on this point. For example, it is often said that the brother who believes in the indwelling is weak against Pentecostalism.
- B) Bible versions are being made an issue of fellowship by some. There are a few who would limit Christians to use only the King James or American Standard versions. Such brethren are violently opposed to all other translations especially the Revised Standard Version. One's choice of Bible translation is no longer left a matter of personal preference or judgment. Such zealots seem totally blind to the weaknesses of the older translations and likewise blind in their attack against the newer ones.
- C) A third area of concern is bus evangelism. Such

brethren zero in on exceptions and abuses in these programs and then leap to hasty generalizations which condemn the whole concept of using busses to bring the lost to be taught the gospel. Among the types of criticisms we hear are, "You borrowed this from the sectarians," or "These new methods of evangelism are dangerous." The conclusion is, if it is new or some denomination previously used it, it must be wrong. Surely there have been abuses and mistakes in these efforts. But the same is true in nearly every good work we have attempted. A moderate view would reason, let us rid the program of its weaknesses and use it to save souls. The legalistic view would want to kill it and to mark every brother who did not agree.

#### 4. The Spirit of Anti-ism.

There is a growing belligerency and hostility on the part of some brethren toward all who do not obey their pronouncements. Even those who share their basic concern but are not inclined to be as adamant are viciously attacked. The possibility of solving our problems and saving the good works seems out of the question. The watchword is "destroy them right now." Any willingness to work out problems and to exemplify patience is immediately judged as weakness and compromise. There is an inability to see their own weaknesses and mistakes. Ridicule, accusation and innuendo are used to discredit and destroy programs and brethren they dislike. The Spirit of Christ is gradually disappearing and a carnal spirit of hatred, strife and self-righteousness is emerging. Laws are being made where God made none. Division is being encouraged.

God's church can never afford to give in to such agitations and demands. To do so is to allow ourselves to be

permanently hamstrung and crippled. When the legalistic Judaizers sought to impose their man-made rules upon the Gentile brethren, Paul resisted them without hesitation. So must we. In dealing with our fellow Christians, let us always strive to be in absolute harmony with God's will. If we err let us do so on the side of charity rather than harshness. Let every saint strive to keep in that middle road of truth and avoid the ditch of either liberalism or anti-ism. (Prov. 25:27.)

## CHRISTIAN COLLEGES AND CHURCH BUDGETS

A perennial question that arises for discussion among God's people is, "Should congregations contribute from their treasuries to the general support of our Christian Colleges?" Although the pros and cons have been expressed before, the author feels it is necessary to present an answer again.

I speak as one who loves and appreciates our colleges. My children will attend a Christian school. While we encourage loyalty to all faithfully operated schools, this must never lead us to misuse the Lord's money. Nor should a brother be judged an adversary or an enemy who expresses a negative view of a controversial subject.

The rationale for such a paper is that a quiet campaign is being successfully waged in some areas to convince brethren to put the total college program in their budgets. Perhaps because of excessive and unjustified criticism in the past, an unwritten policy of "never print anything that questions the practices of our schools" has grown up. But this is not a healthy situation for the schools or the churches. Let brethren calmly discuss this and every other important question in a constructive way, seeking for scriptural answers, and only good will come from it. We will be stronger and have less conflicts to trouble us.

1. It is not the God ordained work of the church to provide general education. Our whole work is in the spiritual realm and is summed up in Eph. 4:11-13 as evangelism, benevolence and edification of the saints.
2. To do so means to divert funds given for these high and



holy purposes to such mundane things as athletics, social programs, dramatics, and a host of similar things that inhere in a college's program. We do not condemn these things as such, only the Lord's money being used to finance them.

3. The church collectively or locally has no voice in the administration of the colleges. They are run by their boards of directors and administrators as they see fit. Most of our schools have striven to keep their policies in harmony with the wishes of the brotherhood, but not always. I doubt that any college administrators would want to be under a local eldership.
4. It is the duty of parents to educate their children, not the church's duty. If we can shift this duty on to the church, what would stop us from shifting other family responsibilities to the church also?
5. In the past, the Christian schools were deeply involved in the apostasy from the New Testament pattern. . .Bethany College (Campbell's school) and the College of the Bible at Lecington, Kentucky. I hesitate to see our schools gain the additional power and influence that access to the treasuries of the congregations would give them. This would create even closer ties than now exist and should the colleges be led into error. . .those churches with a vested interest might be led to follow their money on into error.
6. Another problem would be the conflict that would arise between the present methods of solicitation and fund raising. No one objects to schools using the many different fund-raising gimmicks they do since they are private ventures of Christian individuals. On the other hand, if they are the work of the church and if they are

to be supported from the treasuries of the churches, how could we then tolerate fund-raising suppers, marches, sales, etc. It would have to be one or the other.

7. To introduce this into our brotherhood would most surely trigger a fight and a consequent division. This should keep us from such a trend. Surely the peace and welfare of the church is more important than getting the colleges into the church treasuries. "Whenever an issue is allowed to divide the body of Christ, that issue must be more significant than the division which it causes. Surely nothing in the realm of opinion is vital enough to cause brethren to destroy the unity of Christ's church. . . ." B. Baxter.
8. N. B. Hardeman is quoted in the Indianapolis Debate as saying that, "Schools are fundamentally human institutions separate and apart from the church. They are not owned and operated by the churches. A school with or without the Bible is a supplement to the home. . . Put schools where they belong and the right to maintain them is invulnerable."
9. If Bible colleges are a work of the church, then the church is obligated to support them the same as evangelism and edification. This in itself would be more than most people would want to do, or say. In reality, the Christian colleges are human institutions, auxiliaries to the home, doing their own work in their own field and this work is different from the church and its work.

### Conclusion

Let the Christian Colleges do their work and let the church do hers. Let individual Christians generously support the schools and let churches support the evangelism, benevolence and edification that God ordained. This has worked

well for the peace and prosperity of our brotherhood and our schools down through the years. May we not jeopardize a harmonious and well-working relationship by an unwise and questionable attempt to put the colleges into the church budget.

## THE CHURCH AND GOOD WORKS

The Lord's church is one of the most misunderstood institutions in the world. If the church were understood, if its distinctive, undenominational nature were known, most of the prejudice toward it would immediately disappear. Sadly, we who are members of the church have contributed to this misunderstanding by our careless use of words when talking about certain good works.

### The Church's Mission

The church has an exclusive mission on the earth, i.e., the bringing of lost men to God through Christ. (Matt. 28:19-20.) This is accomplished through three approved avenues : evangelism, edification and benevolence. The church's primary duty is to proclaim the good news of salvation to every earthling. (Mk. 16 : 15-16.) Having taught and baptized the receptive souls, she must help them to remain faithful and grow to Christian maturity. (Eph. 4 : 11-16.) God has placed upon the church a responsibility to the poor, both within the church and without. (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27.) Nothing else can be a scriptural work of the church although individual Christians may do any number of good works in other areas. While anything can be *described* as Christian that is guided by Christian principles, (i.e., Christian camps, literature, colleges, etc.) nothing can be the work of the church which God did not ordain. Even Balaam the errant prophet understood this principle. He said, "I cannot go beyond the Word of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of my own mind; what Jehovah speaketh, that will I speak." (Num. 24:13.)

## Some Areas of Misunderstanding

The church has no liberal arts colleges or universities. There are many fine schools owned and operated by Christians. But they are not owned or controlled by the church. The church does not determine their teaching staff or general operation. A board of Christian individuals provides their guidance. The church does not finance them, this too is done privately. The Christian college is a non-profit business operated by private Christians to assist Christian parents in properly training their children educationally, socially and spiritually. It is an organization separate from the church. The church existed before the colleges were organized and will continue if the schools close. The church has no obligation to such schools to finance their operations. However, we parents and all Christians interested in the training and welfare of our Christian children should appreciate and assist them in every good way.

The church of Christ as such has no youth camps. It does not own or operate such. Camping is not the business of the church. However, it is not wrong for Christians to engage in camping and to include Bible study, Christian training and worship in that activity. Christian parents provide these facilities for their children. Individual Christians donate their time, work and money to such efforts.

The church has no ball teams. God's church is not in the entertainment and recreation business. She can only operate scripturally in those areas divinely approved. Christians have the right to play ball together but not as "the church" or in the name of the church.

The church has no skating parties or any other kind of parties. Skating parties are not wrong in themselves and we are glad to see Christian youth play together. However, the young people and their parents should bear the expense of such activities.

Remember that in all of these areas, the thing is not wrong itself, but attempting to make such the “work of the church” or to do such in “the name of the church” or to finance them by the church is something for which we have no authority.

The church cannot engage in fund raising projects for its work. Its funds come only from the free-will gifts of its members. ( I Cor. 16:1-3; II Cor. 9:7.) We sell no products or services. We ask no “outsiders” for their help in financing the church’s work. Whatever we do for others we do without charge.

The *private* good works of individuals are not limited or restricted as severely as the congregation in their scope or funding. We can raise money for our private projects in any way that is honorable and expedient since they are not the work of the church. However, the distinction in our private works and the church and her work should always be clearly made.

The church has no weddings, bridal showers, baby showers or funerals. These are social activities of Christians and we do not criticize them. They are sponsored by Christian families and/or individuals, not the church.

Christians can use the “church building” for such of these activities as are appropriate and approved by the elders and the congregation. We must continually remind ourselves that the church is not the building, rather it is God’s saved people. The building is a “non-Biblical” expediency for the convenience of the saints. We violate no principle of Scripture by having bathrooms, water fountains, eating facilities, to be used by the saints. Nor is it wrong for the saints to use these facilities for social activities such as mentioned above.

## The Need For Care

Christians need to be careful in their words and deeds in the matter under discussion, lest we leave false impressions on those about us. Jesus warned, "Take heed how you hear." (Lk. 8:18.) I suggest that we need likewise to take heed how we speak. Peter exhorts us to speak as the oracles of God. (I Pet. 4:11.) A worthwhile slogan of our forefathers was, "Call Bible things by Bible names." Paul urges us to "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one." (Col. 4:6.) This admonition is especially needed by modern Christians in the areas we are discussing.

Our practice has generally been right, but our vocabulary has not always been so. Remember that denominations have all of the things we have mentioned as "church projects." This is why we must be careful to keep the Lord's church distinctive in these matters.

The church is a divine, spiritual institution. It must always be engaged in the spiritual business which God has appointed. Let us devote our congregational strength to preaching the gospel to the lost of earth. The church of Christ is the only institution authorized to do so. (Eph. 3:10.) Let us be actively involved in edifying the members of the spiritual family. (I Thess. 5:11.) This God teaches us to do. Let us be diligent to minister to the needs of the poor and suffering about us. (Gal. 6:10.) The bride of Christ must never allow herself to be distracted from these holy, God ordained pursuits for any other activities, no matter how good or worthwhile they might be.

Remember that anything can be described as Christian which is guided by Christian principles, but nothing can be "the work of the church" unless God has so specified it. Let us be busy and zealous, doing the work of the Lord and that

only, as a congregation. But let us also be zealous toward every good work of this second kind, not expecting the church to do what we individuals should be doing.



## **ADVICE TO CHRISTIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS**

The following words of counsel were first given to the author's own daughter, then to the class of young people preparing to leave for one of our Christian colleges. It is hoped that they will prove helpful to others, also.

1. Do not expect everything to be perfect just because it is a Christian college. Some young Christians go with this false expectation and are disillusioned when they find fellow students who do not measure up to the Christian ideal. Remember that not all students who go to Christian colleges are Christians. A number of non-members will be enrolled. Their values will not be those of Christ. Some students are problem children whose parents send them to a Christian college hoping to reform them. Some in this category will be rebellious and unwilling to conform with the rules. Then too, not every young person who has been baptized is a faithful child of God. (Rom. 9:6.) Just as we have such weak, worldly members at home, you will have them at a Christian school.
2. Do not expect every teacher at a Christian school to be a spiritual giant. We are so accustomed to hearing the names of great preachers who are on the teaching staff of our colleges, that some students expect every professor to be of that calibre. Of course not every teacher can be a Jimmy Allen or Batsell Baxter. If they are faithful Christians, competent in their field, that should be enough.
3. Do not fight the strict rules of the college, rather gladly

accept and abide by them. Some of the rules may be stricter than you are used to at home, yet they are necessary for the proper supervision of several hundred students. You may not personally need such close supervision, but many do. The school will not change its rules for you, you will only make life hard for yourself if you strive against them. Christians seek to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. ( I Pet. 2:13.) We should gladly go the extra mile. (Matt. 5:41.)

4. Count your teachers and the staff of the school as your friends and let them help you with your problems and needs. Some kids regard all teachers as adversaries to be resisted and resented. What a shame to set yourself in opposition to those who would gladly be your best friends. Their wisdom, counsel and guidance will be worth more than silver and gold. (Deut. 32:7.) Since you will be separated by many miles from your parents you will need their Christian advice in making the many adjustments of college life.
5. Study hard and be serious about your work, but be sure to leave time for some recreation, social life and extra curricular activities. After college comes profession, marriage, family, and responsibility. There will not be much time left for the revelries of youth. Enjoy these wonderful years of college and then be prepared to settle down to the adult life.
6. Do not be so busy being a student that you neglect the Lord's church. Some will absent themselves from mid-week service or Sunday evening because of "study." That is not an acceptable excuse. Find a good congregation with which you can be happy and get involved from the very start.
7. Seek out a church with good teaching. You want to grow

spiritually and become stronger while there. It might be more fun to go where a fellow student preaches, but not necessarily the most beneficial for your spiritual welfare.

8. Do not expect the congregation where you attend to be just like your home congregation. While it may actually be better, in churches as in families, there is no place like home. Get to know all the members there that you can. Look for the best attitudes in the preacher, elders and members. You will learn to love them and be loved. If you do not have this positive attitude you may grow discouraged and disinterested.
9. Do not go to college just to catch a marriage partner. Granted one of the advantages of a Christian college is that there will be a large reservoir of eligible prospects on campus. Also, since most young adults choose their mates during their college years, you will likely find a mate there. Let marriage to a fellow Christian student be one of the serendipities of your college years. There is a certain undesirable impression conveyed by the girl or boy whose main goal in going anywhere is to capture a mate.
10. Do not be cliquish with just a few friends. There is the temptation to stick with just a few close buddies, especially friends from back home. Take full advantage of the opportunity to have hundreds of new friends. Remember he that hath friends must show himself friendly. (Prov. 18:24, KJV.) In this same connection, do not forsake and neglect your old friends because of new friendships. Some tend to snub their old friends when they discover thriving new friendships in a different environment. (Prov. 27:10.)
11. Be selective about boys you date. Not every boy who has been baptized along the way and attends a Christian

school will display Christian manners toward a girl. Be careful to choose those that share the same love and zeal for God and His ways that you hold. The boy you date may be the man you will marry.

12. Plan to grow spiritually as in every other area while you are in school. Take courses and participate in those activities that will help you to be more Christ-like and useful in the kingdom.
13. Do not murmur and complain about the city where the school is located, the campus cafeteria, the dorms, etc. No place will be like home. No one likes a complainer. You will only make yourself miserable with such. Seek out the good points in these areas. Like Paul, be ye thankful (Phil. 4:6) and learn the secret of being content in whatever place you find yourself. (Phil. 4:11.)

What a grand privilege it is to live in a land and time where the marvelous blessing of Christian education is available for the youth of the church. May God help every parent see the rich benefits it affords their children and may the young people desire to take advantage of this opportunity. Thank God for those faithful men and women who make Christian education possible for my kids.

## CHRISTIAN JOURNALISM AND THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL

The earliest echoes of the restoration plea were heard in the pages of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, the *Christian Baptist* and the *Christian Messenger*. These journals carried the messages of devout men into the homes of the masses and contributed greatly to the rapid growth of the movement in the early eighteen hundreds. As the restoration gained momentum, other brethren brought forth numerous papers of all descriptions and qualities. It would be hard to measure the vast contribution that many of these publications made to the cause of Christ. One could in confidence assume that things would be much different now had they not existed. Truly the restoration movement was cradled in the printing press and fed with ink and paper. On this diet, it grew to a hearty adulthood.

A second chapter was written when the great digression swept over the church beginning in 1849. David Lipscomb and his *Gospel Advocate*, Benjamin Franklin and his *American Christian Review* and Austin McGary and his *Firm Foundation* led the way in a valiant battle that saved the church from total apostasy.

The radical movements that arose among us had their papers also, but it was the teaching influence of Christian journals such as those mentioned above that helped the brethren to come to a proper understanding of the various points of issue and thus saved the church from the entanglement of radical legalism.

On another front, the great missionary movement of the

church following World War II was spurred on by the help of Olan Hicks and the *Christian Chronicle*. At that time it was virtually the only paper among us that functioned as a regular brotherhood-wide news journal with a special emphasis on mission work. Many of the men and women who have and are now serving overseas, were awakened to the need and motivated by the *Chronicle*. Many individuals and churches were prompted to help mission work because of its thrilling messages.

While a young preacher, serving in a small mountain town in Colorado, in 1960, the gospel papers opened my eyes to a world hungry for the gospel. They acquainted me with a growing, vibrant brotherhood that was making history for Christ. They presented needs and challenges that even a small struggling congregation could help with. That need led to a personal and congregational involvement that continues until today. This story could be repeated thousands of times.

Today, the brotherhood needs quality Christian journals to take the acts of the church and its leaders into every Christian home. The church desperately needs skilled Christian journalists to report the events of the times and to ply the pen to the needs of the day. In-depth reporting of the mission harvest fields is needed to acquaint brethren of the great victories for Christ and to challenge more to become involved in going and sending. The gospel is good news. Good news is always exciting and interesting.

Some decry the lack of commitment to world evangelism. But people cannot do better until they know better. The problem is one of communication. Let's get the information and the needs to the saints. I have confidence that with proper understanding, they will respond in a wonderful way. John Milton said, "Good, the more communicated, the more abundant grows." If the good news of the kingdom's progress

is suffering from a lack of readership, it is likely because our efforts at communicating it have gotten in the way.

Without doubt, we are today seeing the greatest evangelistic and missionary outreach in the kingdom since the first century. The great Sunset church in Lubbock has motivated congregations to make commitments for planting the gospel in every nation NOW. Mission workshops are blossoming all over. Hundreds of young Christians are campaigning for Christ overseas yearly. Christian Colleges are all placing prime interest on missions. Schools of preaching are multiplying our number of trained soul-winners and teachers. Great coverage of these events is being given by some of our papers. We need the mission awareness to throw back the curtain of ignorance and let the good news of the progress of the gospel pour into the eyes and hearts of the brethren.

Even as we rejoice over the success all around us, we see evil shadows cast across the path by our adversary the Devil. Today, the church in America is threatened from without by an onslaught of militant unbelief that aspires to overwhelm us. Within, she is troubled by extremes on the right and the left. We have seen journalistic columns used as rifle ranges to fire deadly missals at brethren and the church. Articles impetuously written, have fanned sparks of discord into blazing controversies that leave only smoldering ruins. This is Satan's strategy to divert us from the glorious task of preaching the gospel to a dying race. We must not be turned aside. We need voices with a *certain sound* to raise the trumpet call to battle. (I Cor. 14:7-8.) We need a variety of Christian papers to meet the many needs of our people. But we need men to guide them who speak things that befit sound doctrine. (Tit. 2:1.) Let us be thankful for our faithful gospel journals and their noble influence for good in the proclamation of sound doctrine and defense of the gospel.

## HELL, THE END OF THE WICKED

A cardinal doctrine of our faith is that a hell of fearful punishment awaits every lost soul in eternity. Modern man fondly hopes that there is no such thing. Satan gladly encourages this vain and foolish dreaming. Even many apostate preachers and denominations boldly deny this divine teaching, i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses and Unitarians. Jesus warned, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.'" (Matt. 25:41.)

### 1. Does Hell Really Exist?

Man is universally conscious of sin. Every tribe has its totem, its altar, its sacrifice. The guilty conscience is experienced by every responsible soul. All sin and know the condemnation of their own heart. (Rom. 3:23.) The universal cry of every lost person is, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24.) The reality of sin cannot be denied. Every marker in the cemetery is a silent witness of it. Every war fought is a demonstration of it. Every crime committed perpetually proclaims it. Every liquor store and beer parlor testifies to the fact of sin.

But there can be no sin without law. The great English doctor of jurisprudence, Blackstone, wrote, "Where there is no law there can be no wrong, or violation." *Commentary*. Paul said the same: "Where there is no law, neither is there transgression." (Rom. 4:15.) If there be no law to break then no one can commit sin. But God's law is manifest to all men. (Rom. 2:11-16.)



Law is of any consequence only when there is a penalty for disobedience. We quote Blackstone again, "Where there is no penalty, the law is null and void." If the state has a law against speeding while driving a car, yet when one is found guilty, no penalty is imposed, then that law becomes null and void. No one will feel obligated to obey it. A law without a penalty attached for violation is inconceivable and absurd.

Now if there is no hell or punishment for wickedness, then there is no law, for "law without penalty is null and void." If there is no law, then there is no sin, for "where there is no law there can be no wrong." If there is no sin, then there is no moral or spiritual responsibility incumbent upon man. If there is no moral or spiritual responsibility upon us then why do we find all over the earth churches, courts and prisons? Even Christianity itself is a useless joke if there is no punishment for disobedience. To deny hell is ridiculous for to do so is to deny that which is every day demonstrated before our eyes, i.e., sin and law.

Jesus declared the existence of hell: "I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell. . . ." (Lk. 12:5.) Our Lord makes no idle threats. He uses no vain repetitions, yet this theme is mentioned continuously in his teaching.

## 2. Hell is a Future Punishment.

Some claim that the pangs of a *guilty conscience* constitute all the hell there is. A little thought will show the folly of this assertion. It is well known that the more one commits sin the easier it is to do so. The conscience grows calloused with repeated sin. ( I Tim. 4:2.) If this theory were true then the worse a man is the less hell he will suffer. On the contrary, the more devout a person is the more sensitive will be his conscience about sin. Per this theory, the

more spiritual a man becomes, the more desirous he is of pleasing God, the more hell he will experience. To escape hell, one would simply harden his heart and plunge into unrestrained sin. The theory is absurd. Believe it, who will?

If conscience is our hell, it would also be our heaven! As a rule, however, all those who deny hell want to cling to a literal heaven. The same verse proclaims the reality of both heaven and hell. (Matt. 25:46.)

Others claim that we get our *hell here on earth* through pain, suffering and misfortune. But often the wicked prosper in this life while the righteous suffer. The psalmist was envious when he saw the "prosperity of the wicked." He wondered if it really paid for him to be righteous because of the apparent iniquities of this life. (Ps. 73:3-5, 12-14.) Consider righteous Job and his suffering. Absolute justice is rarely seen here on earth. There must be a future judgment to right these wrongs. Martyrs for Christ are seen reigning in glory. (Rev. 20:4, 6.) The wicked who escaped justice in this life will pay their price in hell. (Is. 14:9-11.) If this foolish theory were true then the godly mother who because of her saintly life deserves heaven, receives hell on earth because of the thoughtless follies of her wicked son. Our lives are so interwoven here on earth that it would be impossible for a wicked husband to suffer hell while his wife enjoyed heaven in the same house. To properly be rewarded and punished they must be separated so far that one can have no influence on the other.

The truth is, hell will be experienced only after Jesus raises the dead and judges them. (Rev. 20:11-15.)

### 3. What is Hell Like?

The Lord used numerous comparisons to teach us the reality and nature of hell. Hell is like the valley of Hinnom

or Gehenna. (Matt. 5:22.) This was the refuse dump of Jerusalem. It was no modern sanitary landfill. Garbage-smoldered throughout the valley. Hell is like that.

Hell is like a lake of fire and brimstone into which sinners will be cast. (Rev. 20:10.)

It is like unto a bottomless pit such as we often dream of in our nightmares. (Rev. 20:3.)

It is like an oriental death house with weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 8:12.)

Hell is like outer darkness. (Matt. 8:12.) Seldom do we experience utter darkness but the horrors of hell will be like that. Such conveys an idea of lostness and hopelessness.

Hell is a place of immeasurable loss. Those who end up in hell will have lost all the pleasures of this life. All things they were fond of will be lost. Their place with Abraham and the righteous in paradise will be forfeited. (Lk. 16:19ff.) They will lose heaven and the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son. (Rev. 22:14-15.) All hope will be lost, even the hope of dying. In hell "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mk. 9:43-48.) "The smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night. . ." (Rev. 14:11.) There is no annihilation of the wicked as so many fondly wish.

Hell is a place of repulsive, horrible people. Look around you at the most abandoned wretches on earth. . . they will be there. Here there is hope for any person. There is a little good in the worst of men. There they will be completely abandoned in their wickedness and you in their midst. There will be no more restraints upon them for God will have given them up forever.

It will be a place of painful remorse. Sorrow, shame and carcasses of dead animals, even the bodies of executed criminals, were cast there and left to decay. Perpetual fires of self-condemnation will be in every heart. The hopelessness and despair will be overwhelming.

The duration of hell will be eternal. "And these shall go away into eternal punishment." (Matt. 25:46.) Every link of the chains of hell will be stamped "forever." Hell is no reform school from which you will graduate. Purgatory is but a wistful dream. Hell is not a preparation for heaven. No missionaries will ever be sent there.

We leave this dreadful scene with good news. No man or woman has to go to hell. You may choose heaven if you so desire. The cross of Christ stands as a flaming beacon squarely in the path of every hell-bound soul. Every sinner who goes to hell must walk over the crucified body of Jesus and trample the blood of the covenant under foot.

Only the tender mercy of God has spared us thus far from the hell we justly deserve. Will you not turn away from that dreadful cliff on whose edge you have stood so long and with a thankful heart accept the salvation he so graciously offers?

## IS IT WRONG TO EAT MEAT?

Seventh Day Adventists teach their members that they should not eat meat. Some go so far as to say that the eating of flesh is sinful. Although the foundation of this Adventist practice is an alleged vision of their prophetess founder, Ellen G. White, they try to find Biblical approval for it. (See Ellen G. White, *Selections from the Testimonies*, Book 3, p. 549, Book 1, pp. 203-207, 1936.)

### ARGUMENTS FOR A VEGETARIAN LIFE

1. Vegetarians argue that when God first created man He gave him a diet of herbs, Gen. 1:30. This we would not dispute, yet in Gen. 9:3-4, God said to Noah and his family (the entire human race), "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you, as the green herb have I given you all. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." This plainly declares that God himself has given man permission to eat flesh with His approval. The one restriction being that it be properly killed and bled.
2. Some go so far as to say it is wrong even to kill an animal. They cite the law, "Thou shalt not kill." Deut. 5:17. They grossly misapply this prohibition which refers only to the killing of man made in God's image, see Gen. 9:6. It cannot be wrong to kill beasts for needful purposes because God ordered them slain for sacrifices, Lev. 1:4-5. Furthermore, He ordained that "the flesh of his peace offerings shall be eaten on the day of his oblation . . .," Lev. 7:15. When God created man he said, ". . .let them have dominion over the fish of the seas, and over

the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," Gen. 1:26. Man is thus authorized to use the lower creatures of earth for his needs. Of course, we would not justify the wanton, wasteful destruction of God's creatures. We only have them as a stewardship, Ps. 50:10-11. If the vegetarian were truly consistent in this interpretation of "thou shalt not kill" he could not kill a rat, a fly or a cockroach. Of course, some of the Hindus of India are that conscientious, though their reasons are different. Vegetarians are in an awkward position to explain Christ's preparing fish for his disciples to eat and telling them to "Break their fast," John 21:9, 12. Did Christ sin? The Bible says no, I Pet. 2:21. Then it cannot be wrong to eat the flesh of fish. They point out that when God led Israel through the wilderness, He fed them manna, a vegetable product. But they do not usually mention that he also gave them quail meat in large quantity, Num. 11:31-32. Also, they were given definite permission as to which meats they could eat with heaven's blessings, Lev. 11:2-6.

3. Again, they cite the prohibitions against eating "unclean" meats in Lev. 11:28. They thus jump to the unwarranted conclusion that all meat is forbidden. This is to ignore the permission God granted for them to eat clean meats such as beef and mutton. The unclean meats which were forbidden to the Jews were primarily scavengers and predators which in those days would have been more likely to harm one's health because of lack of sanitation and facilities for keeping meat. Also, those food laws were like the ones forbidding the sowing of different crops in one field, which were positive, divine laws designed to test the loyalty of the people toward God, Lev. 19:19.

4. Vegetarians have no right even to forbid us to eat animals that were unclean under Moses' law. In Peter's vision on the flat roof of Simon's house he saw all manner of unclean creatures let down from heaven. He heard a voice saying, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." This he refused to do because of his Jewish background and training. Then he was told, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Acts 10:9-15. We readily grant that the vision was teaching about far more than meat, but it did not teach error about meat! Thus Paul, after showing that Christ had removed the old Mosaic law, wrote, "let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a sabbath day; which are the shadow of things to come, but the body is Christ's," Col. 2:16-17.
5. To make abstinence from meat a matter of religion is a sign of apostasy. Paul warns that when men fall away from the faith, they would forbid to marry and command "to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth," I Tim. 4:1-3. Notice that: a) it is the doctrine of demons (devils) to so teach; b) that God created meats to be received by man; c) those who believe and know the truth can and will receive them; conversely, those who do not believe and know the truth will not; d) every creature of God is good and is not to be rejected, I Tim. 4:4; e) meat is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, I Tim. 4:5.
6. To make one's diet a mark of religion is "will worship" of no spiritual value since it is the precept and doctrine of men, Col. 2:20-23.
7. No one has to eat meat to please God. He has left diet up to each person's own preference in this Christian age.

“One man hath faith to eat all things; but he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth set at naught him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth,” Rom. 14:2-3. The important thing in Paul’s thinking was not what you eat, but how you love and respect your Christian brother. Eating meat should never be a test of fellowship. “Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own Lord he standeth or falleth,” Rom. 14:4.

8. We must respect our conscience. “Happy is he that judgeth (condemns) not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat because, he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” Rom. 14:21-23. God never wants us to violate our conscience. We may educate it but not ignore it!
9. We must respect the conscience of a weak brother. “Overthrow not for meat’s sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for the man who eateth with offense. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth,” Rom. 14:20-21. On a slightly different problem, Paul wrote, “Wherefore if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forevermore?” I Cor. 8:13.
10. Our only restrictions on eating flesh are stated in Acts 15:28-29, “. . .that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled. . .” With these things duly observed one can eat any animal flesh so long as it is received with thanksgiving and prayer and used in moderation, II Pet. 1:6 , remembering that law of kindness toward a weak brother.



If Adventists or any other wish to be vegetarians, that is their privilege. But let them not seek to declare their practice a law of God and bind it upon others. We appreciate the great contributions Adventists have made to the science of nutrition and the development of new foods such as soybean products. Yet our appreciation must not keep us from opposing the false teaching and practice that they set forth in the name of God. In the matter of meats and many others, they teach the doctrine of demons, I Tim. 4:1-5.

## LET'S GO SWIMMING

As summer draws near with its warm weather and vacation time, millions of Americans will make their way to the public pools and beaches. Some of those who go will be Christians. Many who go will be urging their Christian friends to accompany them. As with any other activity, the conscientious child of God asks, "Should I or should I not engage in this recreational activity?"

Our people have suffered from a lack of leadership in this area. Never has the author seen an article on the subject, and only seldom has he heard it mentioned in the pulpit. It is a fact that most leaders quietly discourage the practice, but only if faced directly with a question about it, or a proposed congregational activity involving a swimming party. Sadly, some leaders have actually encouraged or even participated in such. Thankfully, many devout parents have trained their children to stay away from the public mixed swimming facilities. Many, however, in their weakness, gave way to the insistence of the young, that "everybody does it."

### JUST WHAT DO WE OPPOSE?

In discussing popular social and recreational issues, people tend to get emotionally upset so that clear reason and scriptural principles are lost sight of. Let me first clarify the issues by pointing out some things we are not opposing.

- A. It is not wrong to swim. Sometimes in our zeal to speak against some worldly practice we do not make our point clearly. Often brethren conclude that the preacher preaches against *swimming*. Being intelligent enough to

know that swimming in and of itself is not evil, they brush off his entire lesson. Swimming is no more a sin than golfing or bicycling.

- B. We do not condemn swimming in public as such. If those swimming are modestly dressed and otherwise behaving in harmony with Christ's will, they could swim in public just as they would do any other activity in the presence of others.
- C. Mixed swimming of men and women is not the true point of the objection. Properly attired or otherwise pleasing to God, the two sexes could play in the water together just as they would picnic together.
- D. We are not against young people having a good time. Some falsely conclude that preachers who speak out against worldly practices are really "old fogies" who are "anti-youth" and who oppose anything that brings pleasure to the young. This is certainly a mistaken assumption.

While we freely make these concessions, we must remember that a good thing can become sinful if we allow just a small amount of sin to enter in, even as a little poison will contaminate a whole container of food or medicine. (I Cor. 5:6.)

### WHEREIN IS THE SIN?

We are against immodesty on the part of God's children. Paul charges all Christian women to "adorn themselves in modest apparel....which becometh women professing godliness." (I Tim. 2:9-10.) *Lasciviousness* is a work of the flesh which will keep one out of heaven. (Gal. 5:19-21.) The word is defined, "1) Wanton; lewd, lustful, 2) Tending to

produce lewd emotions.” Webster. Jesus said that when a man looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has already committed adultery in his heart. (Matt. 5:28.) This our Lord condemned.

From the foregoing verses we can easily draw the following guidelines:

- A. Clothing or lack of it which tends to produce lewd or sexually lustful emotions is sinful if worn in the presence of the opposite sex who would be tempted to lust.
- B. Modern swimwear is patently in this category. This cannot be disputed.
- C. The unlawful sexual passions which are stirred in any normal, healthy young man who spends long hours with scantily clad young ladies on the beach or at the pool are obviously lascivious and therefore wrong.
- D. Not only is the man guilty who lusts, but she who provokes his thoughts by her mode of dress shares his guilt according to the definition of the word.

So then, our objection is to men and women, boys and girls, swimming together in modern skimpy swimwear. We label this as sinful because it is a violation of the rule of modesty and holiness of dress and because of the lust that invariably goes with it.

### WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Every sincere Christian wants to please God in all matters. Herein is no exception.

- A. We should abstain from fleshly lusts which war against

the soul, and have our behavior seemly or winsome before the world. (I Pet. 2:11.) No Christian should be found at the public places of swimming in mixed groups.

- B. Christian parents should provide wholesome activities for their youngsters which can be enjoyed without guilt and shame. Many saints arrange for private pools and have girls' days and boys' days so that they can swim separately. This we heartily commend.
- C. Let our elders, preachers and teachers speak out so that all members of the flock will understand their duty in this matter.
- D. Let us be reasonable, fair and consistent in dealing with this issue and others. Young Christians are quick to discover our inconsistencies in dealing with sin and sinners. The same rules should apply to one and all.
- E. Parents must learn to say no to some requests of their offspring. We do them a grave disservice if we allow them to pursue activities which experience tells us will surely make them vulnerable to sin.

The world should easily detect the child of God by his holy manner of life which shines brightly in the dark world of sin. So long as God's people dress like the sinful world, act like them, talk like them, and play like them, we will never have an impact upon the lost. With Paul we say, "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 7:1.)

## MEETING TEMPTATION WITH CHRIST

### MATT. 4 : 1-11

Temptation is part and parcel of every Christian's daily life. "There has never been a man so good that he was exempt from trials and temptations." Even our Lord was tempted of the devil. In fact, he was tempted in all points like as we are—but He did not sin, Heb. 4:15.

In God's wisdom, He allows us to be tested to see what materials our faith is really made of. (See Gen. 22:1.) Although God himself tempts no man to do evil (Jas. 1 :13.), Satan is always anxious to do his best to pierce our armor and lead us to sin. (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7.) As unpleasant as temptations are, and though no man should seek for them, it is a fact that "where there is no temptation, there can be little claim to virtue," W. H. Prescott. "Though now for a little while . . . ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the *proof of your faith*, being more precious than gold. . . may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus..." I Pet. 1:6-7. Temptations overcome are like a file that scrapes away the rust from our souls.

*CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE.* The Christian has a mentor who has shown him the proper way to meet and overcome temptations. He left us an example and we should follow his steps in this as in all other matters, I Pet. 2:21.

Christ faced the same tempter. He was tempted of the devil, Matt. 4:1. So are we, I Pet. 5:8.

Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, Heb. 4:15.

Not that he faced every specific test and trial, but he was confronted with every type of temptation.

The same avenues of temptation were used on Christ as are used on us. Our temptations come through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, I John 2:15, 16. Satan appealed to the lust of the flesh when he urged him to turn the stone into bread. He *showed* Christ all the kingdoms of the world and promised them to him; the lust of the eye. The episode on the pinnacle of the temple was an appeal to the pride of life. Christ met and conquered all of these.

Christ was tempted when he was at his weakest point physically and emotionally after forty days of fasting in the loneliness of the wilderness. We should always remember this and expect Satan's attempts when we are at a low ebb.

The weapon Christ used to overcome temptation is the same weapon we have today. Each time Satan sought to bring him down our Lord countered with the Sword of the Spirit. . .the Word of God. Each time the enemy's blow was deflected. "It is written" is the most powerful deterrent to sin the world has ever known. May we use this as effectively as did our Savior.

The victory Christ won over temptation will be our victory if we likewise overcome. Satan left him. If we resist the Devil he will flee from us, Jas. 4:7 Because Jesus overcame, he returned to his Father in glory, John 16:17, 33. If we overcome we will reign with him in glory, Rev. 2: 26-27.

*THE DIVINE PROMISE.* We who are God's children can overcome any evil plot Beelzebub may lay for us because our Father has promised: "There hath no temptation taken you

but such as man can bear, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make also a way of escape that ye may be able to endure it." I Cor. 10:13. Again, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation...." II Pet. 2:9.

*THE HEAVENLY PRESCRIPTION.* A dangerous disease demands a powerful medication. The following ingredients properly blended and faithfully used will not only cure but effectively inoculate the saint against future temptations.

*Faith in God* and trust in His promises gives us courage to face temptations and boldly fight the good fight. Knowing our own weakness and knowing Satan's great power, without strong conviction of God's providential help, we might despair and surrender. "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith...." I John 5:4.

*Fellowship with God* neutralizes most temptations. "To realize God's presence is the one sovereign remedy against temptation." Finelon. When we walk in the light of God, the blood of His Son Jesus forms a protective shield about us, cleansing us from sin, I John 1:7. As a young man would not dare to speak coarsely in the presence of his beloved mother, much less act so, the Christian who lives daily in the presence of his heavenly Father finds it easy to resist sin.

Recognition of one's own weakness will help him shun and avoid temptations that could destroy him. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I Cor. 10:12. Nothing is more dangerous to a saint than a false sense of security. A foolish man feels that he must "prove himself" by wrestling with every temptation. The Holy Spirit warns, "flee fornication," I Cor. 6:18; "flee youthful lusts," II Tim. 2:22; "flee idolatry," I Cor. 10:14.



In fact, the wise soul avoids the very appearance of evil, I Thess. 5:22, K.J.V. His prayer is, "Lead me not into temptation," Matt. 6:13.

**Purpose in Your Heart To Be Pure.** "*Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself....*" Dan. 1:8. No man will accomplish much in life who does not plan and purpose his goals. So it is morally and spiritually, only those who are determined in their heart to fight Satan and win will overcome temptations. "Keep thyself pure," I Tim. 5:22, should be every disciple's announced goal. "Keep thy heart with all diligence" warned Solomon, Prov. 4:23. When temptation penetrates into the heart, sin will soon follow in the life. "No degree of temptation justifies any degree of sin," N. P. Williams.

*Discipline* is required to be victorious. If we manfully resist the devil, he will flee from us, Jas. 4:7. We must put on the complete Christian armor, stand and fight, Eph. 6:11, 13. We must be *sober* and *watchful* for our adversary stalks us as a roaring lion, I Pet. 5:8. Be ever on guard, "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation..." Matt. 26:41. Learn to say no! It will be of far greater value to you than learning French or geometry. How can I ask God to deliver me from temptation when I have not honestly done my best to keep out of it?

*The Word of God* stored up in the heart, ready for instant use, is a powerful weapon to drive away the tempter. The Psalmist writes, "Thy word have I laid up in my heart that I might not sin against thee." 119:11. Jesus drove Satan out of his presence with three swift blows from the Book of Moses, Matt. 4:4-11. The Christian's only offensive weapon is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, Eph. 6:17. A Bible on the table will not do the job, the truth

must be in the heart! An expensive, artistically bound volume is of little value to the soul who knows not how to use it.

*Be constant in prayer.* "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," Matt. 26:41. In his model prayer, Jesus taught us to pray "lead us not into temptation," Matt. 6:13. Sin has little power in a praying heart.

*Do not be discouraged by grievous temptations.* Remember, the temptation is not the sin, it is the yielding that defiles us. Temptation is Satan knocking at your door, yielding is opening the door and inviting him in. If God's own Son was attacked by Satan, surely we can expect no less, Matt. 10:24. Satan desired to sift *Peter* like wheat, not Judas, Lk. 22:31. If Satan is so determined to harm us, it proves that our life and work are a threat to him. If you do fall in the battle, do not despair; grace and mercy are readily available. Christ's blood is continually available to wash away all confessed sins, I John 1:9; I John 2:1-2. Jesus promised to intercede for Peter when he fell, Lk. 22:31; so he ever liveth to make intercession for us, Heb. 7:27. Thank God that he doesn't demand sinless perfection from His children.

Saints, be of good cheer, Christ overcame the world and we through him are more than conquerors, Rom. 8:37.

## PAGANISM

Christianity in the widest sense of that term is professed by only 30% of earth's population. The rest of the peoples worship in various forms of heathenism. Excluding Islam, these people worship gods made by men's hands.

The consequences of paganism are appalling. All of these religions leave their followers in the depths of moral degradation. Every kind of immorality, deceit and dishonesty prevails. Socially the strong dominate the weak, women are degraded before men. The poor are treated as the dirt of the ground. Financially the nations that are addicted to idolatry are generally poor with only a very few men holding most of the money. Domestically, the home is the throne of the tyrant father, women are little more than slaves. Children are sired with little thought of moral training. Politically, these nations are either oppressed or they are oppressive. The rights of men mean little to heathen rulers. The welfare of a society is of no serious concern. Those in power enrich themselves at the expense of their poor subjects.

The only effective weapon against idolatry is the gospel of Jesus. It will tear down the strongholds of ignorance. (II Cor. 10:3-5.) While the major Protestant churches have done much in the past to combat paganism it is sad to see a willingness to accept the pagan religions as equal partners by the liberal leaders of today's Protestantism.

Idolatry is wrong. It is wrong on numerous counts. We will notice four areas in which it is condemned of God.

1. Idol worship dishonors God the Creator of man.

Paul writes: "because that, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God neither gave thanks . . .professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things."(Rom. 1:21-23.) Even as Jehovah strictly charged ancient Israel, so it is today, "I am Jehovah thy God...thou shalt have no other gods before me, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them for I Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God. . ." (Deut. 5:6-9.) It is hard for Americans to visualize human beings prostrating themselves before images of beasts or men, debasing themselves in the most abject manner before the creation of human hands. Yet one has only to board a modern jet liner and in a matter of hours he can be in Asia or Africa where such is the rule of life, not the exception. While unbelieving religious liberals and altruistic anthropologists speak of the splendor and beauty of heathen worship, the Christian is shocked, disgusted and appalled. It is gross and sensual, far from beautiful. It dishonors the God, in whose image man is made, to offer such vile worship.

## II. Idolatry is wrong because it is vain and foolish.

Isaiah ridicules the idol worshippers of his day in 44:12-20 of his book. "The (black) smith maketh an axe, and worketh in the coals and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with his strong arm; the carpenter sketcheth out a line; he marketh it out with a pencil; he shapeth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and shapeth it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. He heweth him down cedars, . . .and strengtheneth for himself one among the trees of the forest: he planteth a fir-tree, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; and he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself: yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread: yea, he maketh

a god, and worshipping it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshipping, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They know not, neither do they consider: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see and their hearts, that they cannot understand. (Behold how Satan blinds them!) II Cor. 4:4, J.W.) And none calleth to mind, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination (idol)? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Again in 46:1-2, Isaiah cuts sarcastically at the Bel and Nebo gods of Babylon as he foresees the people fleeing their city with their idols strapped to the backs of their beasts. Not only can they not save their worshippers, the gods themselves must be saved from capture or destruction by their devotees. Man, the crowning jewel of all creation, made in God's likeness with intelligence, superior to all other creatures, should perceive the folly of such senseless worship. Paul argues in Rom. 1:20 that all idolators are "without excuse" since with their native intelligences and basic senses they could realize the one God's everlasting power and divinity. He further charges that such idolatrous worship is the result of man becoming vain in his reasonings and professing himself to be wise. Man seeks a god like himself so that he can do the desires of his flesh with the approval of his conscience and his society.

III. Idolatry is wrong because it is cruel and degrading.

Idoltrous rites have included human sacrifice, ritual fornication, sensual dancing, torture of devotees, and sacrificial victims. Idolatry has cruelly crushed the masses of people under foot as the Hindu Brahmins have the Harijans (the low caste) people of India, treating them far worse than they treated their beasts and even vermin and insects. Multiplied millions yet cringe in fear of demons, evil spirits and shamen (witchdoctors) who claim to hold supernatural powers. People let rats and cows eat the grain with impunity while millions fight to cling to the thread of life and battle starvation in India. In Thailand, Buddhist women are told they cannot enter Nirvana (the highest state) as women, they must be reincarnated as men. Polygamy is basically a product of corrupt religion that teaches that man's future happiness depends upon the number of spirits he can generate to take into eternity with him.

IV. Idolatry is wrong because it leads men away from the true God and farther and farther into rebellion.

Paul vividly portrays this downward path in Romans 1: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves.... God gave them up unto vile passions (homosexual perversions).... And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful . . ." (vss. 22-31.) The

author used to think that this sordid, morbid picture was only of the first century Romans. A trip into any pagan nation in Africa or Asia will be a living commentary on Paul's words. The road of idolatry is away from Jehovah and in the opposite direction of righteousness, justice, and truth. From Paul we learn that men first reject God in their heart, then they are rejected by Him. Man becomes like the God or god which he worships. The faithful Christian grows to be like the righteous Jehovah. The heathen is like the devil gods he worships.

As these words are written I look out of my window here in New Delhi, India and see the situation as described above. What can we do to help these poor benighted souls who languish under the yoke of Satan's false religions? The answer is simple and plain. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mk. 16:15-16.) No, this is not simplistic for the Scripture tells us that the gospel of His Son Jesus is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. (Rom. 1:16.)

Brethren in America, look around you and be grateful, look up and be thankful, and then send the blessed gospel light into all the world.

## REVELATION 20, AN EXPOSITION

The twentieth chapter of the Revelation has been a battle ground for ages. It is the *only possible* foothold that premillennialists can find in the Bible. If it can be established that the events of this chapter are not to be interpreted literally, then their wild speculative system falls to the ground.

### Revelation Is A Book Of Figures And Symbols.

This is undisputable fact. Notice a few examples. In 1:1 John tells us the book was "signified" unto him. The root of this word is *sign*. In 1:13-14 John saw Jesus but uses numerous metaphors to describe him. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." "His feet were like unto burnished brass." "Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword." None would make these descriptive terms literal. In chapter 1:20 John saw seven stars and golden candlesticks which he explains are seven churches and their angels. In 12:3 and 9 he saw a great red dragon which was said to be symbolic of Satan. He saw a harlot which he identifies as the great city that ruled over all the world, obviously Rome.

Chapter 20 is also filled with symbols. We see an angel, a chain, a serpent, an abyss with a lid, 1,000 years and evil forces named Gog and Magog. Even the premillennialists understand all of this as symbolic save the 1,000 years. But I argue that it is unreasonable and inconsistent to explain all these as figurative and then single out the 1,000 years as literal.



## The Symbols Identified

*Who* is the angel of Chapter 20? First, we ask *what* is an angel? The word simply means a messenger, it may be a heavenly, a diabolical or a human one. The angel of this passage is likely Jesus. He alone has the power to do what the angel does. He has the keys of death and Hades. (Rev. 1:18.) All judgment and authority are his. (John 5:22-27) He came to bind the strong man Satan, that he might rescue those held in Satan's domain. (Matt. 12:28-29.) Christ is "the angel of the Lord" of the Old Testament. Compare Ex. 23:20 and I Cor. 10:4, to see the evidence of this. For a fine discussion of this question the reader is referred to the book, *The Divinity of Our Lord*, by Canon H. P. Liddon. When we say Christ is the angel or messenger of Jehovah, we in no way deny his deity. Nor do we argue that he is in nature an angel, i.e., a created being. The word is used for its definition, i.e., a messenger.

Who is the dragon? John answers this for us in 20:2 by saying it is the Devil and Satan. Like the fierce dragons of ancient myth, Satan threatens all of humanity.

What is the chain that bound Satan? That chain is the gospel. When Satan tempted Christ, the Savior successfully resisted his every attempt with the aid of the Word of God. Compare Matt. 4:1-11. That which is the power of God to salvation is also his power to restrain Satan's power.

When was Satan bound? If we can determine this from the Scripture, we will know for sure when the 1,000 years began. The Bible shows that by his coming, his death and resurrection, Christ bound Satan. Notice again Matt. 12:24-29, Christ argues, "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can one

enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." The fact that Jesus cast out demons, that he now saves men from sin, is proof that he has bound the strong man, Satan, who is god of this world. (II Cor. 4:4.) As Jesus contemplated his forthcoming death he said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31.) In Col. 2:14-15, Paul reasons that when Christ was nailed to the cross he "despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." The expression principalities and powers has reference to the evil spiritual powers, i.e., he stripped them of their power and authority. Again, Paul says that Christ "brought to naught him that had the power of death, that is the devil." (Heb. 2:14.) John says that Christ was manifested to the end that he might destroy the works of the devil. (I John 3:8.)

Some cannot believe that Satan is presently bound since so much sin and wickedness yet abound in the world. The verse says, Satan is bound "that he should deceive the nations no more." (Rev. 20:3.) With respect to the nations and sinners, Satan is bound in a relative sense. He cannot stop the spread of the kingdom. He cannot destroy the gospel. (Matt. 24:35.) We say that Satan's binding is relative or partial as concerns the world, even as reflected in Jude 6. Angels that fell from their sinless state, God has "kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Yet Satan and his fallen helpers are allowed some degree of freedom to tempt mankind even while under this heaven-imposed restraint.

With respect to the saints of God, Satan is absolutely bound. He cannot trick the Christian so long as he is faithful. In John 10:28, Jesus said of his disciples, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." So long as the disciple is

faithful, Satan is incapable of separating him from God. With the whole armor of God we can stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11-13.) The man begotten of God, who does not make a practice of sinning, keepeth himself and the evil one toucheth him not." (I John 5:18.) We can illustrate this by likening Satan to a vicious dog bound to a chain of 10 feet. If we stay outside the circumference of the chain the dog cannot touch us. But if we wander within his bounds, he can devour us. The chain is God's word. Keep that word between you and Satan and you are safe. Ignore the word at your own peril. Satan was bound at Calvary when the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head. (Compare Gen. 3:15.) He will continue bound until the little season just prior to Christ's second advent.

### Who Reigns With Christ?

In Rev. 20:4, John saw the souls of martyred saints reigning with Christ. Here is a vision of men from the earth, not of men on the earth. This is the pre-resurrection state of martyrs for Christ. Notice that these martyred saints were *presently* reigning with Christ. Early in Revelation, Jesus had promised persecuted disciples that if they would be "faithful unto death" he would give them a crown of life. (2:10.) In 3:21 he said, "He that overcometh I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in His throne." Faithful saints who die for the Lord reign with him now. Nothing is said of a *future* reign on earth!

### Where Do They Reign?

John says that these triumphant saints reign *with* Christ. (20:4.) But Christ's throne is in heaven, not on the earth. We notice in Rev. 3:21 that he promises that the overcoming saint will sit down with him in His throne even as he sat down with the Father upon his throne. In Acts 2:32-36

Peter argues that the resurrected Jesus *ascended into heaven* to sit at the right hand of the Father. Again, Paul argued that he must depart this earth to be with Christ. (Phil. 1:23.) Therefore, the knowledgeable Bible student does not look for an earthly reign of Christ.

### What Is The First Resurrection?

Premillennialists argue for two bodily resurrections, one of the righteous at the time of Christ's alleged return to earth, the second for the wicked at the end of that reign. They seem to forget that the term "resurrection" can have a spiritual import. For example, in Rom. 6:4-5 our salvation and baptism is likened to a death, burial and resurrection. The same illustration is used in Eph. 2:1, 4-6, and Col. 2:12-13 and 3:1-4. These cases prove that we need not interpret the word literally. In John 5:24-29, Jesus speaks of salvation as a resurrection and then mentions the literal resurrection of the body in the same context. "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life," i.e., the saved man has experienced one resurrection (a spiritual one) and at the last day he will be raised to the resurrection of life. Thus the first resurrection is the result of salvation. For those who have experienced that first resurrection there is no fear of the second death because their sins are forgiven and they will be raised to eternal life. (See Rev. 20:6, 14-15.)

### What Is The Thousand Years?

Already we have shown that both the book of Revelation and its twentieth chapter are highly figurative. Throughout the Bible *numbers* especially are given figurative or spiritual meanings. The number seven is the most commonly used symbolic number, usually it means completeness or perfection. Also, the numbers twelve and forty often have

meanings beyond their numerical value. "The word thousand is used more than twenty times in the book of Revelation. Not once, we believe, is it to be taken literally." R. B. Jones, *The Latter Days*, p. 152. The expression "thousand years" means a long period of time in contrast to the "little seasons" of 20:3. "The figure of one thousand represents a definite period of time, measured by and known to God." G. L. Murry, *Millennial Studies*, p. 184. It is the period of time extending from the Lord's first advent and victory over Satan until the little season which will occur just prior to his second coming. It is the time when Satan is bound. (Rev. 20:2) But we have already shown that Satan is bound now. It is the time of the first resurrection. (Rev. 20:5) But the first resurrection is our experience in salvation which occurs now. It is the time of the martyr's reign with Christ. (20:4) But those who overcome Satan reign with Christ now. (Rev. 3:21) Therefore we conclude that the thousand years is the period of the Christian age while Christ sits at his Father's right hand in heaven, reigning on David's throne. (Acts 2:32-36)

### What Is The Little Season?

There are a number of points we can glean about this matter. It is a brief period of time just prior to the coming of the Lord in final judgment. It will take place after a long period of time in which the departed saints have reigned with Christ. It will be a relatively brief period of unusual Satanic activity. (Rev. 20:7-9) Other passages also speak of extremely wicked and anti-Christian conditions that will prevail before the Lord comes. (See II Pet. 3:3-4; II Tim. 3:1-5.) It appears that the little season will involve a world-wide persecution of the Lord's true church. It will be Satan's last attempt to crush the cause of Christ. The little season of persecution will end with the Lord's second coming whereupon he will save the saints and judge the wicked.

## Who Are Gog and Magog?

The nations which Satan will deceive are called Gog and Magog. (Rev. 20:8.) We also find Gog mentioned in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, but there are numerous distinctions in the two records. In Revelation Gog is a nation, in Ezekiel he is a prince. Ezekiel's Gog comes from the north, in Revelation he comes from the four corners of the earth. John speaks of two persons, Gog and Magog, while Ezekiel speaks of Gog out of the land of Magog. Gog and Magog represent future enemies of the church whose true identity are as yet unknown. There is no evidence at all that would justify our applying these references to Russia.

## What Is The Camp of the Saints?

In Rev. 20:9 the church is likened to a military camp under fierce attack, completely surrounded by its enemies. The situation seems hopeless by human standards. But God intervenes to save her. The figure is probably borrowed from the time of the Exodus when the nation of Israel was organized as a military camp in the wilderness with hostile forces on every hand. •

John also styles the church as "the beloved city" which could only refer to Jerusalem. But this would not be the old material Jerusalem which had perished some 26 years before. It would be the new, spiritual Jerusalem, as mentioned in Heb. 12:22. We see a picture of the church under persecution by worldly forces far greater and more powerful than herself. The case looks fatal to human eyes.

## What Is The Fire That Fell From Heaven?

Just when it appears that the forces of Satan will overwhelm the Lord's cause, fire will come from heaven to de-

stroy the enemy. It reminds us of God's judgment upon Sodom. (Gen. 19:24.) God had promised Ezekiel that he would send fire upon Magog. (39:6.) This surely refers to the Lord's coming in fiery judgment upon the wicked as described vividly by Paul in II Thess. 1:7-9.

### What Is The Great White Throne Judgment?

In this section (Rev. 20:11-12), John describes an *universal* judgment, for all the dead were summoned to stand before the throne. It will be a personal judgment in which each individual will give account of his conduct. This judgment will be righteous in nature for the Lord will be the judge and the individual's own personal record will be measured by God's book. The whiteness of the throne suggests the purity of the judgement to be meted out. It will be the final judgment, for the punishment of the wicked will be the *final* punishment of the lake of fire. Christ will be the judge upon the great white throne. (Matt. 25:31-32)

### What Revelation 20 Does Not Say

Through the years our brethren have refuted pre-millennial speculations on this passage of scripture by noting the many things not mentioned therein that are essential if the premillennial theory is to be established. The careful reader will note the silence of the chapter on the second coming of Christ; the bodily resurrection; an earthly reign; the throne of David on earth; Jerusalem or Palestine; living, earth-bound Christians, or the final resurrection. We do read, however, of curses pronounced upon those who dare to add anything to the words of this book. (Rev. 22:18-19)

Rather than Revelation 20 teaching the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, it teaches the present reign of Jesus in heaven with his saints and a second coming which will bring judgment upon the wicked.

## SOME MISAPPLIED VERSES

Over the centuries misconceptions grow up around certain passages of Scriptures. In his battle against sin and error, man sometimes reaches for weapons (verses of Scriptures) that appear to condemn the evil when really they do not. Sometimes we only see the words of one verse without considering the context. This commonly will lead us down wrong paths. We quickly concede that most of these misuses of God's word are unintentional, and of innocent motive. However, every truth-loving disciple will want to know the correct interpretation of any and all scripture. Likewise, he will want to make only proper application of it. Let us notice a few of these misapplied verses and learn the correct exegesis of them.

I. *Deut. 22:5*. "A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah."

This is the proof text of those who say it is sinful for a woman to wear slacks or pantsuits. This seemed to the author a good use to make of these words until he remembered that when Moses penned them both men and women wore the toga type of garment which had no legs sewed in for the males. The main distinction was in the sash worn with it. Men had their leather girdles (like John the Baptist) and the women wore a pretty sash. But the garment was essentially the same. Some parts of our world today still have similar long skirts for both men and women. I began to ask, when did pants become the primary wear of men? Were



they God-ordained or just a cultural matter? Did God award males the exclusive patent rights to wear the long britches?

The main question was, however, what did these words mean to men and women of Moses' day? In my judgment the words were meant to proscribe homosexuality and their practice of transvestism where men masquerade as women and women as men. Such abominable practices had been condemned from the days of Sodom and Gomorrah's judgment. (Gen. 19:1-28) Moses had already specified such as a crime punishable by death. (Lev. 20: 13-16.) Since it has always been common for those who are unhappy with the sexual nature which God gave them to try to present themselves as of the opposite sex, it seems that this was the practice Moses was condemning.

Modern ladies who wear pantsuits and other "legged" garments cannot be arbitrarily charged with renouncing their femininity. Surely most of them are completely happy to be women (wives and mothers). And since the culture allows women to wear such without any suggestion of transvestism, how can we continue to use this verse to condemn these ladies?

Really, most of us tend to reject anything that is different than what we grew up with and were taught is proper. This is our cultural training and it varies not only from country to country, but from section to section in a country. When confronted with something which seems wrong to our cultural training, we tend to look for some indication that God shares our disapproval. Most people tend to think that their culture is the proper God-given way of doing things. Moses' warning against the transvestite seemed just what was needed to condemn a new fad in women's clothing, but the sincere student cannot use it for any other purpose than God intended.

Finally, in a day of mini skirts and short shorts, a lady in a proper-fitting pantsuit is a refreshingly modest sight. When she has to work in manual type jobs or in the yard, surely a modest-filling pair of pants is far more becoming than a dress. The only restriction the Christian lady is under is that her apparel be modest by God's standards. ( I Tim. 2:9-10) Let us be content to leave them with the liberty which God gave them.

II. *Deut. 23:18.* "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow; for even both of these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God."

From this verse many folks have concluded that it was sinful for a Christian to sell a dog or buy one. However, the passage has no reference to four-legged dogs at all. A vital key to interpreting Old Testament Scripture is the proper understanding of Hebrew parallelism. The Hebrews had a peculiar style of expression whereby they emphasized a thing by repetition. When this is noted in the passage under consideration, the meaning is immediately seen. Verses 17-18 form a unit. It is interpreted thusly:

There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel. . .

Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot into the house of Jehovah . . . for any vow.

Neither shall there be a Sodomite of the sons of Israel.

Thou shalt not bring the wages of a dog into the house of Jehovah. . .for any vow; for even both of these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

Obviously the wages of a dog speaks metaphorically of

the money a male homosexual prostitute would bring if he came to make a vow to Jehovah. This, along with conventional heterosexual prostitution, was abominable to the righteous God. It is no sin to raise and sell dogs if one is otherwise honest in his business.

III. *Gen. 38:1-10*. The story is recorded of one Tamar who was given to Judah's eldest son Er. Er died and according to the ancient custom the next brother was to take the widow and father a child to keep the name of his brother's family alive and that there might be a proper heir for the brother's property. Onan the second brother was ordered to fulfill his duty to his brother's widow by his father. The young man went in unto his brother's wife, but "he spilled it upon the ground lest he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of Jehovah and he slew him also." The misapplication is that Onan masturbated and that was evil and God killed him for it. What truly happened was that he went in unto his brother's wife, i.e., he engaged in the sexual act, but rather than complete the act and cause her to conceive a child in his brother's name, he withdrew and spilled it (the sperm) upon the ground. Thus he refused to honor the law and his duty to his deceased brother and the widowed wife. For that God punished him.

While the act of masturbation may be condemned on the basis of lust or perhaps some other verse, this passage does not do so. While some misused this verse to discourage young men from an unwholesome practice, others have used it to justify cohabiting with harlots.

Let the Bible speak its message and let us strive to properly understand it and fairly apply it to our lives. When we wrest the Scriptures even for a noble cause we endanger our very souls. (II Pet. 3:16.)

## SOME REASONS FOR UNBELIEF AND ANTAGONISM TOWARDS GOD

There are some lost sinners whose hearts only need to be stirred to make the flame of faith come alive. Yet others refuse to recognize God as the Lord of their lives, but are wholly indifferent to the whole subject of faith and religion. But there is a third class of unbelievers who make the supreme object of their lives the propagation of their skepticism. With evangelistic skill and enthusiasm, they seek to inject the contagion of their own unbelief into the veins of everyone they come in contact with. Why are some people so hateful and militant against our Jehovah?

In his classic book on Christian Evidences, *Therefore Stand*, the late Wilbur Smith sets forth a number of reasons for this response of the unbeliever toward God. We will note nine of them.

1. Man fallen away from fellowship with God is biased and prejudiced toward his former friend whom he has wronged. We see this same emotion in human friendships that become alienated and romance that goes sour. It seems difficult for friends to become alienated without a degree of hostility emerging and strangely enough it is usually the offending party who harbors the hostility. The sacred writer makes note of this; for example, Paul reminds the Colossians, "And you being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind and your evil works . . ." (1:21.) Jesus said the world hated him "because I testify of it, that its works are evil." (John 7:7.) David pondered the very point in Ps. 2:1-3, asking, "Why do the nations rage and the people meditate a vain thing? ,

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'" Sinners are hostile to the Lord because his goodness constantly reminds them of their own sin and condemnation.

2. There is a darkness that clouds the mind of men apart from God. Second Corinthians 4:3-4 points out that the gospel is veiled or hidden in them that perish; "In which the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel . . . should not dawn upon them." Satan's influence over the human mind is similar to that of one man who dominates another's thinking and conduct. A good example is the evil Charles Manson who totally lorded over the minds and lives of his young hippy followers. The Gentiles knew God but refused to glorify him and give him thanks for his blessings. They "became vain in their reasonings and their senseless heart was *darkened*." The French commentator Godet points out: "*Reasonings* is always taken by writers of the New Testament in an unfavorable sense; it denotes the unregulated activity of the understanding, in the service of a corrupt heart." Paul writes of sinners who "walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart...." (Eph. 4:17-18.) Again he *speaks of "men corrupted in mind and bereft of truth."* (I Tim. 6:5.)
3. The pride of sinful man makes him militant against God. There lurks in the hearts of sinners a desire to be his own god. Satan's temptation to Eve was "Ye shall be as gods." (Gen. 3:5. See footnote.) So he tempts all men. Jesus asked, "How can ye believe who receive glory one of

another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not." (John 5:44.) When man confesses the holy Christ, he declares himself unholy. When he bows to the independent God, he admits his dependence. It humiliates man's false pride and destroys his self-sufficiency to acknowledge the Sovereign God. Dr. H. F. Osborn writes, "From the period of the early ages of Greek thought, man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature." *The Origin and Evolution of Life*, p. ix. Dr. Jeoffry Brun in his Survey of European Civilization says, "*The new learning offered man a more vainglorious picture of himself, and rooted itself in his pride; whereas his religious beliefs had been the fruit of his humility.*" pp. 9-11. Even today it is common to read of the humanist who is predicting that man is nearing a state of divinity in his evolutionary growth and technical progress. Such thinking is at war with the one God. In all things the mind of sinful man would be its own measure, guide and rule. It exalts its own imaginations which it loves and applauds, dotes on and adheres to. Man's besetting sin is to invent his own moral and spiritual guidelines. (Eccle. 7:29.) This philosophy makes *self* the absolute judge of what is to be believed; what is right and wrong. It rejects an objective supernatural guidance, scorning what does not suit self. Thus where false pride prevails, where it is not put to death by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:13), man will never receive the gospel in an acceptable way. Or if he accepts Christianity in part, he will seek means for negating and rejecting its full demands.

4. Then there is in some a determination to live without God. David says in Ps. 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The thrust of the original text is, "The fool hath said, no God for me." Thus it is the de-

cision and verdict of his heart to reject the very concept of God. It implies that he seeks out arguments to persuade himself that there is no God. Now as always, some humans refuse to have God in their knowledge. (Rom. 1:28). If men are to persist in godlessness, they are compelled to create reasons for their unbelief. It is not that the facts force men to disbelieve. Sinners are determined to reject God because their chosen lifestyle requires a freedom from all restraint.

5. There are educational influences in our modern age that by their very nature create an attitude of skepticism. In most secular colleges and universities there are numbers of professors whose learning has filled them with vanity and arrogance, who dedicate themselves to liberating their students from what they style the "bondage of religious superstition." The student who is subjected to such influences will often succumb. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he shall go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it." However, the reverse of this is also true. Train up a child in unbelief, and when he is old he will be an infidel.
6. The increasing supremacy of natural things to the subordination of the spiritual things contributes to the problem. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the nobler heavenly recognitions. (Lk. 8:14.) Materialistic man does not feel that he needs a transcendent God to aid him. So he scoffs at and ridicules those who do sense their need.
7. The exaltation of science and knowledge tends to turn man away from God. Man is so absorbed in the pursuit of nature's secrets that he is increasingly ignorant of his inner spiritual life and needs. It has always been true that to most sophisticated intellectuals, the Word of the cross

is foolishness. The world in its wisdom has never known God. (I Cor. 1:18, 21, 26.) Worldly wisdom affects the proud man just like alcohol affects the alcoholic. Drunk on his own pride he rejects his own Creator.

8. Sin begets unbelief in wicked hearts. Jesus said, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd." (John 3:20.) When a man does not love the truth but has pleasure in his unrighteousness, he will surely reject the God of truth. (II Thess. 2:12.) Evil men seek to hinder or hold back that truth in their unrighteousness. (Rom. 1:18.) Sinners never wish to look into the mirror of God's Word to discover just how deformed and perverted they truly are.
  
9. Ignorance of the Word of God and of true Christianity contributes to the atheism of the world. When men are ignorant of God's righteousness, they will always seek to establish a righteousness of their own. (Rom. 10:3.) For some this is atheistic humanism i.e., when man exalts himself to the place of God. Since faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), the man who has no knowledge of the Scripture cannot be expected to believe. The appalling ignorance of God's truth that prevails in most hearts is a fertile seed bed for infidelity. Some who are enemies of God have only known perversions of Christianity such as Catholicism, Protestantism or the cults. These they confuse with the Lord's true system and then they reject it all. Such people point to the cruelty and wars of Catholicism as their reason for rejecting Christianity. But true Christianity has never fought a war. If we who follow Christ and his Word alone would show the sinful world the beauties of pure Christianity, then this reason would be neutralized at once.



Ours is a day of militant unbelief. Like a mighty tidal wave it is sweeping across our land and much of the world. Perhaps the knowledge herein shared will better equip us to go forth and fight the good fight of faith. Through our King Jesus, we will be more than conquerors.

## THE MIRACLE AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

When Jesus left for his heavenly throne, he promised his chosen apostles that miraculous signs would accompany them as they went forth preaching his gospel. (Mk. 16:17-20.) One example of that divine assistance is seen in the report of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple in Acts 3:1-26.

### THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

*The lame man.* From Luke's brief record we can piece together the following profile. He was a Jew, a resident of Jerusalem. The fellow was over forty years of age (Acts 4:22) and had been crippled from birth. (3:2.) The author of Acts being a physician carefully describes his condition, i.e., a weakness in his feet and ankle bones. (3:7.) The man was a beggar. Daily he was transported by others to his place by the Temple gate. He was a common sight to all who frequented the Lord's house. In our land today we see no such beggars because of our social welfare programs. Thirty years ago they were an everyday sight in large cities. In the undeveloped nations of the world we still have thousands of such beggars. Socially, this beggar would have been on the bottom rung of the ladder. The upper echelons of Jewish society would have treated him with contempt. He would be fortunate to have gained a few pennies a day.

*Peter and John.* These men were apostles of Christ, specially chosen to take his message to all men. Their Lord had recently been lynched by a howling mob of Jews, instigated by Jerusalem's leaders. All of the apostles' faith had been shaken by the events of his death. (Mk. 16:14.)

Following his resurrection they had been privileged to spend forty days with their Lord rebuilding their shattered conditions. (Acts. 1:3.) Peter had quailed with fear when the violence swirled about Jesus. He even denied knowing the man. (Matt. 26:73-74.) But now he boldly marches into the lair of that lynch mob's leaders. These men not only had a commission from Christ but a promise of his heavenly power to assist them. (Mk. 16:17-18.) On the Pentecost Sunday following his ascension they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1-4.) They were fresh from a signal victory of that day when 3,000 souls had been won for their master.

### THE SETTING

The incident took place at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. This entrance was fitted with magnificent folding doors, fifty feet high by forty feet. They were covered with gold and Corinthian brass. It was also known as the gate of Nicanor. The gate joined the court of the Gentiles with the court of the women on the east. The court of the Gentiles was the largest and busiest court in the temple precinct. There were visitors, spectators, money changers and merchants selling sacrifices.

### DETAILS OF THE MIRACLE

The lame man was an undisputed subject for healing. He was known to all the citizens of Jerusalem. His affliction was genuine having prevailed for more than two decades.(4:22). Anyone could see and verify his condition. The man had no previous connections with the men who brought about his cure. He did not work with or for them. In fact, he did not even know them. He had no inkling of what was going to happen. There is no indication that the patient had "faith" in God to heal him as a prerequisite to receiving the blessing. The faith that brought about the miracle was in the apostles.

(3:16). The man was healed immediately with no time lapse or "stages of recovery." (3:7). He was restored to perfectly sound health. His walking and leaping before hundreds of witnesses proved this. (3:9). No medication, medical assistance or therapy was needed at all. This act of healing was performed publicly and conspicuously. No gift was asked for by those whom God used to heal the poor man. Even the enemy had to concede that a notable miracle had been performed. (4:16.) The gift of healing was not offered to others that day who might have been similarly in need. The purpose of apostolic miracles was not just to remove affliction, rather they were like a bell calling men and women to Bible study. Then, too, it confirmed the apostles' message as being from God. (3:11). One marvels at how totally unlike modern claims of faith healing this true miracle was.

### THE GREAT SERMON PREACHED

Rather than preach on miracles, Peter preached on Christ, the Son of God. (3:13a). He did not encourage people to seek miracles. Instead, he convicted them of their awful sin of rejecting and killing Jesus. (3:13b-15). He painfully reminded them that they had preferred a murderer over their Messiah when even the pagan Pilate had declared his innocence. (3:13-14). Although they had killed the Savior, Peter argued that God had raised him from the dead and that the apostles were eye-witnesses of it. (3:15b). It was the power of this resurrected Christ that had healed the cripple. (3:16). He then called upon the audience to submit to Jesus. (3:17-26.) Their ignorance mitigated but did not excuse their deed. (3:17). To be forgiven they must repent and turn again to God. (3:19). In his brief record, Luke does not stop to explain this command. But it is obviously the same as Peter's earlier command on Pentecost, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . ." (2:38.) He promised that "seasons of refreshing" would

come from the Lord which is parallel to being “baptized for remission of your sins,” and receiving “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in 2:38. Obedience to Christ is essential, he said, even as Moses taught.(3:22).

## THE RESPONSE TO THE SERMON

Many who heard that day believed and followed Christ. (4:4). The number of male disciples then numbered about 5,000. Likely women and children were in addition to this number. The temple authorities, being Sadducees, were angered at their talk of resurrection.(4:1-2; compare 23:8). They had the apostles arrested and thrown in jail.(4:3.)

## VALUABLE LESSONS TO REMEMBER

A flood of valuable lessons can be drawn from our study.

The beggar asked for a small gift and received an undreamed of blessing. So God still blesses His children.

Peter was not ashamed to say, “silver and gold have I none.” Nor should we. Scriptural things are more valuable to the poor than purely material goods.

There is room in the Lord’s kingdom for the poor. The question is, is there room in our congregations and personal lives?

Think how much good we can do for humanity and the Lord, even though we have no silver and gold.

Notice how vast a difference exists between the apostolic miracles of healing and those of present day faith healers.

Crimes of sin and ignorance are no less sins that must be

accounted for to God. When we learn of our sins, we also must repent and turn.

We are reminded of the true purpose of miracles: to attract the attention of the lost and to verify and confirm the apostle's word.

Like the Jews, we must harken unto Christ in all things or fall under God's judgment.

We see in this the angry response of hardened sinners to the gospel. Their modern counterparts are yet with us.

See how the church grows, even in the face of persecution, when the gospel is faithfully preached.

## WE MUST RESPECT THE "LAW OF SILENCE"

Total respect for God's Word demands more than many are willing to give. We must study, perceive and accept the authority of God's silence. He does not have to say "thou shalt not" in order to prohibit a thing. Failure to recognize or accept this principle has been one of the fundamental underlying causes of our religious differences. Some of those who went before us recognized the importance of this principle.

"It is evident that whatever God has not commanded, he does not want observed nor does He want to be served therewith, nor will He have His Word set aside nor made to suit the pleasure of men." This was written by Dirk Phillips in the 16th century in his book *Vindication*, quoted by J. D. Murch, *Christians Only*, p. 15.

That there is such a principle is clearly stated in I Cor. 4:6 where Paul writes that "ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." We see it applied in at least three instances:

1. In Acts 15:1 we read of certain brethren who taught circumcision as a Christian doctrine and insisted on its observance. The apostles and elders wrote the brethren concerning this practice, "We have heard that certain (men) who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; *to whom we gave no commandment.*" Acts 15:24. They proceeded to repudiate the actions of these certain men. Even though circumcision had been commanded under the Old Covenant, it could not be bound upon the church since no commandment concerning it had been

given.

2. In establishing the superiority of Christ over angels, the Hebrews author writes, "having become much better than the angels, he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For *unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son. . .*" 1:4-5. The very fact that *God had not said* to one of the angels these words which He spoke of the son is proof of their inferiority to Christ.

3. While explaining the need for the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, the writer says, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah: *as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests.*" (Heb. 7:12-14.)

If we do not respect the sacred silence of God's word, then no one can object to infant baptism or sprinkling, counting beads, burning of incense and a thousand other things that God did not specifically forbid, being introduced into the faith and worship of the church. The concept that "I can do anything God does not forbid" in Christian worship lets in an avalanche that few are ready to accept. See also Lev. 10:1-3 where Nadab and Abihu violated this law by offering strange fire. God had not *specifically* forbidden the use of their fire by a positive command. However, it was forbidden since He had specified that they were to use the fire from the perpetual fire on the great altar before the tabernacle for incense.

It is the silence of the New Testament on instrumental music that leads us to reject instrumental music and other like additions to our faith and worship. J. D. Murch comments on this theme: "Within the last generation the



Church of Christ has made a phenomenal growth. This is due to two things: (1) Its people have stood like a Rock of Gibraltar for 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,' amid the doubt and confusion superinduced by liberalism. They have challenged the spirit of compromise and worldliness and dared to be a 'peculiar' people teaching and practicing what they believe is the Bible way of life. (2) *They have come to realize that the silence of the Scriptures must be respected* as well as the commandments of Scripture, but that obedience to its silences permits freedom of judgment and action," *ibid.* p. 313.

Sadly, few Christians understand the "silence of the Scriptures" today. Every leader and teacher should familiarize himself with this that his own faith might be strong, and that he might also teach others. When a generation grows up that does not know this principle of truth, they may well reason like Martin Luther, "I can do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid." Woe to the church when that day comes.

## GOD AND THE NATIONS

Our God not only created the universe, he rules it to this day. Haughty King Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." (Dan. 4:25.) Much wild speculation about modern nations and prophecy is seen in religious literature and broadcasting today. Virtually all of it is false and misleading. God does not specifically prophesy of Russia, China, the United States, or any other modern nation, but certain principles of how God deals with nations in every age are set forth in Scripture.

I. Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. (Prov. 14:34.) In every age those nations that were basically righteous have prospered under God's providential care. Conversely those societies that chose to ignore moral and spiritual standards of the Creator have languished and not a few have died.

II. God chastens nations that are rebellious towards him in order to recover them. Assyria was the rod of God's anger and the staff of his indignation which he sent against a profane nation of Judah. (Is. 10:5-12.) Joel interpreted the locust plague and the drought which struck his land as "a day of Jehovah." (1:15-20.) Later he urged the people to repent that God might lift his sore judgments from their land. (2:12-20.) The economic depression which stalked post-exile Judah was said to be because they had neglected God's house while selfishly pursuing their own interest. (Hag. 1:3-10.)

III. God has no "chosen nation" in the world today. "In

every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34-35.) Contrary to the idea that the Jewish people are yet God’s favored people, Paul affirms, “There is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him.” (Rom. 10:12.) God has “cast away” Israel as a political nation yet he is anxious to save every Jew who will accept Christ as Lord. (Rom. 11:15, 20, 23.) God’s kingdom today is the spiritual kingdom of Christ which transcends all national boundaries and racial groupings. The church is a kingdom not of this world. (John 18:36.)

IV. Nations can become so wicked as to fill the cup of iniquity and ultimately be destroyed. God could not deliver the land of Canaan to faithful Abraham during his life because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. (Gen. 15 17.) The Hebrews had to wait some 400 years before a just God could eject the Amorites and give their land to Abraham’s heirs. (Gen. 15: 16.) When Moses led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, God warned, “Defile not ye yourself in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; and the land is defiled, therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants.” (Lev. 18:24-25.) So wicked were they that the sovereign Creator ordered them to be exterminated with no mercy. (Josh. 6:17.) At a later date the Amalekites reached that same depth of moral degradation and they too were consigned to annihilation. (I Sam. 15:1-4, 18.)

V. A righteous remnant will preserve a nation from destruction. When Sodom and Gomorrah had become vile in their sexual corruption, God commissioned three heavenly messengers to investigate the condition. In conversation with Abraham, one of these agreed that if ten righteous souls were found, God would spare the whole. Jesus described his disciples as “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth.”

(Matt. 4 13-16.) So long as there is a reasonable segment of society left to honor God, to work for improvement, God will be tolerant in withholding judgment. But woe to that land whose righteous remnant vanishes. The nation's funeral is not far off.

VI. God wants all men of all nations to be saved and become citizens in his spiritual kingdom. Peter reminds us that God is not willing for any to perish but wishes all to come to repentance. (II Pet. 3:9)

VII. Our task as Christians is to be busy fulfilling the Lord's commission by taking the gospel invitation to every man and woman on planet Earth. (Matt. 28:19-20.) Christ promises to open doors for us which no man can close. (Rev. 3:8.) No nation can successfully keep the leaven of Christ out, when God's people commit themselves to his holy cause.

VIII. All the kingdoms of this earth will pass away at that day appointed by Jehovah when he sends his illustrious Son back to consummate all things. The day and hour is unknown to mortal man. (Matt. 24:42.) Therefore we must always be ready for the event. (Matt. 24:44.) The Earth and the works therein shall be burned up (II Pet. 3:10) and the inhabitants of all the ages will be gathered before the judgment throne of Christ. (Matt. 25:31, 32.)

Let all of the King's children remember that their citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20.) May we always view our life here as strangers and pilgrims who look for a better country at home with the Father. (Heb. 11:13-16.) Daily we should strive to be the light of the world holding forth the word of life to a lost and dying world. (Phil. 2:15-16.) And though the kingdoms of earth may pass one by one, our great kingdom will never be shaken. (Heb. 12:28.) It shall stand forever. (Dan. 2:44.)

## IS GOD JUST?

The question is often raised, how can God be just and yet let the ignorant soul be lost who has never heard the gospel? Because many are asking the question, an answer is demanded. The nature of the question demands a Biblical answer. The consequences of the issue are universal and eternal, therefore Christians must find the proper answer and boldly proclaim it to all who ask.

## ARE THE IGNORANT HEATHEN SINNERS?

Paul's verdict on the whole human race is declared in Romans 3. "They are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one; . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Vss. 9-10; 23.) To the Gentile Ephesian Christians Paul writes, "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world . . . among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest . . ." (Eph. 2:1-3.) Before the gospel came to the Ephesians they were in exactly the same condition as the heathen in China today who have not heard the gospel. Thus they are *dead* spiritually because of their sins, they are children of wrath. In Eph. 2:12, he continues by stating that when a Gentile is separated from Christ *he has no hope* since he is without God. Only in Jesus can he be reconciled. Now if the primitive man, separated from Christ has no hope, what is his expectation in judgment?

Then there is Jesus' great commission, "Go ye into all

the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. ” (Mk. 16:15-16.) Question: Is the ignorant heathen included in the category “the whole creation?” If yes, and if he can be saved in his ignorance, why does he need the gospel? To argue that the primitive man is in a safe condition makes the commission of Jesus foolish. You cannot save a saved man. A man must be lost before he can be saved. You cannot save a man from freezing who lives in equatorial Africa, nor can you save a man from sin if he is safe in his condition. All creatures need the gospel to be saved because all men are lost. We have established that all men are sinners; I ask you, are they lost sinners?

### WHY ARE THEY LOST?

We noted above that all men are sinners and therefore lost. Now we will probe a little deeper as to their problem. Sin separates the sinner from God. (Is. 59:1-2.) Sin always brings a consequence. The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23.) Someone asks, but how can they sin without a Bible or knowledge of God’s will? First, consider the practice of idolatry, a practice that is virtually universal outside the few western nations. Paul reasons that “That which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; *that they may be without excuse*: because that knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings.. . . and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man. . . .” (Rom 1:19-23.) Notice that idolatry is without excuse! It was so before Christ came, it is so today. The creation itself demands a supernatural God who is greater than man himself. No image made by man’s hands can

suffice! Thus all who engage in idolatry sin against Jehovah.

But how can they sin without the Bible, you ask? Again, we call the apostle to testify. "For when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." (Rom. 2:14-15.) Although they have no written law, yet they do have law, the law of the conscience written on their hearts. This sense of moral responsibility is universal. There is in every rational man a sense of ought and ought not. Every society has its code of moral law. No man can escape his amenity to such law. When he keeps that law his conscience approves of his conduct, when he breaks it his conscience accuses him. Even for the Christian, Paul says, "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:22-23.) When the heathen does what he knows to be wrong he has sinned. When he fails to live up to his known moral duties he likewise sins. (Jas. 4:17.)

In addition to the above there was a point in time when the knowledge of the true God and his righteous ways was revealed to the human family. These revelations from the Patriarchal Age were to be passed down from father to son even as righteous Abraham did. (Gen. 18:19.) Paul points out that those Gentiles "refused to have God in their knowledge!" (Rom. 1:28.) Because of the vanity of their thinking and the darkness of their hearts they refused to glorify Jehovah or give thanks unto him. They preferred gods of their own creation, gods like unto themselves. Because of *this* God gave them up unto a reprobate mind. But their sin of rebellion and rejection had awful consequence unto their

children for generations to come. Perhaps this helps us to see the significance of God's warning in Deut. 5:9. After proscribing idolatry he says, "For I Jehovah thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children, and upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Having proven that the heathen are sinners, I ask what are the consequences of it? "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.) "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you. . ." (Is. 59:2.) They are *lost* because they are sinners.

### BUT IT SEEMS UNJUST

To some people, for God to allow the ignorant heathen to be lost seems very unjust. But we have established that they are lost because of their own personal sin. God cannot be blamed for their condition. The real question is, can God be just and save a sinner without the sinner's obedience to the gospel? A vital theme of the gospel is that sin demands punishment. Since all men are sinners, all deserve punishment. But God so loved the race of man that he let his own Son die in their stead so that he could be just and still justify him that had faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:26.) If God elects to save some without faith in the Son, would this not be partiality since he demands it of others? Would it not be unfair to the Son who was made to die so all who believed in him could be saved, if God decided to let some unbelievers be saved? Our God is just. (Is. 45:21.) He always does that which is right in judging men. (Gen. 18:25.)

God is just because he has made provisions to save all men. He is not willing that any perish. (II Pet. 3:9.) He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezek. 18:23.) He gave his only son to save all sinners who would believe on



him. (John. 3:16.) He gave the church to be as a beacon light to all men in darkness. (Phil. 2:15.) He gave the gospel which is the power to save all men. (Rom. 1:16.) He laid upon every Christian the duty of preaching that gospel to every creature. (Matt. 28:19-20.) God has promised, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching . . . ." (John 7:17.) We Christians may be unjust because we have not dedicated ourselves to the great task of evangelizing the world, but our God is *just*. Let no man raise the question about God's integrity in dealing with sinners!

A point often overlooked in this issue is that though the Scriptures teach that even ignorant heathen sinners will be lost if they obey not the gospel (II Thess. 1:7-9), they also teach that punishment will be suited 'to the guilt of the sinner. Jesus said, "That servant, who knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, or did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes." (Lk. 12:47-48.) This indicates that both the disobedient, enlightened American with the gospel message all about him and the ignorant pagan who never saw a Bible will both be lost. However, the former shall be more severely punished for he sinned against greater light and opportunity. This is justice!

### SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS

This theory that the disadvantaged heathen can somehow be saved carries with it many serious implications. It implies Christ's death was unnecessary. For if today's heathen can be saved without the gospel, why could not the entire Gentile world of the first century have been similarly saved? If God could be just and excuse one, why could he not likewise excuse all? Then the Son could have been spared Calvary.

If the theory is correct, then there is great value in being

an ignorant pagan with no knowledge of Jesus and the Bible, since you can be saved in that situation. That being true, it would be very cruel and unjust for Christians to take the gospel to them, since the knowledge it brought would damn their souls if not obeyed. That would place the missionary in the awkward role of being responsible for the damnation of every soul who heard his gospel message and did not obey it. Again, if ignorance will justify, then Bible translation is more deadly than smallpox. It will cause millions to become guilty of sin if they do not accept it.

If the heathen are saved, then the Word of God is wrong in all those places where it teaches they are lost. Then Jesus was mistaken in saying that all creatures needed saving since this implies that all creatures are lost. (Mk. 16:15-16.) Really, rather than vindicating God the theory casts a reflection over His integrity as we discussed above.

## CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of this belief are devastating in many areas. It destroys all the motivation and urging for world evangelism. If the heathen can be saved in their ignorance, why bother with going to them. Why endure the discomforts and problems of living in strange, hostile environments and societies, if they can be saved anyway. Why sacrifice time and money that could be spent at home if the lost are not really lost.

Why should we be concerned with Bible translations. The great amount of time, energy and money taken to produce and then circulate the Bible is totally unnecessary if the heathen can be saved without it.

This belief when held regarding the heathen, tends to grow on a man's mind. Soon he can rationalize how God can

also save the sincere but uninformed Catholic or Protestant who lives next door. The last stop is a form of universalism like is seen in modern Protestantism.

In reality Satan is the author of this theory because if he can get the church to buy it, then evangelism will cease, the heathen will be left to die in their sins and be forever lost with the evil one.

Why is this strange notion so popular among modern Christians? I suspect that it is an attempt to rationalize and justify their failure to evangelize the world. If they are too busy or selfish to do this task, and the poor heathen are lost, then they are guilty of criminal negligence. But if it could be believed that really the heathen will be saved anyway, what difference does it make after all? "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, enjoy our good life of ease and our good God will fix everything up." Do not believe it, brethren. All sinners are lost and only the gospel can save them. Christians also will be lost who fail to do their part to evangelize the nations!

## THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

One of the most fascinating and interesting personalities of the entire Bible is the angel of Jehovah. Perhaps no other Bible character is so little known or understood as he. Who is this angel of Jehovah? The answer to that question will be the object of our study.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGELS

To properly understand about the angel, we need to review the characteristics of angels in general. Angels are created beings. They were made through Christ in ancient times. (Col. 1:16-17.) Being creatures, angels are not divine in nature. They are not omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent. Angels are holy, but they are capable of sinning. (II Pet. 2:4.) Their very name indicates that they are messengers of God. Man is never allowed to worship angels, since only God may be worshipped. (Rev. 22:8-9.)

### ACTIVITIES OF THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

In the Old Testament we find at least 23 separate references to his work for God's people. In Gen. 16:7-14 the angel of Jehovah appears to Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarah as she wandered in the wilderness. He promised her a son and a large posterity. "And she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth. . . ."

In Gen., 18:1-2, Jehovah appeared unto Abraham at Mamre. "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him. . . ." He fed his three guests a meal. One of them promised that Sarah would bear a son within a

year. (18:10.) When Sarah laughed at the idea he claimed that nothing was too hard for Jehovah. (18:14.) He told Abraham that he was come down to investigate the situation at Sodom. Abraham perceived that he was the judge of all the earth. (18:25.) After Abraham had secured a promise from the man concerning Sodom, "Jehovah went away." (18:33.) Then we read that he (Jehovah) rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah "brimstone and fire. . . ." (19:24.) Notice that while he appeared to be an ordinary man in reality it was Jehovah that visited Abraham that day.

Genesis 22:9-18 records the story of Abraham offering Isaac. Just as the patriarch lifted his hand to plunge the sacrificial knife into his only son, "The angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven." When Abraham saw the ram which had been provided, he called the place Jehovah-jireh. (22:14.) And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time. . . . and said, "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah. . . ." (22:16.) He then renewed the covenant promise of the Messiah.

Genesis 28:10-17 tells of Jacob's dream at Bethel. He saw a ladder set up on earth and the top of it reached to heaven, "and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold Jehovah stood above it. . . ." (Footnote says that Jehovah stood beside him.) Moses tells us in Gen. 31:11-13 that it was the angel of Jehovah that was "the God of Bethel" which Jacob saw. When Jacob was returning to his homeland he wrestled with a man throughout the night. The man said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel for thou hast striven with God. . . . And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel for said he, I have seen God face to face . . . ." (Gen. 32:22-30.) Hosea later wrote of Jacob, "In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he had power with God, yea, he had power over the angel. . . even

Jehovah, the God of hosts. . . ." (Hos. 12:3-5.)

On his death bed, Jacob blest his sons by the name of God, the angel who had redeemed him from all evil. (Gen. 48:15-16.)

When Moses saw the burning bush, "The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. . . and when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush. . . and he said, draw not nigh hither: but put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." When asked by Moses what was his name, he was told that it was "I AM THAT I AM" who spake with him. (Ex. 3:2-14.)

It was "the angel of God who went before the camp of Israel" when they made their exodus from Egypt. (Ex. 14:19-20.) Yet in Chapter 13:21 of the same book we are told that it was Jehovah who went before them in the pillar of cloud and fire.

Concerning his angel, Jehovah warned Israel, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him." (Ex. 23:20-23.) Note that they had to obey the angel and that he could forgive their sins.

At the episode of the golden calf God withdrew this special angel and only promised to send an ordinary angel. This so frightened and distressed Moses and the people that Moses fervently interceded for God to reconsider. Upon their repentance God did decide to send his angel to once again lead them. (Ex. 33:1-3, 12-16.) Isaiah comments

that this was “the angel of his presence” that guided and protected them. (63:9) The expression literally means angel of his *face*.

As Joshua prepared to march on Jericho “he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.” When asked, the man replied that he was “prince of the hosts of Jehovah . . . and Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship . . . and the prince of Jehovah’s host said unto Joshua, put off thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.” (Jos. 5:13-15.) Continuing the narrative in 6:2 we read that “Jehovah said unto Joshua.” So this man whom Joshua worshipped was in reality Jehovah.

Three times the book of Judges records appearances of this notable angel. He appeared to the nation at Bochim to reprove them for their disobedience. (2:1-5.) He appeared to Gideon to commission him to save Israel from Midian. Here again the angel is called Jehovah. (6 : 11-14.) In Judges thirteen he appeared to Manoah and his wife and promised them a son. . . Samson. When Manoah offered him food to eat the angel ordered him to “offer it unto Jehovah” as a sacrifice. (13:16.) “Manoah knew not that he was the angel of Jehovah. And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, What is thy name, that, when thy words come to pass, we may do thee honor? And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore asketh thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?” (13:16-18.) When the burnt offering was made “the angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame of the altar.” (13:20.)

In II Kings 19:33-36, Jehovah promised to save Jerusalem and king Hezekiah from the armies of Sennecherib, king of Assyria. “The angel of Jehovah went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand . . . .”

When David sinned by taking a military census of his nation, God sent a pestilence upon the nation by his angel. "And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of Jehovah standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem." David and the elders fell upon their faces and prayed. (I Chron. 21:9-30.)

Daniel saw the angel of Jehovah in 533 B.C. while an exile in Babylon. He was "a man, clothed in linen whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz; his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." Daniel felt totally undone in his august presence. He had come to reveal the future of the nation to Daniel. (10:5-14.)

#### A SUMMARY OF FACTS ABOUT THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

We have seen that passages that began with the angel as their subject commonly shift the names to "Jehovah, God or Lord" as in Ex. 3:2-6. The angel claims God's power and authority. He forgives sins. (Ex. 23:4.) But this only God can do. (Mk. 25:10.) He revealed the future. (Dan. 9:14.) He had the power to judge, to save or destroy. (I Chron. 21:14-15.) God's people are allowed to worship the angel. But we are strictly forbidden to worship an ordinary angel. (Rev. 22:8-9.)

#### WHO THEN IS THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH?

He is certainly not a created being. He is not a man although he often appeared as a man. He is not simply a created angel. Nor is he God the father, for John tells us



that no man hath seen God at any time. (John 1:18.) Remember that the angel directed Manoah to worship another than himself. (Judges 13:15-16.)

The following observations will establish that this mighty angel was no less than the Word of God, the pre-incarnate Christ. The angel of Jehovah told Moses that his name was "I AM THAT I AM." Jesus claimed that he was I AM. (John 8:58.)

The angel led Israel through the wilderness and provided their needs. (Ex. 14:19-20.) Moses reported that Jehovah directed Moses to smite the rock that the people might drink in the desert. But Paul tells us that the rock they drank of was Christ. (I. Cor. 10:2-4.)

In Joshua, the angel is the prince or leader of Jehovah's host or army. (5:14.) In Revelation 19 we see the army of heaven and its notable leader. Then John sees his name which is "The Word of God." (19:11-16.) In his gospel John identifies the Word of God as the only begotten of the father who became flesh. (John 1:1-3, 14.)

The angel told Manoah that his name was *wonderful*. (Judges 13:16-18.) Isaiah in his famous prophecy of Messiah said, "His name shall be called Wonderful. . . ." (9:6.)

Isaiah calls him "The angel of God's presence," which means "of his face." (63:9.) The Hebrew writer says Christ is "the very image of his (God's) substance." (1:3.) Edward Young says, "The angel of His face is the angel who is His face or in whom His face is made clear. In him the Lord is Himself present." (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3, p. 482.)

Jacob saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending and Jehovah standing be-

side it (foot note). (Gen. 28:13.) Jesus declares himself to be that ladder. (John 1:51.)

The angel of Jehovah can be worshipped. (Josh. 5:13-15.) No mere man or created angel can be worshipped acceptably. (Acts 10:25, 26; Rev. 22:8-9.) But Jesus commonly accepted the worship of men. (Matt. 28:17.)

The angel is repeatedly called Jehovah. But Jesus is also called Jehovah. Is. 43:11 affirms that there is no savior but Jehovah. But Paul in Tit. 2:13 describes Jesus as our great God and savior. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah. We do not affirm that Jesus is the Father. We simply recognize the fact that inspired writers ascribe the descriptive noun Jehovah to all three of the sacred Godhead. The word "Jehovah" describes a person who is eternal and self-existent. This is true of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Daniel saw the angel in his regal glory in 10:5-6. John the apostle saw the same glorious being on Patmos. He saw "one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace, and his voice as the voice of many waters. . .and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." It was the Son of God who had been crucified but resurrected. (Rev. 1:12-18.)

These appearances of the angel of Jehovah in ancient times are called theophanies, i.e., when God assumes the form of an angel or a man in order to speak and act visibly and audibly to men, to provide them some revelation or guidance.

These many references demonstrate that our Lord existed from eternity with the Father, just as John affirmed in his biography. (John 1:1-3.) They tell us of the Savior's activities in behalf of the redeemed during those long years before he came as Jesus the Son of Mary when mankind groped in darkness for a guiding hand.

In the light of these scriptures let us honor and adore the Messiah who blessed man in ancient times as the mighty angel of Jehovah and now as Jesus of Nazareth.

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Great confusion prevails about the Holy Spirit of God and His work. Only the Bible can tell us the truth about this important subject and correct our thinking about it.

### I. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit.

The world is misled by the word "ghost." It conjures up strange and exciting concepts of spooks and souls of dead men, for that is the connotation we give the word today. In 1611 A.D. when our King James translation was published the word "ghost" had quite a different meaning. It was a synonym for the word *guest*. Since the Christian's body is said to be "a temple of God's spirit," they reasoned that when He came into the saved person's life He was a Holy Guest or Holy Ghost. (I Cor. 6:19.) The translators used the terms "Ghost" and "Spirit" interchangeably in Acts 2:4: ". . .they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

### II. The Holy Spirit is a Person.

Masculine pronouns are used to refer to the Spirit. "He will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:13.) The Spirit functions as a person. "He shall teach you." (John 15:26.) "The Spirit suffered them not." (Acts 16:7.) These and numerous other similar examples are all suggestive of an intelligent personality with volition.

### III. The Spirit is a Member of the Godhead along with the Father and the Son.

The well known baptismal charge says, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19.) Paul closed his Corinthian correspondence with this beautiful benediction. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (II Cor. 13:14.) Peter uses the term "God" to refer to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:3-4. We hurriedly emphasize that the Spirit is not the Father nor the Son. Rather, He is a separate divine personality who shares Godhood with them. We commonly use the term "trinity" to describe these sacred three.

#### IV. There have been Four Measures of the Spirit.

The powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit have been given in four distinct measures. John tells us that Jesus received the Spirit *without measure*. (John 3:34.) Thus the Lord had an unlimited degree of the Spirit's power at His disposal. We hear him claiming "all power" in Matt. 28:18. No individual ever did all the miracles Christ did, nor has any had such authority to speak and act.

The apostles had the *baptismal measure*. Jesus promised them they would "be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence," following his ascension. (Acts 1:5.) He further said that they would receive power or authority when the Spirit came upon them. (Acts 1:8.) This would prepare them to lead and guide the infant church. They could work notable miracles such as healing the lame (Acts 3:6-7) and raising the dead. (Acts 9:40.) They could preach the gospel in "tongues" or languages they had never studied. (Acts 2:4, 6, 11.) They could pass these miraculous gifts on to others by the laying on of their hands. (Acts 8:14-17.) They were inspired to write the scriptures to guide the churches. (John 16:13.)

There are only two instances of Holy Spirit baptism recorded. The apostles received it. (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4.) The family of Cornelius, the first Gentile converts likewise were baptized in the Spirit. (Acts 10:44; 11:15-17.) It empowered the apostles for their strategic mission of establishing the fledgling church and revealing the New Covenant. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise, not a command. (Acts 1:5.) It was administered by Christ. (Matt. 3:11.) Christ commands his disciples to administer water baptism. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 10:47-48.) Today there is but one baptism (Eph. 4:4-5) and that is immersion in water. (Col. 2:12.) If we had both Holy Spirit and water baptism there would obviously be two baptisms and Paul's declaration would be wrong!

There was a *laying on of hands* measure of the Holy Spirit as illustrated by the events in Samaria recorded in Acts 8:14-17. The apostles had laid their hands on Philip, a deacon and evangelist. (Acts 6:5-6.) This enabled Philip to perform miraculous signs to confirm the message he preached. (Acts 8:6-7.) However, Philip could not transfer his miraculous power to those he taught and baptized in water. (Acts 8:14-16.) It was necessary that an apostle lay his hands upon a man before he could receive the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. (Acts. 8:17.) Since no apostle lives today, no one can receive miraculous gifts today.

There is an *ordinary measure* of the Holy Spirit whereby the Spirit dwells in the Christian in a *non-miraculous way*. Peter promised two things to those Jews who would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus: 1) remission of sins, and 2) the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38.) He again said that the Spirit is given to all who obey God. (Acts 5:32.) Paul reminds us that God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. . . ." (Gal. 4:6.) Our bodies are said to be "the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you." (I

Cor. 6:19.) Some eighteen times the inspired writers speak of the Spirit's indwelling the Christian. Many, however, have a difficult time accepting this teaching. If God had wanted to convey to Christians that His Holy Spirit would actually dwell within them, how might He have made it clearer than He has?

What are the benefits of God's Spirit dwelling in our lives if there are no miraculous gifts? There are many blessings which flow to the Christian from this gift. We are "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man." (Eph. 3:16.) The Spirit helps us to mortify or to put to death the deeds of the sinful flesh. (Rom. 8:13.) He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. (Rom. 5:5.) According to John 14:16 the Spirit comforts the saints. Paul argues in Rom. 8:26 that the Spirit helps our infirmities and makes intercession for weak Christians. Through the Holy Spirit we are enabled to bear the fruit of the Spirit in our Christian life. (Gal. 5:22.) In all of these wonderful blessings received by the child of God there is no promise of any miraculous gift like "tongues" or healing. Rather, these are spiritual blessings of a non-miraculous nature.

Let all of God's children love, worship and adore the triune God. May we learn of and appreciate the many good things which God the Holy Spirit does for us. Let us fill our hearts with the truth of God which will keep us from all the extremes and errors of Pentecostalism and other false teachings about the Holy Spirit. Let us educate our brethren as to the blessings made available to us in Christ and let the truth of the matter overwhelm every false doctrine.

## NO PLACE TO HIDE

Isaiah describes a man trying but unable to hide himself from the Assyrian invaders in Israel. The bed was too short and the cover was too narrow for him to hide himself upon. (Is. 28:20.) I see a similar scene in America today among many Christians.

The church is like a small band of pilgrims in a hostile wilderness with swarms of enemy armies pressing the attack on every side. (Rev. 20:8-9.) The problem is the average Christian, preacher and elder is trying desperately to convince himself that no serious problem exists.

Some have quit subscribing to papers and magazines and sold their televisions to avoid the unpleasant news of current events. Other have carefully built a shield around their lives to screen out all evil and the very mention of such. Families keep moving further into the countryside away from the wicked city to escape pressures of moral corruption.

But out where the real world and 99% of the people live, evil men are waxing worse and worse. (II Tim. 3:13.) Those who hold the false philosophies of humanism, evolution and hedonism and other similar views are boldly and militantly attacking Christianity and its value system from every side.

Most public schools have been captured by these hellish forces. Higher education is generally brazen in its anti-Christian program of attack.

The TV and movie industry is almost wholly controlled and used by these evil attitudes. The news media prints



glowing reports of their conquests and shames and ridicules those who dare oppose them.

Most of the mainline Protestant churches have been successfully infiltrated and captured with hardly a struggle. The few remaining ones are under open siege. Denominational preachers and theologians such as Joseph Fletcher are among the chief spokesmen for skepticism, immorality and every ungodly moral evil.

Our children are being seduced and corrupted by these heathen forces before our very eyes. Our churches are feeling the same pressures in their own memberships. Our moral and spiritual standards are being eroded as pressures mount to conform to modern society.

Brethren, one can only hide from a belligerent enemy so long, one can run from the bully just so far. Sooner or later there comes the time when there is no place to run or hide. Inevitably we will be forced to stop, turn and do battle. The question is, should we wait until every outpost has fallen and the final fortress is surrounded and under attack? Or, should we now, while we yet have a little strength and influence in our society, unsheath the sword and make our stand for God, Christianity, marriage, the family, and morality?

The question in many minds seems to be, is it right for Christians to do something other than go to worship, be morally good and to evangelize? The Scriptures authorize us to fight against sins and ungodliness and to defend the cause of God against the devil and his angels.

1. We are to fight the good fight of faith. (I Tim. 6:12.)
2. Our weapons are spiritual, not carnal; we fight against

every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God. (II Cor. 10:3-5.)

3. We are commanded to stand and fight against the world rulers of this darkness with the weapons and armor of the Lord. (Eph. 6:10-17.)
4. We are to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness. (Eph. 5:11.) Our fight must be more than a wringing of the hands and bemoaning what the world is coming to. It must be more than an occasional sermon on such issues. An emotional outburst in the church bulletin or a brotherhood journal will not suffice. We must put our words into action. Sermons without follow-up positive action are just like faith without works—lifeless, dead and useless.

The “ain’t it awful society” never accomplished anything! (That is, those good people who shake their head, wring their hands and say “ain’t it awful” and go home and sit down to watch TV.) We must do more than just pray. Two small boys played around and were late getting started to school. Having a stern teacher one suggested that they should stop and pray. The other countered, “Let us pray as we run.” Prayers are answered as God aids and rewards our human efforts for his holy name.

### BRETHREN, WHAT MUST WE DO?

Perhaps your heart is pricked and you want to join the battle to save our children, homes, church and nation.

1. Inform yourself. Blind zeal is seldom productive and often destructive. (Rom. 10:3.)
2. Join hands with others who have launched a Christian

counterattack.

- A. Right to Life groups are functioning across the land in every state. They fight abortion and euthanasia (the selective medical killing of the weak and unwanted.)
- B. Citizens for Decency groups are found in many cities. They seek to rid communities of pornography, smut shops and filthy movies.
- C. Stop ERA groups such as Women Who Want to Be Women, Eagle Forum and others who are actively opposing the proposed Equal Rights Amendment and the women's liberation movement.

Nearly every community is plagued with the common evils of liquor, beer, gambling, and prostitution, i.e., "massage parlors." These must be driven out. Our public schools have largely been lost but there is still hope in some areas. You must get involved to have a positive influence. P.T.A.s must feel our influence. Christians need to be active participating members of these and similar groups.

We need elders who will recognize this need and bring in qualified Christian leaders to educate and inform their congregations in these areas. We need preachers and elders to stand up publicly and lead the members into affirmative action.

We need boldness to go to City Council and make our demands known. We must get over the shrinking timidity so common among us in these areas. We must go to the press and visual media and ask to be heard. We need to be strong, determined and stubborn in our resistance to the damning social and moral evils.

We must be willing to run the risk of being ridiculed, misrepresented and even slandered and attacked by the opposition who cherish their evil privileges and desperately wish to preserve them. This definitely is not the route of comfortable discipleship.

We must be intelligent and Biblical in our opposition. The ignorant rantings of the backwoods preacher gain nothing but derision. Leaders, however, will listen when we speak calmly, rationally and factually. Truth is still the best weapon in our arsenal. (John 8:32.)

We must be willing to invest our funds in this fight. Only when we are willing to spend and be spent will we win the battle in our arena. (II Cor. 12:15.) Our founding fathers declared their willingness to risk their lives, liberty and fortunes when they declared our independence from Great Britain. Nothing less could have brought about the victory. It is extremely costly to wage a successful war against entrenched evil.

We need strong backing from fellow Christians for those who are out front in the thick of the battle. Many preachers are hesitant to boldly step out in such fights for fear of losing the support of their congregations and ultimately their jobs. This ought not so to be.

We must not only be against things bad but we must be for things wholesome and good. It is never healthy to be always "against" something.

We will have to be willing to work with other groups in our community in addition to churches of Christ. Alone we do not have enough numbers or clout to make our voice heard. Without compromising in doctrinal or spiritual matters we can cooperate with civic groups and patriotic

groups, as well as religious groups who share our concern for basic public morality.

Does it not concern you that in most cases the public battle against evil has been and is being fought by leaders of the denominational world? Is God's army not willing or able to enter the fray in the name of Jehovah? Can we really complain about how bad the world has become if we have never lifted a hand to drive the devil out? May we who have volunteered for Messiah's army now step forward with eager hearts to volunteer ourselves to be the front line assault troops to take the battle into Satan's domain and drive his alien armies forever out of our land.

## FIGHTING MORAL EVILS

As an active worker in the pro-life battle against abortion, I am sometimes asked by fellow Christians to explain why I involve myself in this and similar matters.

For nineteen years I taught classes and preached forceful sermons against sin and wickedness to my Christian brethren along with other Biblical themes each Lord's Day. The brethren generally were not guilty of such foul deeds. The teaching reinforced their convictions. The young did need to be taught principles of righteousness before they fell into sin. But the sinners who really needed the lessons were not there. The worship assembly of the saints was the last place they would be found. While I thundered at brethren, and empty pews, the world kept getting worse and worse. I wrung my hands and lamented what the world was coming to.

Out in the world corrupt sinners were clamoring for more booze. They were promoting drug abuse. Free love was being glorified. Abortion on demand was legalized. Television and movies were prostituted. The moral fabric of the nation was putrifying. Repeatedly I was shocked to learn how many people in the country knew little of the Lord's church and nothing of what we stood for.

Some two years ago I became associated with the *Tennessee Volunteers for Life*, a pro-life group working to save unborn babes from death by abortion. Little by little I began to reach beyond the walls of the meeting house. To date, twenty five letters on this subject have been published in the editorial columns. I have engaged in four televised debates on abortion and euthanasia. There have also been

other debates on this and the E.R.A. issue. There have been a dozen interviews on T.V. news and talk shows.

Letters have been written to politicians, both state and National. Some of them were personally visited. City Council has been visited. To my surprise, I find most of the leaders interested and responsive. We have seen some change in their views and positions to support the cause of morality and decency.

It is now common for neighbors and even strangers on the street to stop me and thank me for the good work done in taking a public stand against this public evil. They speak highly of the Lord's church for holding such convictions. When a question arises in our city about some serious moral issue, usually the phone rings as citizens seek to learn if we can be counted on to help.

I hasten to add that we must be careful not to become unbalanced on such issues. We are first gospel preachers. Our primary task is to preach the gospel and save souls. There are daily duties to the congregation with whom we work; these must not be neglected.

I fight the sin of abortion and other evils, out where the sinners are, for several reasons, viz.:

1. Paul instructs, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. . . . ." (Eph. 5:11.)
2. Such work puts feet on my sermons, delivering God's message of rebuke to the sinners where they are.
3. I thus fulfill my duty as a Christian citizen. If I do nothing to stop the cancerous spread of evil, who can I

blame but myself for letting it happen? Evil people are only doing what comes naturally for them. I cannot expect them to control the growth of wickedness. The prophets of God in ancient Israel not only preached God's religious message, but His moral message as well. See Amos 2:4-8.

4. I fight against these evils to protect my children from them. While I actively train them at home in God's ways of virtue and goodness, I know that soon they will go forth on their own into a crooked and perverse world. The wicked of the world make no distinctions in whose children they corrupt and destroy. Satan especially delights in capturing a young Christian. Stamping out evil practices in our community is just as reasonable as eliminating deadly snakes and health hazards from one's own yard.
5. I fight the abortion people to save the lives of millions of innocent unborn babies being ruthlessly destroyed. Most of us would get upset and concerned if we had knowledge of the systematic extermination of a class of citizens of one community, i.e., Jews, blacks, Indians. Our conscience would demand that we try to stop it. Had Pilate no guilt when he allowed the Jews to murder innocent Jesus? (Matt. 27:24-26.) Yet most Americans and Christians passively sit by while one million babies are annually killed by abortion at the whim of their mothers. Not over one percent of these are for threat to the mother's life, rape or serious deformity. What is the essential difference in this and Pharoah or Herod's massacre of the Hebrew babes? I believe I would be guilty of criminal negligence if I did nothing.
6. I want to do more than shadow box in the war against Satan. Paul tells us that he fought not as one beating the



air. (I Cor. 9:26.) I fear that some of our sermonizing and church bulletins are little more than shadow boxing when it comes to really grappling with the enemy.

7. My efforts will actually help sinners not to commit yet more and greater crimes against God. (II Tim. 2:25.) Some of them can actually be brought to repentance and conversion when they see our faith and hear our message.
8. I press the battle because Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. (Matt. 5:13.) Salt, however, is of no value if left stored in the box. The box must be broken open and put to use. So we Christians must be shaken out of our buildings before we will ever influence the world.
9. I go forth to battle to defend the sacredness of life made in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26, 9:6.) When people lose their reverence and respect for human life, there can be little room left for respect for the giver of life.

Are there no knights left who will put on the shining armour of God and take up the banner of King Jesus and go forth to do battle against the cruel, inhumane king of darkness and his hosts? (Eph. 6:10-17.) Must we sit idly by with trembling hands while our world is ravaged and defiled by sin's workers?

Up, ye soldiers of the Kingdom, let us take the battle to the enemy's door and then defeat him in the name of the God of Heaven.

## COMING TO TERMS WITH SIN

Sin is rampant in our society. It is daily increasing in both degree and frequency. The pollution of sin is daily encroaching upon the church through the lives of some of her weak, worldly members. Denominational churches are losing their influence and members in alarming proportions. Both Protestant and Catholic churches have repeatedly lowered their standards to accommodate their members' life-styles and convictions about worldly practices.

The Lord's church is growing in numbers, yet she is shrinking in proportion to the mushrooming population of the world. Some carnal minded brethren would lower the church's standards of moral conduct to encourage more people to come in and keep more of her present members.

There have always been some members of the church who lived far below the standard of godliness set forth in the Bible. They were usually a minority and kept their worldly views and practices quiet and hidden, fearing to bring them into open light. Then they were looked upon as an erring minority. Now we see a new boldness and a change in attitude in worldly, carnal church members. Many of them now openly practice their sin with no fear of reproof. Some men who serve as elders, deacons and preachers now engage in social drinking, smoking, mixed swimming, without shame or inhibition. Some of them openly approve of promiscuous divorce and remarriage. These compromisers now publicly publish their views and attack those who oppose such conduct as being "unChristian, unloving, legalistic, without Bible authority, or troublemakers." Now we actually see brethren seeking to justify such conduct by distorting the

Scriptures to make them seem to uphold their aberrant practices.

## WHAT GOD EXPECTS OF CHRISTIANS

Today, just as 1900 years ago, God expects a certain high level of moral conduct of those who would be His children. We must deny “ungodliness and worldly lust” and “live soberly, righteously and godly” lives. (Tit. 2:11-12.) Christians are expected to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul and to have their behavior seemly before their sinful neighbors. (I Pet. 2:11-12.) They cannot “conform” to the sinful habits of the world, rather they must be transformed into Christ-likeness. (Rom. 12:1-2.) Saints must never forget that pure religion involves keeping oneself unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27.) We are taught to “come out” of the sinful world and be different thereto. (II Cor. 6:17.) Again, we are to “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit” and then strive to perfect holiness of life. (II Cor. 7:1.) Upon becoming Christians we must cease to live as sinners, putting off the deeds of the old man and replacing them with the godly habits of Christ. (Eph. 4:17-24.) Not only must we have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but we are obligated to reprove them. (Eph. 5:11-12.) Christians should be modest in dress and practice shamefacedness and sobriety which becomes people professing godliness. (I Tim. 2:9-13.) In addition to correct doctrine and worship, we must pursue a godly course of living. (I Tim. 6:11.)

## THE DUTY OF GOD’S PREACHERS

The man who accepts the sacred responsibility of a gospel preacher is obligated to proclaim the *whole* counsel of God, including moral duties. (Acts 20:26-27.) He must “put the brethren in mind” of God’s standards. (I Tim. 4:6.) His

lessons must consist of reproof and rebuke as well as exhortation whether such is popular or not. (II Tim. 4:2.) Brethren must be forewarned that if they engage in the works of the flesh they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. (Gal. 5:19-21.) Most important of all a man of God must be a willing example of godly living. (I. Tim. 4:11-12.)

## SOME PROBLEM AREAS OF OUR DAY

Our congregations are burdened with problems that not only are wrong in themselves, but which compromise and weaken the church before a lost world. We see some Christians dressed in shockingly immodest apparel. Others engage in social dancing. Many yet engage in the use of tobacco. Some even indulge in the social use of alcoholic beverages. Multitudes of God's people marry non-Christians. Marriages are broken by divorce and second marriages are entered into with little or no regard for God's divine regulations. Some saints are members of secret fraternal lodges that are competitive with the claims of Christ. All of these things and others are detrimental to godliness and ruinous to congregations. The shame of it all is that in hundreds of pulpits these topics are never discussed and no warning is ever given. Worse still, we are seeing some "relevant preachers" and elders daring to defend some or all of these sins as respectable and acceptable conduct for Christians. Some dare to stand in the pulpit of God's assembly while practicing some of these things in their daily life.

## HOW GOD VIEWS SUCH A SITUATION

God speaks to such compromising men throughout His Word. Through Isaiah He thundered, "Woe to them that call evil good and good evil." (5:20.) We are taught to imitate faithful Paul who preached the whole counsel of God. (I Cor. 11:1; Acts 20:26-27.) We are forbidden to "diminish

from" God's message. (Deut. 4:2.) When Micaiah was pressured to declare good words unto wicked Ahab, he responded, "As Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak." (I Kings 22:13-14.) He went to prison on bread and water rather than back down! May God raise up ten thousand of his tribe for our generation.

Congregations must never discourage faithful leaders who cry out against sin, neither should they tolerate spineless professionals who fear to stand up against sin and sinners. Jeremiah bemoaned the fact that "both prophet and priest (were) profane" in his day. They practiced wickedness even in Jehovah's sacred temple. (23:11.) He described the condition as astonishing and horrible when the prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests ruled by their means and God's "people loved to have it so." (5:30-31.) Woe to that congregation who encourages delinquency in the pulpit and eldership! Isaiah scorned the people of his day for daring to say to God's prophets, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things." Really they were saying "prophecy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10.) The church of Christ in Thyatria was rebuked for tolerating a teacher in their midst who encouraged ungodliness. (Rev. 2:20.) How many of our congregations would receive a similar letter today? Remember, a preacher can encourage a sinful practice by never letting it be known it is wrong!

As Christians we must be prepared to be different from the sinful society about us. We must never conform to the ungodly standards of Satan's children. (Rom. 12:1-2.) Saints must make no provision at all for the sinful flesh. (Rom. 13:14.) When congregations become corrupt with sin, whether it be doctrinal or moral and when we are unable to change them for the better, we must be prepared to come out of them so that we do not have fellowship with their sin and share their judgment. (Rev. 18:4.)

## GOD'S UNCHANGING LAW ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Modern man finds it difficult to accept and conform to God's rules of morality. In no area is this seen as vividly as in the case of marriage, divorce and remarriage. God's book reads the same in modern America as in ancient Judea or Corinth. Our great task is to convince men and women to humble themselves and accept it. Strangely, it is members of the church who seem to have the largest problem doing this rather than aliens. We cannot be true to our commitment to restore original Christianity if we fail to accept, teach and live by this original legislation on divorce and remarriage.

1. Marriage is a *sacred* institution. The same God who made the first man, made his mate and ordained their marriage. (Gen. 2:20-24.) God made only one wife for Adam and one husband for Eve. No arrangements were made for a second choice or exchange. Jesus based his teaching on God's pattern in Eden. (Matt. 19:4-5.) Jehovah has given specific regulations for marriage to maintain it in an honorable way. (Heb. 13:4.) Man is expected to conform to these divine rules for marriage as in all other matters.
2. God has indicated who can marry. Those who have never been married before may marry so long as they choose a partner who is eligible in God's sight. Paul writes to the Corinthians, ". . . if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." (I Cor. 7:28.) Those who are widowed may remarry. (I Cor. 7:39.) If they are Christians they must marry in the Lord. Those who have previously been

married but whose former mate broke the marriage vow by unlawful sexual intercourse can remarry. Jesus forbade divorce and remarriage "except for fornication." (Matt. 19:9.) We have no right to impose our own restrictions on the divorcee with such grounds. The term used by Jesus to identify this exception is *porneia* which means any type of unlawful sexual relation. This then would include such heinous evils as homosexuality and bestiality as well as heterosexual adultery. Lusting in one's heart is not adequate grounds for putting away one's mate since no actual intercourse is involved. (Matt. 5:28.)

3. God shows us who *cannot* marry. Those who have been previously married but whose mate was not put away because of fornication may not remarry with God's approval. (Matt. 19:9.) Of course, here I speak of a former mate yet living. If the former mate is deceased, then the survivor is free to be married to whom he will. (Rom. 7:3.) Those who would marry a person previously married, whose mate was not put away because of fornication, enter an unlawful union. Jesus said, "He that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Matt. 19:9.) Then those who were put away because of their own immoral conduct are forbidden to remarry. Jesus plainly declares that even the innocent victim of an unlawful divorce cannot remarry. "Whosoever shall marry her when she (the innocent, loyal wife) is put away, committeth adultery." (Matt. 5:32.) Since God is just (Ps. 89:14) and since He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) how could he allow the guilty fornicator to remarry when He has denied the innocent person that privilege?

#### 4. God's View of Divorce.

To the Jews who were putting away their loyal wives

without due cause, God said, "I hate putting away. . ." (Mal. 2:16.) So evil is the deed of divorcing that it always involves one or both parties in dishonor. States may create a "no-fault divorce" code, but the Creator of mankind and marriage still hates it and holds those parties guilty who dishonor His sacred marriage covenant and seek unscriptural dissolution of their marriages. Jesus said that God joins man and woman in marriage. (Matt. 19:6.) He proceeds to warn, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Remember, God made the first marriage. It was a perfect model with one husband and one wife. (Gen. 2:18-24.) The Creator forbids men. . . even men of government and the courts, to dissolve what He hath joined. He goes on to label unacceptable remarriages as "adulterous." (Matt. 19:9.) He promises that adulterers will be judged, i.e., condemned by His righteous law. (Heb. 13:4.) When Herod Antipas took his brother Philip's wife, John the Baptist told him, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (Matt. 14:4.) It was not lawful on two grounds. a) She was a close relative, thus it was incestuous, b) She was another man's wife.

## 5. Some Modern Attempts to Circumvent God's Marriage Laws.

- A. It is argued that Paul added another exception allowing remarriage in I Cor. 7:15. There Paul says, "If the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases. . . ." Thus they say desertion is grounds for remarriage. Their mistake is in assuming that to be *bound* in marriage (I Cor. 7:39) is the same as to be under bondage. (7:15.) Paul uses two distinctly different terms to describe two distinctly different things. In 7:39 the woman is *bound* to her husband.



The word derives from *deo* which means "to bind, to tie, to fasten. . . ." In vs. 15 he says the wife is not under *bondage* if her unbelieving husband departs. The word *bondage* derives from *duoloo* and means "to make a slave of or reduce to bondage. . . ." Thayer. He simply says that the Christian is not a slave to an unbelieving mate. Therefore he/she is not obligated to disobey God in order to please such, even if they threaten to leave.

- B. Others find grounds for legitimizing second (or more) marriage unions in I Cor. 7:20. "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called." Thus, if one is married to his fourth wife and becomes a Christian, they argue he should keep her. But that which proves too much proves nothing. What of the polygamist with ten wives? Should he abide with his ten wives upon obeying the gospel? And what of homosexual partners? Some even claim to be married to their perverted lovers! Shall they abide in their marriage calling? The truth of the matter is, we should abide in *honorable* callings which are acceptable to God. If a man is in a sinful relationship, he must come out of it upon obeying the gospel. That is what repentance is all about! The reader should open his Bible to I Corinthians Chapter 7 carefully read verses 18-24. Is the context there discussing marriage? Is it not rather discussing such things as circumcision, bondservice and redemption? Whatever it teaches, it cannot be made to disannul the teaching of Christ in other places. (Matt. 19:4-9; 5:32; Rom. 7:1-4.)
- C. Some argue that baptism sanctifies a sinful marriage relationship. Baptism does wash away the guilt of past sins (Acts 22:16) if truly repented of. (Acts

2:38.) But baptism cannot justify an unholy relationship. In I Cor. 6:9-11 Paul reminds the Corinthian brethren that though they *had been* idolaters, adulterers and effeminate, among other gross sins, they had been washed, sanctified and justified in their conversion. Granted, the idolater was forgiven his idolatry but could he continue his idol worship after his salvation? Could the effeminate homosexual continue his perversion once saved? Can then the person living in an unholy marriage union continue to live in that relation? The obvious answer is no.

- D. It is argued by some that the non-Christian is not under Christ's law of marriage. Therefore, marriages and divorces prior to salvation do not count. They seem to forget that marriage is as old and wide as the race of man. (Gen. 2.) In the centuries before Christ came and declared his law, marriage was with us. I ask the brother who takes this view, were Abram and Sarai married? I know that God's laws for marriage were prevailing then because he punished Pharaoh and Abimeleck for taking Abraham's wife. (Gen. 12 and 20.) Would these brethren affirm that none is married in God's sight today save those who are true Christians? Rome might deem to so pontificate, but no careful student of the Bible would dare to so affirm. The truth is that aliens are amenable to Christ's law. The first century Gentiles stood condemned for transgression of God's law. (Rom. 1:26, 32.) All sinners today are commanded to *repent*. (Acts 17:30.) But to repent means to change one's mind and conduct regarding his conduct toward God and His law. Therefore, all sinners are amenable to God's law.
- E. Some argue that the sin is in the divorcing, not the

remarriage. They say if the party guilty of breaking the marriage will just admit that he sinned, in so doing he is free to be remarried, be it one or ten times. But really, this is just a shuffling of words that confuse the issue. In fact, Jesus condemned both unlawful divorce and unlawful remarriage in Matt. 19:14-9. Since God hates putting away (Mal. 2:16) all unscriptural divorces are evil. Inasmuch as the unlawful second marriage is declared to be adulterous it is sinful. (Matt. 19:9.) Those holding this view argue that one cannot "live in the state of adultery." But they must reject the clear statement of Col. 3:5-7 which orders the Colossians to put to death such sins as "fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires. Wherein ye once walked, when ye *lived in these things*. . . ." Also the expression "committeth adultery" in Matt. 19:9 is third person singular present indicative in the original which literally means "he is committing adultery."

- F. It is argued by some that the *guilty* fornicator can remarry once the marriage is dissolved by the innocent party. This view is absurd when one remembers that even the innocent victim of a broken marriage that does not involve fornication cannot remarry acceptably to God. (Matt. 5:32.) God is just in all of his doings. (Deut. 32:4.) But to deny an innocent victim the right to remarriage while granting the privilege to the immoral marriage breaker would be grossly unjust. Also, such a doctrine would open the door for terrible abuse. If the guilty fornicator can remarry with impunity and still go to heaven, would not people who had unhappy marriages be tempted to escape their plight by committing adultery, confessing it to their mate and then urging the innocent party to divorce them so they could choose a new partner?

G. Some fear that such a firm unyielding stand will put the church out of business in a society where divorce has become so prevalent. First of all I deny this assertion. It is my experience that sinners of the world look to the church expecting us to honor and maintain the high standards of God in this and every other moral issue. It is the weak, worldly Christians who seem to have the most trouble accepting God's regulations. Most sinners know that they must change their lives and conform to God's rules in this and every other aspect of life. Secondly, the same philosophy would force us to come to terms with all other popular sins such as the use of liquor, drugs, tobacco, free love, etc. The church must call men up to the standard of Christ, regardless of the popularity polls. We can never lower his standards to those of the sinful world. To be transformed is our challenge. (Rom. 12:1-2.) The broad way which the many travel still leads to death. Only in the narrow way will we find life. (Matt. 7:13-14.)

#### 6. What Can We Do to Change This Unholy Trend?

We must do a better job of training and educating the young regarding God's rules for marriage both at home and in the church. If trained right, most children will act right when older. (Prov. 22:6.) Let the church proclaim God's message on marriage clearly and forcibly to all the world, along with the saving gospel. Let us encourage Christians to marry Christians. Although this is not a 100 percent guarantee of a happy marriage, it does remove some of the major obstacles to happiness and provides a spiritual bonding that helps marriages to survive. (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-16.) The church should have ongoing programs to educate and help married couples build and maintain stable, happy homes.

**There should be skilled Christian counselling available for couples with marital problems. Prevention is always better than trying to cure a bad disease once contracted. The elders should deal firmly and quickly with those who would destroy their marriage or enter into unlawful unions. Since the sin of the unlawful marriages is the adultery, obviously the unlawful sex must be given up by those that wish to follow Jesus. May we with gentleness, forbearance and meekness correct them that oppose themselves in this or any other like cause if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. (II Tim. 2:24-26.)**

## CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

In days past, Christians and the church stood firmly opposed to the evil practice of promiscuous divorce and remarriage. Always there have been those who were weak and compromising in dealing with this problem. Some never preached on the subject, though they did hold the scriptural point of view. Others performed marriages for divorcees with never a question about the circumstances of their divorce or a scruple about doing so. Some few tried to justify their beliefs and practice but seldom in a bold public way.

### Things are Changing

In recent years there have been several books and pamphlets published that boldly challenge the long-held views on the subject. Not only would such brethren excuse the practice of divorce and remarriage but they accuse brethren who cry out against this of being trouble-makers and persecutors of innocent people.

### Some Reasons for This Change

1. Some congregations have many remarried divorcees in their midst. To appease them they have abstained from preaching against the sinfulness of the situation. Many times the oft-married brother or sister becomes very prominent in the life of the congregation. Feelings of guilt make it necessary either to admit the wrong and right it, or to try to justify the situation. ( I Cor. 5:6.)
2. Some leaders in their desire to have a large growing mem-

bership are anxious to take in anyone regardless of their life and conduct as long as it is not outrageous by community standards. They equate quantity with quality.

3. Some preachers measure their message by the popularity charts. That which is unpopular is quietly passed by. (II Tim. 4:3.)
4. Some are intimidated by wealthy or influential members of their congregations whose lives are affected by this problem. Fearing reprisals or trouble, they conveniently preach on other, acceptable themes. (I Tim. 6:17-19.)
5. Preachers who weakly went along with accepting such divorced people and who performed marriage ceremonies for them had to rationalize their conduct in the face of Jesus' teaching.
6. Some leaders who once stood opposed to the divorce evil have been gradually worn down by the pressures of the degenerate society that steadily beat upon the walls of the Kingdom and is slowly encroaching upon the conduct of its members. Their resistance has finally given way to the new morality.
7. Some leaders held the correct, scriptural view and taught it until a member of their family entered into a second marriage which stood condemned. Under those circumstances they readjusted their interpretation to clear the guilty. (Prov. 17:15.)
8. There are some preachers and elders who are ignorant of God's teaching on this vital subject. We now have a second generation of leaders in the church who have grown up in congregations with little or no teaching on the subject. Men who are not taught on a given subject

cannot provide effective leadership in that area. (Hos. 4:6.)

9. Many have been so confused by the numerous theories being tossed about on the subject that they do not quite know what to believe or do.
10. Some leaders have unconsciously grown so accustomed to the darkness of this moral sin that it just does not seem too bad any more.
11. Many have allowed their sympathies for hardships that would be faced by the involved families, especially where children are involved, to blind them to the righteousness of God's law.
12. Some brethren have turned to this compromising view because they were "turned off" by the attitude and conduct of some leaders who opposed divorces and remarriages which are contrary to Jesus' teaching. Some were harsh and heartless in dealing with men and women trapped in unlawful marriages. (II Tim. 2:24-25.) There have been cases of discrimination where some were called to account for such illicit unions while others were passed by. (Jas. 2:9.) Some ignore the exception Jesus allowed, i.e., "for fornication" and insist on no grounds for remarriage. Yet others pontificate that although Jesus allows the exception, there are no innocent parties in a broken marriage. Such attitudes always drive some souls to opposite extremes.
13. Some brethren are always looking for easy solutions to hard problems. There are no tougher problems faced by congregational leaders than those of unscriptural marriage unions. While it is highly desirable to seek new and easy solutions in the secular realm, it is fatal in the spiritual. (Prov. 4:25-27.)



14. Some falsely believe that God's word is not static and unchangeable, but is plastic and may be adjusted to meet the changing moods of man's behavior. (Matt. 24:35.)
15. No doubt, some men are being used by Satan to corrupt and weaken the Lord's church. (II Cor. 11:13-15.)
16. Human wisdom has sometimes been allowed to be exalted above the revelation of God on these matters. Unscriptural divorce and remarriage just does not appear too bad to man's jaundiced eyes. (Is. 55:8-9.)
17. Liberals who scoff at God's law and reject the very idea of a law that man is expected to conform to, cannot bring themselves to accept this strict, high standard for marriage and divorce.

Though men may protest and though a score of alternate views may be proposed, Jesus' word still plainly says, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: And he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Matt. 19:9.)

## HOMOSEXUALITY, AN ABOMINABLE SIN

An all-wise Creator made the distinctive sexual natures of men and women and assigned their unique roles in life. True happiness comes to men and women who understand their proper sex role and observe it. Unhappiness and moral disaster come to those who pervert the natural role which God assigned their sex.

### 1. The Problem Defined.

Homosexuality is defined as "eroticism for one of the same sex." I would add that to be sin one would have to "lust after" such forbidden experiences in his own heart (Matt 5:28); or actually engage in the evil act. We emphasize that one who has had one such experience in his past is not to be classed as a homosexual. He would be such only if it was continued. This distinction is important because it is a fairly common thing for children to have such experiences only to go on to normal sexual maturity.

Paul specifies this as a prevalent sin among the Gentiles of Roman society. ". . .for their women changed the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness." (Rom. 1:26-27.)

Such perverted souls are often described as homos, queers, faggots, and fairies. They prefer to describe themselves as "gay." Women of this persuasion are called lesbians. This term comes from the Aegean island of Lesbos where this practice was widespread in the 6th Century B.C.

## 2. The Extent of the Problem.

It is now estimated that between one in ten and one in six adults in America is homosexual. This would be between 10 and 20 million. Because of the present confusion of sex roles and the deterioration of home stability, sexual perversion is rapidly a growing problem in our society. In 1964 it was established that there were 4,000 homos in Washington, D.C. Over a five year period of time more than 400 were dismissed from the U.S. State Department alone in the nation's capitol. San Francisco now has the dubious honour of being the "gay capitol" of our land with over 100,000 such citizens. Jess Stern in his book *The Sixth Man* boasted, "Someday we will outnumber you, and you will be the abnormal ones and we will be the normal."

## 3. An Ancient Evil.

Sexual perversion is an ancient evil. The citizens of Sodom were given over to homosexual practices. In Gen. 19:1-8 the men of Sodom accosted Lot's house desiring to "know" the two guests within. The word "know" is the same as that used in Gen. 4:1, where it is said that Adam "knew" his wife Eve and she conceived. Some scholars think that this was the sin of Canaan against his drunken grandfather Noah. This would explain the severe penalty which God imposed on him. (Gen. 9:20-27.)

Homosexuality flourished in ancient Greece and Rome as their civilizations grew old and began to decay. Notable perverts included Alexander the Great, Socrates and Plato. Among the Romans were Julius Caesar and other emperors. In the Renaissance period we find such names as Michelangelo, Leonardo de Vinci, and Frederick the Great.

It seems that sexual confusion is the curse of affluent, advanced civilizations. Rarely is it found in the primitive

societies where sex roles are clearly defined and the lifestyle demands masculinity in males and forces the women into the motherly role. An African brother told me that his tribal language did not even have a word for such in its vocabulary.

#### 4. God's Word on Homosexual Conduct.

We have already noted the sin of the men of Sodom towards Lot's guests. Moses relates that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly." (Gen. 13:13.) Jude comments that the people of Sodom had given themselves over to fornication (literally sexual uncleanness) and gone after strange flesh. (Jude 7.) The angels of God declared that the judgment on Sodom and her sister cities was because of just such conduct. (Gen. 19:13.) This is significant because modern day apologists for the gay "sub-culture" attempt to whitewash the people of Sodom by saying their sin was only a lack of hospitality. The absurdity of such interpretations is patent. The word "sodomy" has been applied to this practice from ancient times.

Moses' law strongly condemned homosexuality. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is an abomination." (Lev. 18:22.) In such cases "both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death. . . ." (Lev. 20:13.) The wages of a Sodomite were not to be brought into the house of Jehovah. (Deut. 23:17-18.) It was for just such moral crimes as these that God had taken their land from the Canaanite tribes. The land vomited them out. Moses warned Israel that the land would also vomit them out if they took up these corrupt actions. (Lev. 18:24-30.) Centuries later when Israel had absorbed the heathen Baal worship, blending it with Jehovah's religion, Sodomites set up shop in the very temple of

Jehovah. Heathen fertility cults fostered all kinds of sexual indulgence in the name of religion. Josiah had them driven out in his reformation. (II Kings 23:7.)

The new covenant condemns homosexual conduct in no uncertain terms. In Roman 1:26-27 Paul points out the prevalence of such among the Gentiles and in verse 32 he concludes by saying that according to "the ordinance of God. . .they who practice such things *are worthy of death* . . . ." In writing the Christians in Corinth he warns that adulterers, the effeminate and abusers of themselves with men will not inherit the kingdom of God. He comments that some of these Christians had been such in the past but they had been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Christ and the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:9-11.) The implication is plain that such unholy activities were past events in their lives.

## 5. What Causes Perversion?

To escape guilt and condemnation some argue that homosexuals were born that way, therefore they cannot help themselves. Dr. Charles Socarides, M.D., says that homosexuality is not "innate" or "inborn" but an acquired or "learned process." (Journal of American Medicine. *Dr. Isadore Rubin, M.D., writes* in a official publication of SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the United States), "That genetic, constitutional or glandular factors play little role in the causation of homosexuality. (Rubin sees no wrong in such conduct. J.H.W.) Homos admit that at some period in time they made that choice of lifestyle. Dr. Morris Fishbein in his book, *Successful Marriage*, notes that though genetic and hormonal factors may contribute to causing homosexuality, the environment which leads to homosexuality would still have to be provided. "The training is the differential in the individual's ultimate behavior."

In his excellent book, *The Psychology of Counselling*, Dr. Clyde M. Narramore points out the following factors that contribute to sexual maladjustment such as we are discussing.

A. It may stem from a lack of wholesome sex education. When bashful parents fail in their responsibility here they may be contributing to their children's moral ruin. Children will seek out information about their sexuality. Either they will find it at home or from some far less desirable source.

B. Faulty childhood impressions and unwise handling of sexual training by parents can have profound effects on children. Such may cause serious problems of adjustment later in life. Little children must never be told scary stories or shamed when they need and desire information in this realm.

C. Sex problems may be created and/or aggravated by the unwholesome influence of a secular society. Many movies, T.V. shows, books, and magazines portray homosexual love as normal, tender and exciting. This stirs curiosity in some and awakens latent emotions in others. It also erodes social convictions that such is disgusting and wrong. Dr. Laurence J. Hatterer of Cornell University told the American Academy of Psychoanalysis that homosexuality can be triggered by environmental influences, chief of which are suggestive homosexual literature, plays and movies.

D. A dominant mother who stifles and belittles her son's budding masculinity may cause him to lose confidence in his own manly sexualness. It may cause him to fear women in general and thus turn to men.

E. A thoughtless mother treats her son as a girl which she wanted but did not get. She dresses him in frilly clothes, keeps his hair long and encourages him to play with girls'

toys. He thus grows up thinking it is natural to fill a feminine role in life.

F. A weak father may be the cause. The son cannot look to such a father for moral support in his struggle to be a man. Even a daughter may lose respect for men in general because of her weak unmanly father. These children may be drawn into homosexual liaisons.

G. When the father is cruel to his son, the boy may be fearful of competition with all males. Yet boys desperately need acceptance with their peers. They win this by allowing other boys to abuse them sexually. This gains the attention and the comrades they long for. Girls with cruel fathers may transfer their fear and hate to all men and turn to women for a lover-companion. Lesbians are commonly the victims of a lack of love.

H. Overindulgent mothers can hurt their sons. Such mothers spoil their sons. Often they unconsciously try to make their sons substitute husbands. Sometimes his emotional attachment to his mother is so strong that he cannot love another woman. His sex drive leads him to men.

Dr. Irving Bieber, M.D. in his study *Homosexuality: A psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals*, writes, "We have come to this conclusion that a constructive, supportive, warmly related father *precludes* the possibility of a homosexual son; he acts as a neutralizing, protective agent should the mother make seductive or close-binding attempts." Peter and Barbara Wyden in their book, *Growing Up Straight*, argue: "This much is certain, it is just about impossible for a homosexual to be the product of warmly loving, sensible parents and a sexually well-adjusted home atmosphere."

I. Initial sex experiences may warp a child. Children are

often seduced and molested by homosexuals. In their innocence and naivete, they find such erotically pleasurable and a pattern of behavior is established before parents know it. Parents, be watchful of the friends and associates of your youngsters.

J. Homosexuals recruit heterosexuals in their fellowship and practice. They not only prowl the dark streets, they have their social clubs and promotion societies.

K. Such practices as unisex hair styles and clothing fads tend to blur the distinctions in sex roles. Youngsters growing up in such a culture may be adversely affected. In Deut. 22:5, Moses warned Israel against men dressing as women and vice versa.

L. Last, we note that spiritual degeneracy tends to lead to moral decay. Because the Romans first refused to have God in their knowledge, God then gave them up to moral reprobation including sexual perversion. (Rom. 1:24-27.) Evil men wax worse and worse. (II Tim. 3:13.)

Conclusion:

Is there no hope for the homosexual? The answer is yes. Some Christians in Corinth had been salvaged from such a horrid life. But there can be no saving of such until it is recognized as sin, repented of and forsaken with the help of God! "Keep thyself pure." (I Tim. 5:22.)



## **SMOKING, DRINKING AND GAMBLING**

A reader has written asking if it is correct to say that smoking is a sin just as the drinking of alcoholic beverages, gambling, or the use of drugs. Our reply is as follows:

1. If the use of tobacco is in fact sinful, this would put it in the category of all other sinful things. And, if a thing is sinful, it could cost us our eternal salvation especially if we refuse to give it up when we learn it is wrong. I take the position that it is sinful because:
  - A. It damages one's health. This is agreed by virtually all medical authorities, and since my body is God's holy temple (I Cor. 3:16-17 and I Cor. 6:19-20), and since God says that he will punish anyone who defiles his temple, for me to deliberately indulge in a habit which will definitely harm my body is sin.
  - B. The use of tobacco is wrong because it enslaves one to the habit. I Cor. 6:12 tells us that we should not be brought under the power of anything except God. II Pet. 1:6 teaches the Christian to have self control, but a man addicted to the use of tobacco is a slave to it and has lost his self control in this matter. Therefore, it is a sin.

Since smoking is a sin and sin separates man from God (Is. 59:1-2), therefore, smoking is as dangerous to the soul as drinking, gambling, etc.

2. I grant you that smoking is not as bad in one sense as drinking, gambling and drugs, in that it is a sin primarily

against my own body and God, while the other things affect not only one's self but also our fellow man. No smoker ever ran over someone and killed him while under the influence of tobacco, but many drunkards have. Few smokers would rob a bank to satisfy their habit, as would a heroin addict.

3. I grant you that some few people have smoked heavily and yet lived to a ripe old age, but they are few and far between, and though they may live long they usually have serious health problems resulting directly from their smoking habit.

With Paul and Peter, we exhort all our fellow Christians:

Having therefore these promises (of sonship and heaven) beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, II Cor. 7:1.

“Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. . . .” I Pet. 2:11. The tobacco habit has no place in the godly life. Let the Lord help you to give it up. To the young, never start it.

## ACCOMPLICE TO SIN

Man is prone to fall into sin. His great and constant challenge is to avoid the temptation to do evil. One does not have to overtly engage in an evil deed to be guilty of complicity. There are numerous ways that we can be an accomplice in other men's sins. David condemns certain teachers of God's law with these words. "When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." (Ps. 50:18.)

1. One can be an accomplice to another's sin by *counsel*. The prophet Nahum spoke of a man that *counselled wickedness* who would be destroyed by God. (Nah. 1:11-12.) Some folks who would shrink from doing a sinful deed will counsel and encourage others to do so. There are those who would advise us to take an unlawful tax deduction. Some helpful soul would counsel a young wife with a problem husband to leave him. We must never forget that to encourage another to do wrong is to share the guilt of the evil doer.

2. We can be a party to sin by *command*. David did not lay a finger upon Uriah the Hittite yet he was fully guilty of his death. When he commanded Joab to set him up for death, David was equally guilty. (II Sam. 11:14-17.) If a superior orders his servant, employee or his child to do a sinful deed he then fully shares in the responsibility.

3. *Consent* with a sinful practice involves us in its guilt. Solomon warned his sons, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." (Prov. 1:10.) Paul warns those "who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they who practice such things are

worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them.” (Rom. 1:32.) Although Pontius Pilate washed his hands to declare his innocence, he was guilty of consenting to Jesus’ murder. (Matt. 27:24-26.)

4. We are responsible for another’s misconduct if we *provoke* them to sin. Fathers are reminded not to provoke their children to wrath. (Eph. 6:4.) Husbands or wives often provoke their mates to sin by denying them the sexual privileges of marriage, or by cruelty. Such a partner could not claim innocence even though they stayed at home and did not practice immorality. Sometimes a person so aggravates and agitates another that he provokes him to violence. The provoker will not stand guiltless.

5. By *praising or flattering* the offender we involve ourselves in his guilt. There are those who personally walk carefully but who will flatter and praise those who flaunt the law. In doing this we lend our approval and encourage the rebel in his lawlessness. “A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his steps.” (Prov. 29:5.)

6. *Covering up for or concealing* the sins of someone else is wrong. Even the laws of men condemn the citizen who hides the criminal or covers the evidence of his guilt. “He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.” (Prov. 28:13.) Not only are we to confess personal sins, we must not be guilty of aiding and abetting others. Achan’s family was destroyed with him because they were thus involved in his sin against God and his nation. (Josh. 7:24-26.)

7. We share the guilt of another’s sin if we are *partakers* in either the deed or the fruit of it. John speaks of Christians who became partakers of a false teacher’s evil by opening their home to him and bidding him godspeed. (II John

10-11.) Of course, if we assist a person in a foul deed we are equally guilty. But we can also be involved by accepting gifts that were ill-gotten or by purchasing at bargain prices stolen merchandise.

8. Guilt can be incurred by *silence* when justice demands that we should speak up. God's preachers are commissioned to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice and declare unto my people their transgressions." (Is. 58:1.) They must preach the Word, whether it is popular to do so or not. (II Tim. 4:2.) Even elders that sin are to be reprov'd in the sight of all, that the rest may be in fear. (I Tim. 5:19-20) When a preacher sees sin in the lives of people and sits quietly by, fearful of exposing such, he thereby becomes an accomplice to that sin. The same principle is true for all Christians, i.e., parents who cannot bring themselves to correct their erring children.

9. If we *defend* what has been wickedly done we then share in the guilt. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah." (Prov. 17:15.) A great temptation arises here when the offender is related to us or our friend. We are tempted to defend our own at any price. The same weakness is seen when one defends a member of his political party or union or race or church, regardless of the damning evidence against him. May we who are Christians never seek to justify any man in his error no matter what our social obligation to him.

10 By *compromising* with sin we become involved with it. Compromise usually results from an inordinate desire to please man. We must be more concerned with pleasing God. (Gal. 1:10.) Faithful disciples will buy the truth and sell it not." (Prov 23:23.) Elijah's challenge should be ever before us, "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If

Jehovah be God, follow him. . . .” (I Kings 18:21.) Jesus put it bluntly: “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” (Matt. 12:30.) While politicians might survive by trading the good and the bad hoping for some gain, the Christian must always be firm against sin and strong for righteousness.

Let us all live soberly, righteously and godly every day of our lives. (Tit. 2:12.) Let us resist all temptation not only to sin overtly but even to be accomplice to another’s sin.

## ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Ethics are the parts of Christianity that teach us how we ought to behave. Paul wrote to Timothy that he might know "how men ought to behave themselves" as Christians. (I Tim. 3:15.) The study of Christian ethics teaches us how to conform our human wills to the will of the Lord Jesus. The noted Scottish scholar, William Barclay, has a very helpful book on this subject entitled *Ethics in a Permissive Society*. Barclay notes many different facets of the Christian ethical system. We will notice nine of them.

### 1. Christians have a *community ethic*.

The Christian is always contemplated as a member of society, never as a recluse withdrawn from the world. He has responsibilities that grow out of his membership in the church. Paul writes, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." (I Cor. 12:27.) To meet with God's approval I must fulfill my duties and responsibilities to my fellow Christians. Also, the follower of Jesus is a member of society in general. As such he must honor his God-given duties to society. The Corinthian brethren were reminded that they could not escape association with sinners of the world. (I Cor. 5:9-10.) Under those circumstances, the saint is to live a blameless and harmless life before his neighbors and let the light of Christ shine through him. (Phil. 2:15-16.) He must teach all men the good news about Jesus and actively seek to win them to the Savior's cause. (Mk. 16:15-16.) Furthermore he must love all men in the world and seek to do them good at every opportunity. (Gal. 6:10.)

As a member of the community the Christian is taught to "be subject to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors. . .for so is the will of God." (I Peter 2:13-15.) The introverted brother who shuns his fellow man for perpetual spiritual solitude and contemplation fails to meet his obligations to his fellow citizens of planet Earth.

2. The Christian ethic demands that we be *different*. Though we live in the world we must be different from the world. (John 17:14-16.) The very term "saints" so often applied to Christians means "holy, separated unto God." Collectively the saints make up the church, the *ekklesia*, which simply means "the called out body of people." Although we share this planet with the children of darkness, we do not partake of their evil deeds. Paul reminds the Ephesian brethren, ". . .that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind." (Eph. 4:17.) The Christian that is afraid to be different from his worldly contemporaries is of no value to the Master. Nor can we be secretive about our differentness. We must let the unique light of Christianity be seen by all. Richard Glover writes, "There is no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy kills the discipleship or the discipleship kills the secrecy. . . ."
3. Our ethic is one of body, soul and spirit, that is, it involves the whole of man's being. (I Thess. 5:23.) God rejects both asceticism (which condemns the body and its desires as all bad) and hedonism (which gratifies every desire of the body). God made the human body and it is good. (Gen. 1:31.) He gave his own Son a physical body like ours. The Holy Spirit dwells in the body of the Christian. (I Cor. 6:19-20.) God demands that our



bodies be used in His holy service. (Rom. 12:1-3.) When Paul talks about sinful flesh, he speaks not of the body literally, rather he describes human nature apart from God. (See Gal. 5:19-21.) Thus while some religions or philosophies indulge the body and deny the spirit, and others abuse the body and extol the spirit, we Christians serve God with our body, soul and spirit, despising neither.

4. The Christian standard goes beyond the world and time. It teaches us that we will be responsible for our deeds both now and in eternity. The truth of the gospel hinges upon the resurrection of Christ and ultimately of our bodies as well. (I Cor. 15:3-4; John 5:28-29.) The life beyond the grave offers two choices, a blissful eternity with God, or an eternity of punishment with Satan. (Matt. 25:46.) The gospel promises us a coming judgment where we will give an account to God for all the deeds done in this life. (II Cor. 5:10.) Thus the Christian makes the choices of today in the light of eternity. The fleeting pleasures of the hour give way to the enduring rewards of eternity.
5. Imitation is an essential ingredient of our ethical system. We are exhorted to imitate God as his beloved children. (Eph. 5:1.) We are to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. (I Pet. 2:21.) We learn by imitating the great disciples of the past and present as they follow Jesus. (I Cor. 11:1; Heb. 6:12.) Christian leaders are to offer their godly example for the congregation to follow. (Heb. 13:7.) In fact, all Christians are to be good examples of their religion. Thus can wives win their unbelieving husbands. (I Pet. 3:1.) All are charged to "Be thou an example." (I Tim. 4:12.)
6. The Christian code demands that we be at peace with

fellow christians and all men. The apostle condemns jealousy and strife among Christians as carnal, and childish. (I Cor. 3:1-4.) We are obligated to give diligence to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:1-3.) As much as in us lieth, we are to be at peace with all men, even the heathen of the world. (Rom. 12:18.) If our enemy is hungry we must feed him and by so doing him good, make him ashamed enough to agree to peace. (Rom. 12:20-21.) Even when we are harassed by sinners we Christians should look to the government, God's appointed minister of wrath, to punish the evil doer. We are not to personally avenge ourselves. (Rom. 12:9-19.) Jesus' ethic was truly new and revolutionary when he said, "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9.)

7. Christian ethics call for *humility*. Jesus said, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you, but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20:25-28.) Christ's apostles taught this concept to all their converts. For example, Paul urges the Philippians, "Do(ing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting others better than himself: not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Phil. 2:3-4.) Peter wrote, "All of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (I Pet. 5:5.) This was a shocking, revolting concept for the proud Greek mind. They considered humility an undesirable weakness. Yet the demand of Christ won out and all now see its virtue, even if they do not practice it.

8. Christ's ethical teaching calls for *agape* love for all men. We must learn to love our neighbor as ourself. (Matt. 22:39.) This is not romantic love, nor is it an easy going, emotional or sentimental thing. It is not subject to impulse or passion. *Agape* love is active goodwill that cannot be quenched. This love will govern our attitudes and actions toward our enemies. It will make us always act in their best interest and seek their good, even when they do us wrong. (Matt. 5:44.) This Christian love will make us tolerant in dealing with others. (Rom. 14:1; 15:1-2.) We will always labor to speak the truth in love. (Eph.4:15.) Some disciples handle truth as a bludgeon against their foes. This Christ forbids. This new way of unselfish love has done more to civilize and refine the manners of mankind than any other gift of God.
  
9. *Family* responsibility is central in the Christian ethic. Most of the heathen religions were male-centered. Women and children were of value chiefly as the property of the man. Man had limited responsibilities to his family. But Christ painted an entirely new practice of domestic life. Wives were to love their husbands and be in subjection to them as is fitting in the Lord. (Col. 1:18.) Husbands were to love their wives as Christ loved the church, being willing even to die for them. (Eph. 5:25.) Children were to be properly trained and nourished in God's way. (Eph. 6:4.) They were to be obedient to their parents. (Eph. 6:1.) Aged parents and grandparents were to be given haven in their children's homes. To fail in these family duties was to be worse than an infidel. (I Tim. 5:4, 8.)

Of course there are yet other areas we have not touched upon, yet these nine areas give us a reasonable view of what is surely the grandest system of human conduct ever set forth

for men to live by. May all of God's children remember as they sojourn in this earth, to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." And may our behavior always be "seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (I Pet. 2:11-12.)

## HOW CAN I KNOW RIGHT AND WRONG?

Paul urges Christians to “understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Eph. 5:17.) However, some are puzzled as to just how to determine what is right or wrong for the Christian. Especially troublesome is the fact that there are so few “thou shalt and thou shalt not” rules in the New Testament. The Law of Moses contains 613 specific rules of conduct, both positive and negative. These regulations were for one small nation living in one tiny territory in one distinct period of time. On the contrary, Christianity is for all nations throughout all the earth for all time until Jesus returns. To have specified every obligation and prohibition for Christians would have demanded a quantity of books as vast as an encyclopedia.

Rather than a legal code of specific rules, God chose to give us a small number of divine principles by which any question of any age or culture can be measured. If we can learn those principles and how to apply them, no question, problem or issue can arise but that we can quickly determine our Christian response to it. This is not to deny that there are *some* specific rules. Yet we stress that these principles will be used in the majority of our decision making.

1. God authorizes his people to do “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” (Phil. 4:8.) In contrast anything which is dishonorable or impure or unjust would surely be wrong to engage in.
2. The golden rule of Jesus places us under the responsibility

to treat all others just as we would want them to treat us in similar circumstances. (Matt. 7:12.) This rule prohibits us from doing any wrong or harm to our neighbor, but far more, it demands positive acts of good will to all such as we would covet for ourselves.

3. All the obligations of our faith are “summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Rom. 13:9.) The *agape* love which Jesus demands of us all is not romantic love or family love. Rather, it is that attitude of heart that seeks the best interest of all men.
4. Whatever we do must be to the glory of God. (I Cor. 10:31.) If I do not honestly feel that a deed or action will glorify my Father in heaven, then I should immediately refuse it. The Bible does not condemn the smoking of tobacco by name, but the pious saint simply asks, “Does this glorify my God?” Who would say it does?
5. A disciple must do nothing that would cause his brother to stumble. Paul teaches us, “It is good not to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.” (Rom. 14:21.) This principle teaches that even in matters that are innocent in and of themselves we are obligated to be considerate of our neighbor lest we lead him into sin. Christians following this rule will never selfishly assert their rights without due consideration of the consequences of that action on new, weak or untaught brethren. . .and even non-Christians.
6. We must never do a thing if we have guilty doubts about the rightness or wrongness of it. Writing to Christians whose previous culture had taught them it was wrong to eat certain meats, Paul said, “But he that doubteth is

condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23.) God gave us our conscience and appointed it the task of reminding us when we violate the moral/spiritual code we have been taught. While the voice of conscience must never be equated as the voice of God, nor as an infallible guide, yet God warns us not to ignore our conscience and trample upon it. This is true even if it is crying out against innocent things because of past conditioning. The human conscience when repeatedly ignored becomes seared as with a hot iron. (I Tim. 4:2.) To violate our conscience in any matter is sin. Do you have doubts about a certain movie? Do not go to see it.

7. As we can judge a tree by its fruit, so we can judge an activity by its fruit. Jesus said, “. . . every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” (Matt. 7:17-18.) To illustrate this point we ask, what is the fruit of social dancing? Strong drink is nearly always associated with the dance party and almost inevitably there will be one or more who become drunk. Fighting between some of the young men is a common problem. Why else do we have to have several chaperones at such events. . . often a policeman is employed to preserve the peace. Because of the romantic and sexually stimulating nature of modern dancing, fornication is an oft recurring problem among those who dance. Now in view of this we ask what is the fruit of dancing? Is the fruit bad or good? Since bad fruit cannot grow on a good tree and since the fruit of dancing is evil, therefore the tree of dancing is bad and the Christian will reject it.
8. Christians must always take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. (Rom. 12:17.) Our ethic de-

mands that we not only be honest and pure but that we be thoughtful not to do anything that might be wrongly interpreted by our neighbor. We often use the expression "open and above board" to describe honorable business dealings. This should be the Christian's business *modus operandi*. This standard will govern our relationships with members of the opposite sex so that we avoid any situation that could be construed as evil or unwholesome.

9. Paul likens the Christian's body to a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. (I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20.) He then proceeds to warn us that anything that defiles the body is forbidden under strict penalty. When the child of God contemplates such matters as the use of tobacco, drugs for non-medical reasons, alcoholic beverages, this principle provides him a moral guideline.
10. Paul warns us to "flee fornication." (I Cor. 6:18.) Anything that would lead to the sin of fornication is to be studiously avoided. This principle applies to many modern movies and magazines. It would govern the type of friends we associate with. A certain type of party or social activity would be excluded by it.
11. In the same vein Jesus taught that looking upon a woman to lust after her is sin. (Matt. 5:28.) This teaches a man not to lust but it also teaches the ladies not to dress or act in such a way as to provoke lust in the boys' hearts.
12. Christians are to "abstain from the very appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5:21-22.) We do not wait until a situation is totally bad, if it even appears to be evil, then we reject it. We do not see how close to the life of sin we can walk; we see how far away we can get.



13. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (I Cor. 6:12.) Christians will not allow themselves to be enslaved by any habit. This, too, deals directly with the problems of smoking, alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs, and gambling.
14. Christians are to adorn themselves in modest apparel before others. (I Tim. 2:9.) This principle certainly is the pole star for our public dress code. If a garment immodestly exposes the anatomy, the Christian rejects it forthright. This makes ample allowance for changing customs in clothing and yet provides a universal standard for all disciples.
15. Saints must let their light so shine that men may see their good works and glorify God in heaven. (Matt. 5:16.) When any activity that is questionable arises, we ask, will this cause men to glorify my God if I do it? If not, we abstain.
16. Self control is expected of all God's children. We must add temperance or self control to our faith. (II Pet. 1:6.) This demands of us moderation in things which are innocent and complete abstinence towards things wrong in themselves.
17. Will this action make me more like the sinful world or more like Christ? Paul exhorts us not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed into the image of Christ. (Rom. 12:1-2.)
18. Perhaps the most potent and helpful question of all is, would Christ do or say this if he were here on earth? We are to follow his holy example in everything. (I Pet. 2:21.) If he would not, I should not. Surely these are

not all of the guidelines to be found in Christ's new covenant. However, they are among the chief ones and may we ever use them in living soberly, righteously and godly for Christ.

## **ETIQUETTE FOR TRAVELING PREACHERS**

Ours is a day of travel. Modern jet air service makes any part of our globe only two days away from home. Our land is one of prosperity and this allows Americans opportunity for world travel. Members of the Lord's church enjoy these privileges with all the rest. As Christians crisscross the earth there are a few basic lessons we need to remember, lest we fall into the category of "the ugly American" to whom people say "Yankee go home." My title says Etiquette for Traveling Preachers, but the lessons are not exclusively for preachers. Any Christian traveling abroad should read and heed.

1. Don't forget you are a Christian. We must let our light shine for Christ whether in Denver or Delhi. (Matt. 5:16.) You may be the only New Testament Christian some of these people will ever meet. Do not then be just another tourist sightseer, but be a soul-winner and gospel worker wherever you are.
2. Remember always that you are now the foreigner, a guest in someone else's homeland. Do not expect therefore everyone to speak "American English." It is you who does not know their language. Never act superior, condescending or paternalistic to the local citizens. Please do not convey the attitude that U.S. customs, technology and ways of doing things are the best and only way. Even if that is true in a given case, you are not in America. In their native land they feel they have the best system. Control your tongue and temper your spirit. Even when tired and frustrated, Christians have no right to be impatient and hateful to

others. Let the virtue of patience prevail. (II Pet. 1:6.)

3. Beware of the temptation to get something special at a good price but in a shady way. Most developing nations have a thriving black market that deals in stolen goods, things smuggled into the land without paying import duties, or illegal merchandise. If we fall into the temptation of grabbing these special bargains, we then become partakers. You are then a "Christian" black-marketeer. Most every foreign traveler has had a man approach him with the expensive U.S. watch for only \$10. Should we not ask where did it come from? How can it be so cheap? Usually it is stolen. If you are found with stolen merchandise in your possession, that in itself is a criminal offense. Do not attempt to take something out of a country in an illegal manner. Occasionally someone is tempted to try to get jewelry, cameras and the like home without paying proper taxes on them. Remember that Christian ethics are universal. Such dealings are wrong no matter where you are.
4. Do not let yourself be tempted to engage in some sinful activity since you are away from home and no one knows you. For example, free liquor is offered on many foreign airlines. Wine is cheaper than coke in some lands. Pretty young girls will proposition a man on the streets of some large cities. Then there are those exotic movies or shows which you could never see at home. Some seem to forget that God is as close to us in Rome as in Atlanta. Moses warned, be sure your sins will find you out. (Num. 32:23.)
5. Do not be the Yankee big spender. By the rest of the world's standards, we Americans are rich. The very fact that we can travel abroad spells richness in their vocabulary. Often we convey this by our lavish tips and gifts.

Two dollars in some situations is not just a tip, it is a day's pay, or even a week's pay. Then too, do not be a sucker for every hustler who assures you "it's a big bargain." Americans are known the world round as prime victims for the rip off. Always remember that money doesn't buy everthing. Some travelers act as though it might.

6. Do not forget the Lord's church and the missionaries when traveling abroad. Some brethren seem to equate a vacation from work with a vacation from God. Some tour the Holy land while forsaking the assembly of the saints. Plan ahead to be with the church where you are visiting. Write for information beforehand. Contact the missionaries ahead of time and see if there is something you can bring him or the family.
7. If you are going on a working visit with the missionaries, do not be a financial burden or a tourist bother on the missionary. He has plenty of work to do without doing tourist guide duty. In raising funds, raise enough to pay your room and board. He may not always take it, but let that be his decision. Never forget your purpose in going—to preach the gospel and *help* the missionary. Do not expect special treatment from the U.S. worker or the local brethren. If you are a bother, you negate your purpose in going.
8. When visiting a foreign work, do not pass hasty judgments and criticisms on local customs and practices of the society, the local Christians or the missionaries. What may at first appear wrong, may on closer inspection be fully scriptural only varying in style from our U.S. way. Perhaps it is a question of opinion, not of scriptural law. Remember the U.S. way is not the only right way to do a thing. So long as brethren are violating no sacred

principle they have the right, just as we, to live their lives and do God's will as their background and culture suggests. Strangely after observation one often concludes that their strange, different way is better than ours.

9. Do not pretend to know everything and to have the solution to every problem. Lean heavily upon local brethren and missionaries for a correct interpretation of actions, problems, questions, and issues. Nothing is more distasteful and troublesome than an unknowledgeable stranger trying to tell someone how to run his business. Sometimes local brethren might even be using you to gain a point against the missionary. When you are gone, they will play one against the other. Be willing and anxious to learn of the customs and culture of those whom you are visiting.
10. Do not allow yourself to become enmeshed in problems between our missionary brethren. There are personality clashes and personal conflicts in Asia as in Alabama. Sometimes there is jealousy and competition. You might be set up as someone else's hatchet man. Of course, there will be times when you can clearly see a sinful situation and conscience will demand that you act upon it. But act only after careful investigation and prayer and discussion with all involved. Always be willing to listen sympathetically to the problems of missionary brethren. Far from home and isolated, they need a friendly sounding board. Make it your aim to be a healer, not an opener of wounds.
11. Do not allow national Christians to use you for selfish ends. Many are the world-wide problems met in this category. Some manipulate the unwary American brother to get on a U.S. payroll as a preacher. Seldom if ever does this work in the best interest of the Cause.

Goodhearted Yankees nearly always pay salaries far above what they could make in their own economy. This attracts mercenaries. The system has been abused in untold numbers of cases. It actually hinders the development of the churches of the mission field since they can never support their own preachers as well as we do. And then they reason, why should we? You will be approached to get entrance into the U.S. for education and jobs. Some actually are baptized with this in mind. Even if they are sincere it usually results in their not returning home to serve, but staying in America. This robs the mission church of its leaders. Those who do return home are often spoiled by our American culture and the U.S. support they inevitably bring back so that their effectiveness is actually reduced. Some national brethren will seek to prejudice you against the missionaries because the U.S. worker had to correct them, or will not allow himself to be manipulated. Sometimes there will be an effort to set your teaching against the missionary's. Don't let this happen. Such can only hinder the work. When you return home you will likely receive many letters requesting help. Learn to say no, gracefully. If a case seems to have merit, always clear any help through the missionary. We must learn to help, not to hinder these new works.

12. Last, let us always be ready and anxious to help our missionary brethren, but only as they need the help. If your going for a meeting works a hardship and is not needed, then it really is only for your benefit, not theirs. Learn also what you can do to help the mission workers when you have returned home. That is one of the greatest benefits that comes from such trips.

As we go, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in each and all. If that is too hard, then Yankee Stay Home!

## PROBLEM PREACHERS

Without doubt one of the greatest assets of the Lord's church is her faithful gospel preachers. Churches with good preachers almost always are stable and growing. Good works flourish when consecrated, godly men of God put their hands to the task. Just as surely, however, problem preachers are the church's greatest bane. Most every church has had at least one such misfit in its history. Because of the influence and position of a preacher in our congregations it is likely that a troublesome preacher will afflict the church he serves.

To help elders and congregations to avoid such painful problems I would like to note several undesirable categories of preachers. May I hasten to say that I do not have in mind those men who faithfully proclaim God's truth in love and in so doing arouse opposition from worldly carnal-minded members. (Eph. 4:15.)

1. *False Teachers.* Just because a man says "I am a gospel preacher" does not necessarily mean it is so. There have always been wolves in sheep's clothing in the preaching business. (Matt. 7:15.) No false teacher will ever announce himself as such. Nor will an apostate volunteer to admit his departure. The apostles repeatedly warned us of these poisonous preachers. (Acts 20:28-31; II John 9-11.) A congregation dare not tolerate such a man in their midst.
2. *Rebels.* Some men just cannot submit themselves to the authority of others. Sometimes a preacher is found with this attitude. Jude warned rebellious disciples of judgment awaiting those who "rail at dignities." (vs.



8.) Samuel reminded Saul that “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” (I Sam. 15:23.) These preachers have forgotten or rejected the divine principle that God made elders the overseers of the church. (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2.) The command to “obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them. . .” (Heb. 13:17) is applicable to all Christians, preachers included. Of course not one of the rebels will boldly declare his rejection of authority. He will attempt to discredit his elders or to intimidate them in some way. Some are even now attempting to prove that a preacher is not under elders’ authority, that he is at least their equal. Such men are trouble just waiting to happen. We often see this class of men attempt to unseat and remove elders and not a few succeed.

3. Then there are *impenitent preachers*. Like all other mortals, preachers sin and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23.) Being of flesh and blood they occasionally fall victim to the temptations of life. Just as with other brethren there will sometimes be the stubborn impenitent preacher. Unable because of false pride to admit his error, he may draw away a small group of his disciple friends and start a new congregation rather than repent. How many congregations have had such an inglorious beginning. He may flee to a far city and pretend that nothing has ever happened, only to mar another congregation’s life. Preachers, too, must repent or perish. (Lk. 13:3.) Those who will not, must be delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (I Cor. 5:5.)
4. Occasionally we hear of the *dishonest preacher*. Judas was one of these. He stole from the disciples’ fund. (John 12:6.) What a tragedy to the cause of Jesus when so prominent a disciple as a minister is found mishandling

church funds. It may be that he is dishonest in his own financial transactions. We have known of men who represented the kingdom of truth while being addicted to lying. All liars shall have their part in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8) even men who preach with the eloquence of Apollos.

5. There are men who *love and crave power*. Unable to find it elsewhere they seek it in the pulpit. No one ever knows as much as they, none are so sound in their view. They must run the show or ruin it. They trample on other's rights and crush all opposition. I once heard such a brother say, "If anybody runs this church, I will." Like Diotrephes they love to have the preeminence. (III John 9.) Wherever this type of brother works the church will submit to his will or he will leave in a huff. If neither of these occur, they may have to ask him to leave rather than endure the continual striving which would result.
  
6. Now and again we find a preacher who just *cannot seem to get along with people*. He may be loyal to the truth. He may be a capable proclaimer. But he is always at odds with someone. This is an unfortunate case because some talented men are severely handicapped by this problem. It actually forces many out of the field of preaching. This is usually a personality problem. Either they are too sensitive to other's criticisms or they are overly aggressive. For some it is a problem of communication. They know what to say, but they have not learned how to say it to achieve the desired end. Those with serious personality disorders will likely need professional counseling to master their problem. Some whose basic training was faulty can profit from books on human relations, such as Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People*. Solomon wrote, "He that hath friends must show himself friendly." (Prov. 18:24,

K.J.V.) The golden rule of our Lord is the balance wheel of all good social relationships. A man whose chief business is working with people cannot afford to be deficient in this critical area.

7. Churches are hurt by preachers who are *sadistic* in preaching, teaching and dealing with people. There are men who seem to enjoy browbeating and upbraiding brethren. They feel it a pleasure to publicly humiliate brethren and sinners alike. They urge you to bring your Baptist neighbor and then they proceed to flail him and skin him alive. No consideration is given, no tact is used. To them, this is weakness. Ridicule of sectarians, un-diplomatic name calling, vindictive language are all part of their pack. One brother used to say to his audience, "If you disagree with my preaching you are either mean or ignorant." Thank God that most brethren have outgrown this low type of preaching. How could it edify? How can it save souls? If one be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. (Matt. 10:16.) Paul advised Timothy, "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle toward all. . .in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves. . . ." (II Tim. 2:24-25.) With this ugly approach we may well win the argument, but we usually lose the soul. Such preaching should be labeled with skull and crossbones. It is harmful and destructive. Those saints who grow up under it are usually spiritually warped by its influence.
8. We sometimes see preachers who are *status seekers*. They can never stay with a congregation long enough to do a great work because they are continually seeking a chance to move up the ladder. Bigger salary, and bigger congregations, mean more than the welfare of the church they presently labor with. A congregation may have spent \$2,000 for moving him there and went to great

expense to prepare his home. But he cannot afford to miss this step up, so he goes. There is always that haunting question, after one gets to be the greatest, where does a preacher go? Many leave the pulpit for a worldly position. As one noted ex-preacher eloquently stated, "After you've preached for -----(in Texas), where can you go?"

9. Every generation produces its *attention seekers*. The church gets its share of these, too. To feed their hungry ego, they resort to all sorts of tricks and gimmickry to win the oohs and aahs of the people. It may be extreme styles of clothing, it may be the flamboyant life style. It often is the bombastic pulpit style. For some it is the endless stream of funny stories to get the audience to respond, but which smothers and hides the precious Word of God. Such egoists need to study the inimitable Paul. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:1-2.) The braggart, the clown and the show off seem strangely out of place beside God's great men of the Bible.
10. We cannot overlook the *hobbyist* preacher. He is the man obsessed with one issue to the point that he drives it into the ground. This may even be a valid point he teaches but he becomes unbalanced and onesided in dealing with it. Most often it is a personal opinion or a matter of judgment that captures his mind. Sometimes he thinks he is the only man who sees that point, or that it is the key to the church's future. While he pounds away at his pet theme other important areas of teaching are neglected and his hearers lose their interest in coming to hear his preaching and classes. Often he becomes so

inflamed that he imagines that all who do not share his excitement are enemies of Christ. Most anti preachers first suffered from this illness and then they launched into their peculiar issue. Sound preachers will preach the whole counsel of God. (Acts. 20:27.) They will never hold back *anything profitable* from their brethren. (Acts 20:20.) But a hobby-riding preacher is like “a continuing dropping (of water) on a very rainy day . . . .” (Prov. 27:15.)

11. Last of all, we notice the preacher who is a *promoter*. It is conceded that in a certain sense every preacher must promote the cause of Christ and all good works. But I think of the brother who promotes himself or his own pet project. Some men use their church connections for opportunity to promote their own business interest. Some men always have a big project to promote and so zealous are they that if you do not support their pet you are suspect to say the least. I read recently of a notable brother a few years ago who in his zeal to promote a Christian college said that every church ought to put a certain college in their budget or be looked into. For shame. He caught a storm of protest and rightly so. Surely we do not object to a brother telling us of a good work to help or his encouraging us to do so. We do not mind a brother selling his books, records or soul-winning kits. But when he takes advantage of a captive audience and uses subtle selling techniques to squeeze them into buying, he is out of place. It is wrong to make merchandise of brethren. (II Pet. 2:3.) Paul warns that “Men corrupt in mind and bereft of truth (suppose) that godliness is a way of gain.” (I Tim. 6:5.)

The church needs thousands of gospel preachers. But she does not need the kind who cause her hurt and shame. May God deliver her from those that do. May we who

preach daily prove our own selves to see if we are truly in the faith. (II Cor. 13:5.) May we honor our Savior and respect his holy church and be good ministers of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith. (I Tim. 4:6.)

## OPPOSING ERROR

For some years now, a common concern of all faithful Christians has been the creeping emergence of an apostasy within the ranks of the Lord's church. Numerous articles have been published on these matters and thousands of sermons have been delivered relating to it.

Only a blind man could truly claim that he sees no evidence of this unholy departure. But there has been a great deal of confusion as to how to deal with the problem. This has led to indecision and inactivity on the part of many concerned Christians. Of those who did elect to act, not all proceeded in the most profitable way. Some felt that tolerance and loving acceptance would somehow smother out the fires of error. Of course it did not. Others blindly began to flail at everything and every man who they suspected, even as a man lashes out at snakes in a bad dream. This approach is counter-productive because good works and innocent men are often wounded along with the bad. It also further fuels the fires of the liberal brother who seeks to discredit our objections to his cause.

The times and problems demand an intelligent, balanced response to false doctrine. Paul admonishes us, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:15-16.) Brethren must clearly understand the issues at hand. They must recognize just who the enemy is. We must carefully document and identify the error and its teachers. (Rom. 16:17.) We must be unyielding and consistent is our opposition if we are to win this crucial battle. (I Cor. 15:58.)

While we commonly call our latest intrusion liberalism and modernism, these words need to be more precisely defined in order to keep false teachers from dodging behind our imprecision. Technically the word liberalism suggests those who deny the Biblical doctrine of revelation and inspiration, the miracles of the Bible, the deity of Jesus, and other fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. We have very few men among us who have fallen to this low plane. Our trouble makers rather question the authority of the Bible to settle religious issues. They are questioning and rejecting principles of faith, worship and practice which we are sure are solidly based upon scriptural precedent. Theirs is the ancient sin of denominationalism, i.e., the placing of human wisdom and preference above the revelation of God. (Is. 55:8-9). Those among us who have taken the road of Pentecostalism have in addition to the above elevated their subjective emotional feeling above the sacred scriptures. They forget that man can never direct his own spiritual steps. (Jer. 10:23.) While they are liberal in the sense that they have taken unlawful liberties with God's Word, work and worship, they are not liberals in the classical sense of the word. They are truly modernists in that they have attempted to subvert the old Jerusalem gospel delivered by Christ and his apostles with a new gospel of human opinions. When they thus go beyond the doctrine of Christ, they have not God. (II John 9.)

While these terms have become valid by current usage, we must be careful and discriminatory in our use of them. Better to take the time to spell out a man's error than to cast a vague label upon him that might be easily shaken off. In this we must "prove all things, hold fast that which is good; (and) abstain from every form of evil." (I Thess. 5:21-22) When we take the time to pinpoint his errors and scripturally refute them, we will occasionally discover that what we suspected was liberalism was simply a new way of doing an old thing and not a thing sinful or wrong.



Another danger in dealing with liberalism is that we become obsessed with this one issue and neglect other important aspects of our faith and work. Some become so engrossed in fighting liberalism that all evangelistic activity ceases. Our major concern is always to evangelize the world for Jesus. (Mk. 16:15-16.) Others become so embittered in battling enemies that Christian charity and brotherly love disappears. "Everyone that loveth is begotten of God . . . . He that loveth not knoweth not God. . . ." (I John 4:7-8.) Some neglect the positive aspects of congregational work in their determination to stamp out liberalism. When any or all of these happen, Satan has won a subtle victory. He has the false brother, but then he has diverted the sound brother from the only work that will save the souls of the lost. Let us not be ignorant of the devil's devices. (II Cor. 2:11.) Really, his infernal majesty does not care if we fight liberalism, so long as we abdicate our responsibilities elsewhere. The watchword is *balance*. When we lose that we lose everything in the long run. "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17.) "Let us then put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . .and having, done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:11-13.)

## PURPOSES OF RESTORATION

Churches of Christ in America today are heirs of a distinct movement that sprang up on this continent at the turn of the nineteenth century. Noble men and women dedicated their lives to the goal of restoring the original Christianity of the first century in their day. They sensed the futility of attempting to reform the existing denominations. They concluded that the only practical way to have pure Christianity was to bypass all the existing bodies and begin from "scratch" with the New Testament as their sole guide and blueprint.

## REASONS AND MOTIVES

No doubt each man who contributed to this movement had many reasons for his efforts. It is also most likely that none of the leaders ever wrote down for posterity *all* of their motives. Yet we can glean some all-important goals that were shared by the great restoration pioneers. For the sake of our readers who do not yet share our faith, we would hasten to add that the Restoration movement of the nineteenth century was not an organized movement with a governing body over it. Not even a single individual can be looked upon as the leader or spokesman. That very first generation saw a number of talented men in widely scattered parts of the land, with distinctly different religious backgrounds, launch their own attempt to recover pure Christianity. This was done without an organized, coordinated effort. It is a fascinating study to trace the growth of this restoration movement and to read of the struggles to arrive at that pure religion of the first century.

1. The restorers wanted to overcome the problem of religious division that plagued the believers in Christ. They felt unity could only be realized in Christ and upon the basis of His New Covenant. All saints should speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and judgment, I. Cor. 1:10.
2. They wanted to restore the original simplicity and purity of worship of the Lord's Church. The centuries had produced numbers of additions and subtractions to the true worship of God outlined in the New Testament. The Lord's Supper needed to be restored to its proper place as the center of the Lord's Day worship. Every saint deserved the privilege to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine upon the first day of the week, Acts 20:7. The accumulation of such unscriptural items as incense, candles, holy water, images, crucifixes, and prayer beads needed to be swept away.
3. They sought to discover and proclaim again the gospel plan of salvation first spoken by the Lord and then his holy apostles; Heb. 2:3. Knowing that sinners could not be saved by faith only (Jas. 2:24.) or by works done in their own righteousness (Tit. 3:5); they sought and found that way revealed by Christ. The New Testament posited salvation upon faith in Christ, repentance of sin, confession of faith, and immersion in water, Mk. 16:16; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 2:38.
4. They desired to restore the local congregation of Christians to its rightful place. Each community of saints should be self-governing under Christ and his inspired word. Christ knew nothing of popes or patriarchs dominating his people. Elders, not preachers, were to rule the congregation, Acts 20:17, 28-31. Associations, conventions, synods, conferences, and councils to govern

the churches were all the creations of man and needed to be eliminated.

5. They longed to exalt the Bible to its proper place as the final and complete authority in Christianity. They had seen the damage done by the creeds of the churches. They rejected the traditions of men, Matt. 15:6-9. Their plea was "back to the Bible" It was "to the law and to the testimony" for them, Is. 8:20. They wanted to find and abide in the doctrine of Christ, II John 9.
6. They yearned to rid the world of sectarian names in religion and to restore the name of Christ to its honored place. They were not ashamed to be merely "Christians," I Pet. 4:16. Since the church was Christ's by right of purchase, why not call it "the church of Christ" even as did Paul? Rom. 16:16. Of course they objected not to any other Biblical name for saints or congregations.
7. They felt an obligation to rid Christianity of all those corruptions and errors that had crept in over the centuries, whether in faith or in practice, whether large or small. They were convinced that this could only be accomplished by a rejection of all the denominations of men and a complete return to the divine blueprint laid out in God's word, II Tim. 1:13, Heb. 8:5b.

That first generation of men succeeded admirably in their efforts. Across the land a mighty wave of God-fearing people joined hands in the effort. We would not be so bold as to claim that we have perfectly reproduced the total program of Christ today. But I hasten to affirm that those of your neighbors known as the churches of Christ are diligently striving after that goal. Every saint in every generation must in his own life dedicate himself to that noble effort—i.e., to be nothing more or less than the kind of Christians as were

**Peter, James and John, Paul, and a myriad of others we read of in the New Testament. Will you not join with us in this honorable pursuit?**

## TO RESTORE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY

When caught in a flood, one looks for a high place of safety. In times of confusion, we search for surety and confidence. In today's religious climate, the sensitive believer is anxious to find a way toward fellowship with God that is safe, solid and secure.

The old established denominations and Catholicism are groaning with the pangs of decay. Many strange voices are being heard on the religious horizon. But these only lead further away from the truth of the gospel.

Christ did build his church! It flourished in simple purity in the first and second centuries. Then was pure Christianity, unadulterated by man's hand. Have you ever pondered the possibility of drinking from the clear springs of original Christianity today?

Someone may ask, is it necessary to restore the church? The careful student of scripture and church history knows that many serious changes have been forced upon the Christian religion since its beginning.

The form of church government has been changed drastically.

Names by which the church is known have been changed.

The recipient of baptism has been changed by many groups.

The form of baptism has also been changed.

The creed of the church has been displaced.

Human creeds have overshadowed the will of Christ.

The form of worship has been altered with various additions and/or subtractions.

The plan of salvation has been obscured.

The unity of the church has suffered because of denominationalism. These many changes have robbed believers of a clear vision of what their religion was really like in the beginning. The problem is magnified when we remember that an infallible, all-wise God founded the church and that sinful, fallible men have presumed to change it. Can man ever hope to improve on God's work?

Is it possible to restore first century Christianity today? Jesus founded an everlasting kingdom, (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18). Surely the God who gave us the church is able to preserve it through the ages. To realize the goal of restoration, we must recognize the following points:

Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of religion. His New Testament is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice for Christians.

We must make a proper distinction between the Old and New Testaments.

We must be content to worship and serve God exactly as the first Christians did, as set forth in the New Testament.

The autonomy of each local congregation must be respected.

Every effort must be made to achieve and maintain the

unity of all Christians upon the basis of obedience to Christ and His Word.

If we have no book but the Bible; no creed but Christ, and no name but the divine name, surely we can achieve this goal. When reached, we can maintain it if in matters of faith we will stand united; in matters of opinion and methods we will grant liberty and toleration and in all things practice love for our brethren.

The idea of restoring New Testament Christianity has a universal appeal to men of all nations.

It looks to that one universal church that Jesus founded and is savior of. (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23.)

A universal book (the Bible) is set forth as the only rule of faith and practice, the only authoritative and complete repository of all that is necessary to serving God and preparing for eternity.

Its confession of faith is universal. that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16.)

Universally accepted scriptural names are used: i.e. Christian, disciples, brethren, saints, church of Christ, etc.

Its teaching on baptism and the Lord's Supper are universally appealing for they would be observed precisely as when instituted by Christ.

It advocates a universal life of Christian purity and service as exemplified by the Lord, that goes beyond racial and national boundaries.

It has a universal aim which is to exalt and spread the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.



Could any honest soul object to such spiritual principles as:

Wearing the name of Christ to the exclusion of all human names. . .

Faith in the living, reigning, interceding Christ being the only creed of the church. . .

The New Testament of Christ being the only book of discipline accepted by the church. . . .

The complete authority of Christ over his church being recognized and restored. . .

Christ's one church being exalted above all man-made institutions and organizations. . .

All the commands of Christ being obeyed by his people. . . .

The ideals of Christ being exemplified in the lives of all who wear his name. . . .

Unity in Christ by faith, repentance and baptism into him superseding all denominationalism to the end that there should be one body of which Christ is both Head and Foundation?

The concept of "Restoration" is not new. It is an ancient and constant need in religion. Twenty-five hundred years ago God said to the men of Judah, "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. . ." (Jeremiah 6:16). The student of church history will find many voices who pled the same message. It is not a local

movement. All across the earth, independent movements have sprung up with the announced goal of going back to the Bible, restoring primitive Christianity. This common faith and goal cannot but bring these movements together in Christ, if sincerely followed.

It is not an institutional or governmental movement. Rather, God-fearing individuals are making their way out of the foggy mist of religious confusion into the pure light of God's word. Like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, when they find it, they gladly give up whatever is necessary to lay hold on it. Perhaps you are interested. For more information contact us.

## WHAT HAPPENED AT CALVARY?

The darkest hour in human history occurred in Jerusalem some 1900 years ago. Sin reached its highest pinnacle; human depravity sank to its lowest ebb when Jews and Gentiles together crucified Jesus the Son of God. Against this black background of wickedness the one who came as the light of the world glowed in all his holy glory. As the blood freely flowed from his wounds, many world shaking and world altering events were taking place.

1. As the Savior writhed in anguish and pain, his life slowly ebbing from his wounded body, the *serpent's head was being bruised*. The Creator promised his fallen children that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head while being bruised in his heel. (Gen. 3:15.) These enigmatic words were never fully comprehended until the past mysteries were made plain by the gospel of the new covenant. Christ, the only man exclusively the product of a woman, being virgin born, delivered a crushing blow to Satan, the old serpent (Rev. 12:9.) while suffering on the cross. What appeared to be Christ's destruction was turned into great triumph by his resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1:4.) Paul explains that when he was nailed to the cross, he despoiled the principalities and powers, making "a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. 2:14-15.) Never will Satan enjoy the power he once knew before the Lord came down, and the day hastens when he shall be forever cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented forever. (Rev. 20:10.)
2. The *sin debt* of all humanity was *being paid* in full as our

Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth. It has always been true that apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. (Heb. 9:22.) Likewise it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Heb. 10:4.) But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, does cleanse us from all sin. (I John 1:7.) While some might be willing to die for the good man who is his friend, the marvel of it all is that Christ died for us while we were weak, ungodly sinners and enemies of righteousness. Now we are justified by his blood and we shall be saved from future wrath. (Rom. 5:6-9.) The blood of the wounded Savior cleanses our guilty conscience. (Heb. 9:14.) The effective benefits of his sacrifice extend backwards to Eden and forward to the end of this age. (Heb. 9:15.) So effective was this sacrifice of his life that it need never be repeated. He was once offered to bear the sins of many. (Heb. 9:28.)

3. *Christ tasted damnation for us* as he hung there. It was heaven's plan that Jesus should "taste of death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) Most people think only of his physical death when they read such verses, but much more is involved. His death was a vicarious one. "Jehovah hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." (Is. 53:5-6.) He made "his soul an offering for sin." (Is. 53:10.) Although he died physically, all humans yet die, whether saved or sinners. (Heb. 9:27.) There is, however, a death that faithful children of God will never taste, i.e., the second death, or death of the soul which is to be separated from God in eternity. (Compare II Thess. 1:9 and Rev. 20:14-15.) Do you recall how our Lord cried out in agony when the darkness fell upon the earth scene, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:33-34.) What does this mean? God laid upon the Son all the sin guilt of humanity as he hung dying on the Roman cross. But sin cannot stand in the presence

of a righteous, holy God. So God drew back, separating Himself from His own Son in that awful moment. But what does it mean to be separated from God? That is nothing less than damnation itself. For to be lost is to be separated from God. (Is. 59:1-2.) Our King paid a price far more dear than merely dying in a painful way. He tasted even the horrible second death for us that we might be saved!

4. As those terrible scenes transpired, *the way to heaven was being opened for us*. We can now boldly enter the holy place of heaven itself “by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” (Heb. 10:19-20.) Since we have been “reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Rom. 5:10.)
5. That day *the old covenant was being removed as God’s governing law*. We were made dead to the law of Moses by the body of Christ. (Rom. 7:4.) He “blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” (Col. 2:14.) Since we are now led by the Spirit, we are not under the law. (Gal. 5:18.)
6. As the old covenant was passing away, *the new covenant was being ratified and dedicated*. When instituting the holy supper, the Lord said of the fruit of the vine, “This is my blood of the covenant. . . .” (Matt. 26:28.) The Hebrew writer further explains, saying, “For this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant.” He further adds, “For where a testament is, there must be the death of him that made it. . . .wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.” (Heb. 9:15-18.) Our new covenant would be but worth-

less paper without the death of Christ to certify its message.

7. As the hateful crowd jeered the dying Messiah, the purchase price *was being paid for his church*. Paul reminds us all that the church of the Lord was “purchased with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28.) If the modernists who reject the doctrine of the saving power of the shed blood of Christ are correct, then the church, the Bible, and the very idea of salvation are all made void and meaningless.
8. As the unnatural darkness settled over the land, *the old age was dying and a new age was coming into existence*. The age of law had come through Moses, now the aeon of grace and truth was beginning. (John 1:17.) The kingdom which John the Baptist and Jesus both had promised was now ready to be built upon the one foundation. (Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 3:11.) Later that day his disciples would lay his mangled body in a borrowed tomb, but God would raise him up on the third day even as prophets had foretold. After showing himself alive by many infallible proofs he would ascend into the heavens to take his seat at the right hand of the Father where he would rule and reign until the end of the Christian age. (Acts 2:32-36.)

As we behold this dreadful scene outside Jerusalem's walls on the Calvary's hill, we by the knowledge which our scriptures offer, can see the salvation of humanity with all its attendant blessings. The question of the hour is: “Have you appropriated these blessings for yourself?”

## THE LANGUAGE OF SALVATION

When Jehovah chose to reveal His great salvation to humanity He directed His inspired spokesmen to describe it by illustrations from their everyday life so the most humble soul could easily understand it.

The many illustrations utilized are much like the various acts of a play or verses of a song, in that they are saying the same thing. In all of them we see man separated from God by an impassable barrier called sin (Is. 59:1-2); then we see how God saves man from his predicament through His holy Son, Jesus.

### JUSTIFICATION

Our first illustration is drawn from the law courts. The metaphor pictures the sinner before God his judge, as a guilty, condemned lawbreaker. Because of his guilt he can only look forward to an awful punishment in hell. But when all hope is gone, Christ the innocent one steps forward to pay the penalty of death for the sinner. "For while we were yet weak. . . Christ died for the ungodly. . . much more then being now *justified* by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God. . .," Rom. 5:6-9. The condemned sinner is "justified by faith" in his Savior, Rom. 5:1. He is no longer condemned, Rom. 8:1. He is a sinner but now God treats him as though he were innocent. Because of Christ and his trust in him, God deals with the sinner "just as if he had never sinned." When asked how he would reward the South for their rebellion, President Lincoln said, "I am going to treat them as though they had never sinned." This too is the lesson of the way the loving father received his prodigal son,

Lk. 15:20-24. Condemned ones are justified through faith in Christ, not by the works of the law of Moses, Gal 5:6.

## RECONCILIATION

Our next example is from the social realm and has to do with friendship. Here we see man pictured as an enemy of God. “. . .while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. . . .,” Rom. 5:10. Sinners are alienated and enemies in their minds and in their evil works, Col. 1:21. In this plight, separated from God by our foolish actions, we are lost. We need to make friends with our God and thus be reconciled. But we sinners have no suitable gift to bring to our Lord against whom we have sinned. What can we do? God meets our need. “For it was the good pleasure of the Father. . .through Christ to reconcile all things unto himself. . . .,” Col. 1:19-20. Peace was effected “through the blood of the cross,” (Col. 1:20) and we were “reconciled in the body of his flesh through death,” Col. 1:22. The reconciliation of all men is realized in the “one body” of Christ, Eph. 2:16. But what is this one body? This favorite expression of Paul is defined in Eph. 1:22-23. God gave Christ “to be head over all things *to the church, which is his body. . . .*” So we are reconciled to God in the one true church of Christ.

## REMISSION

From the business world we have our next illustration. Man is represented as standing before God with an impossible debt to pay, i.e., his sins. This is seen in the parable in Matt. 18:23-27. The servant owes his king over a million dollars. In a day when workers earned some 15 cents per day, this was a debt he could never pay. By right the king could have inflicted great punishment upon him, but he forgave the debt. In Christ we have our debt of sin cancelled or paid in



full. God calls it remission of sins," No money or good works can achieve this, for "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission," Heb. 9:22. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins, Heb. 10:4. But the apostles taught, "that through his name, every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins," Acts 10:43. When does this occur? Hear Peter, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto (for) the remission of sins. . . .," Acts 2:38. Without water baptism no one can enjoy remission of sins, i.e., to have his great debt of sin marked paid in full by the Lord.

## REDEMPTION

In the Roman world, over half the population was in bondage. Slavery was a very real and everyday fact of life. Every slave longed for the day when he could be redeemed from his master and set free. It was usually through the kindness and generosity of some benefactor that a slave's price was paid and he was set free. Every man is enslaved to the tyrant sin with no way to free himself. "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin," John 8:34. God through Christ redeemed us. "Ye were bought with a price," I Cor. 6:20; "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life. . . .but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish. . . .even the blood of Christ," I Pet. 1:18-19. We have our redemption *in Christ*, Col. 1:13-14. How then may we get *into Christ*? Paul says we are baptized into Christ, Gal. 3:27. Thus only those who are properly baptized into Christ are redeemed from the bondage of sin by his precious blood.

## CONCLUSION

Space fails us to deal with all of God's terms that describe

our glorious salvation but perhaps these will suffice to show the honest soul that his only hope of salvation is through faith in God's Son, baptism in water according to His gospel and fellowship in the church which bears his name. Will you accept the salvation God offers today?

## **ABORTION -- BLIGHT OR BLESSING?**

Each day 4,000 human lives are put to death. The victims will die without benefit of trial or counsel. They are executed by techniques more cruel and inhumane than any horror movie ever portrayed. These deaths occur in abortion clinics and hospitals throughout our land. Conspirators in this atrocity include willing mothers, medical doctors, government social planners and Supreme Court Justices. These victims are not convicted criminals, they are innocent unborn human babies. One and a half million of these youngsters will die this year. It is estimated that between 40 and 55 million abortions will be performed throughout the world. In the face of this, Pharoah's extermination of the Hebrews boys was but a ripple on the ocean of time. The slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem by Herod did not equal one abortion clinic's daily quota.

January 22, 1973 is a day that will live in eternal infamy. On that day the Supreme Court ruled that: during the first trimester of pregnancy the decision to abort rests solely with the woman and her doctor; during the second trimester the State can regulate the abortion procedure to protect maternal health; during the final three months, when the fetus is viable, the State can regulate or even prohibit abortion except when it is necessary for the mother's mental or physical health. (U. S. News & World Report, March 4, 1974, pg. 44).

The results of this court decision are appalling. Every major paper in the country carries ads for abortion clinics. Many doctors have forsaken their noble calling of healing and life saving and turned to killing unwanted babies. The mother's mental or physical health is a loophole allowing babies to be legally aborted through the ninth month of pregnancy. Upwards of 4,000 of these last trimester babies

were aborted in New York State alone in 1971. J.C. Willke, *Handbook on Abortion*, 1974, pg. 32.

Among the most heinous results of this gruesome business is human experimentation on babies aborted alive. Human babies have been kept alive in laboratories where scientists subjected them to medical experiments that always result in their death. After a brief moratorium, this practice is now legal with some restrictions. *Ibid*, pg. 129-130.

This is but part of a growing deterioration of respect for all human life in our land. Voices are already crying out for euthanasia: elimination of the defective and the aged.

We tend to turn our faces away from unpleasant scenes. Some prefer to stay ignorant on such issues as this. But ignorance will not *excuse* us. The information is available. The very land itself cries out that something must be done.

### SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Is that which is growing in the pregnant mother's womb alive? Of course. When did that life begin? At what point of time? When the sperm and ovum united! Is this human life which lives in the expecting womb? Remember, it is the product of two human lives. If one says it is not human life, then of what kind is it? Animal or vegetable? Is this life merely an appendage of the mother's body? Not at all. It is altogether a new life totally different from the mother. Is this human life innocent? Without doubt! Is this innocent human life willfully killed in abortion? Yes, for that is the express purpose of the abortion. Is it wrong to deliberately kill innocent human life? If so, why? It is because mankind alone is made in the image of God. (Gen.9:6).

## BIBLE TEACHING ON THE QUESTION OF ABORTION

While abortion is not mentioned specifically by name in either testament, there are numerous divine principles that speak to this issue providing heavenly guidance. Notice some of them.

Life is a gift from God. "He giveth life and breath to *all things*." (Acts 17:25). As creator and sustainer of life, God alone has the right to take man's life.(Gen. 50:15-19). Only human life is made "in the image of God?" (Gen. 1:26). Thus human life is elevated to a plane above all other forms of earthly life. This declares that man shares kinship with God. A degree of inviolateness flows from that relationship. Man has always been forbidden the right to kill his fellow human because of this "image of God." (Gen. 9:6). The penalty for thus killing an innocent neighbor was *death*. (*Ibid.*)

Christ taught the value of human life. The first century society had little respect for life. In the Roman empire, sixty million souls lived in debasing slavery. Thousands flocked to the gladiatorial games to watch men fight each other to death for entertainment. Frenzied mobs demanded more brutality and bloodshed. Infants, being the property of the father, were commonly killed or abandoned at birth. Abortion was widespread.

To this society Jesus taught the sacredness of human life. He showed that God so loved all the inhabitants of the earth that he gave the best of heaven to save them. (John 3:16). He commanded that every creature in the world have

opportunity to hear the gospel and be saved.(Mk. 16:15-16). Little children were precious unto him and he rebuked those who tried to turn them away. (Matt. 19:14).

No distinction is made in the Scriptures between prenatal and postnatal life. God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." (Jer. 1:5). Unborn John the Baptist leaped in his mother's womb when the expecting mother of our Lord greeted Elisabeth.(Lk. 1:41). David wrote, "For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst cover me in my mother's womb. . . .my frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth. Thine eyes did see my unformed substance; and in thy book they were written. Even the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was none of them." (Ps. 139:13-16). David was recognized as a person by God even as he was being "curiously wrought" in his mother's womb. Even then there was a plan for his life. The word *brepos* used to describe the baby in Elisabeth's womb, is used interchangeably for both prenatal and postnatal babies.(Lk. 1:41). It means "an unborn child, embryo, fetus; a newborn child, an infant, a babe" *Thayer's Greek English Lexicon*, pg. 105. Christians who question this should ask themselves, was it the Christ-child in Mary's womb or a lifeless blob of fetal tissue?

God's Word still teaches "Thou shalt not kill". (Rom. 13:9). The Hebrew literally reads, thou shalt do no murder. The deliberate taking of innocent human life without provocation or just cause is murder. Abortion is the intentional killing of a human life. The abortion victim is totally innocent, having done no wrong towards the mother, her doctor or society. There is often a selfish motive in abortions for the interests of others are placed above those of the baby. The conclusion of moral guilt is inescapable.

Christ's golden rule tells us, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. 7:12). This rule applied would close all abortion clinics. Would the mother want to be killed by dismemberment such as the dilation and curettage abortion procedure? Would the abortionist doctor want to have a corrosive poured over his body and forced into his lungs and stomach and then be left to convulse for hours till death? This is the baby's fate in the salt poisoning abortion. Is there a nurse who attends in abortions who would want to be ripped apart by a powerful suction machine? By the time early abortions are performed (eight to twelve weeks) the baby has his entire organ system in place and his full sense of pain.

We are taught "not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others." (Phil. 2:4). Selfishness lies at the root of most abortions. Unmarried couples selfishly indulge in sexual pleasure and then when pregnancy occurs they kill the life that would embarrass them. The same attitude is seen when the married professional woman chooses to abort rather than accept the responsibilities of motherhood, which would hinder her personal ambitions.

God condemns the people who are "without natural affection." (Rom. 1:31). Without doubt, a mother that can deliberately kill the innocent child in her womb lacks that normal, motherly affection which God expects of mankind.

### SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Since Adam did not become alive until God breathed into him the breath of life, and since the baby does not breathe until he leaves the womb, some argue that the unborn baby has no soul and can be killed without guilt. But there is no parallel here. Adam had no life, at all, until God inbreathed

him. But the babe from the moment of conception is alive and growing. His oxygen is supplied through his umbilical system. At birth his system for getting oxygen is replaced by one suited for his new environment. It is a biological fact that each human life begins at conception. James says that the body apart from the spirit is dead. (James 2:26). The opposite of this is obviously true, i.e., to be alive, the spirit must be in the body. But the babe in the womb is unquestionably alive (else there would be no need for abortion). Therefore, the living babe in the womb must have a spirit in his body.

Some feel that they have found scriptural proof that the unborn child is of less value than the mother, therefore she has the right to kill the babe if it is a bother to her. The passage is Exodus 21:22, "If men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follows; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him. . .but if any harm follows, then thou shalt give life for life." They reason, "if the baby is killed, only a fine is imposed, but if the mother is killed, capital punishment is given. Therefore, unborn babies are not persons."

But "that which proves too much proves nothing." Notice in vs. 28-32 of the same chapter: If a man's ox gores a free man, the animal and the owner shall be put to death, but if it only gores a servant (slave) the owner of the ox shall pay a fine. Since the slave's death is punished more lightly than the free man's, shall we conclude that slaves are not full persons and can be killed with impunity? If the case of the woman and her unborn babe teaches that the babe is less valuable life, then so does this.

But there is an alternative. The words, "and yet no harm follows," may mean the child is miscarried, but does not die.



Then the expression, "if any harm follows" means that if either the child, the mother or both die, then the guilty party is to be punished with death. If this be accepted, then no greater value is placed on the adult than the prenatal life. The fine is for the injury which caused the early delivery, the death penalty is for the causing of a death of either mother or child.

Can we kill the developing baby if the mother's life is threatened? A doctor's mission in medicine is to save life, not to kill. If faced with a truly "either/or" situation, he may remove a cancerous uterus or a tubal pregnancy. In doing so, the child would inadvertently die. But this would not be the purpose of the surgery. The purpose is to save a dying mother. You may feel that this is simply an exercise in semantics. But it is a fine distinction that reflects a difference in motive and a sacred respect for all human life. Situations where the mother's life is jeopardized by pregnancy are extremely rare today. Dr. J. J. Hefferman says, "Anyone who performs a therapeutic abortion (for physical disease) is either ignorant of modern methods of treating the complications of pregnancy, or is unwilling to take time to use them."

If the baby is the result of rape, could we abort? Our hearts go out to victims of rape and we must offer every kind of help and assistance that God allows. There are, however, certain facts about rape and pregnancy which throw a much different light on this tough question. Less than 1 per cent of our annual million and a half abortions are for hardship cases such as rape, deformity, incest or threat to the mother's life. Our conception of judgment seems grossly unequal on this point. Judges have declared the death penalty for rapists to be cruel and inhumane. The guilty father can only get a few year's punishment, and often goes scot-free. But the innocent babe in the womb gets capital

punishment! He has done nothing wrong in the case at all. Is this fair?

If there is danger of deformity, could we then abort the baby? Ask yourself this question: is all human life sacred or just some? Is the defective baby in the womb human? What of the defective child after birth, is it human? If we can abort the defective unborn, why not kill the defective at birth? Wherein is the difference? Should we decide to eliminate those who are imperfect, we need to ask and answer two important questions:

- (a) Just how perfect will one have to be before he is allowed to live?
- (b) Who will have the power to make the decisions? Has any mortal man the wisdom or the right to thus play God?

Men destroy the weak and defective offspring of their fine blooded animals. Are we now prepared to begin doing this to the human race? In Nazi Germany the point was reached where babies were killed who had wrinkled ears and who were bed-wetters. "A society is measured by the care and attention it gives to its most helpless members."

Is then birth control wrong? These are entirely different questions. In birth control, conception is kept from occurring. Abortion kills life after it is conceived. It is the author's view that birth control does not violate any scriptural injunction. This is a personal matter left to the discretion of each married couple. We would add this word of warning: some birth control methods are abortifacients, i.e., the interuterine device and the morning after pill. These we would reject.

## WHERE WILL IT END?

Influential voices are already being heard to extend this power of death over yet other classes of humanity. Dr. William Gaylin, professor of Psychiatry and Law at Columbia University said, “. . . it used to be easy to know what we wanted for our children, and now the best for our children might mean deciding which ones to kill. We’ve always wanted the best for our grandparents, and now that might mean killing them. . . .” Feb. 17, 1972, *Conference of American Association of University Women*. George Paulson writes, “How long shall life be preserved when there is no redeeming social value? If life has no apparent purpose, perhaps it is to the benefit of others that such lives not be salvaged.” “Who Should Live, *Geriatrics* 28 March 1973, pp. 136-138.

Pages could be filled with similar shocking statements publicly circulated by the thought leaders of our day.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We must inform ourselves and our society of the realities of the abortion problem. Few people are fully aware of the humanity of the unborn child. Most do not realize that the present legal status allows abortion on demand through nine months under the ruse of the mother’s mental health. There is little public knowledge of the cruelty and inhumanness of the various abortion procedures presently used. We must meet the pro-abortion people with sound arguments and intelligent response. Emotionalism and indignation alone will never win the battle. Ninety-nine percent of those who learn the truth about this awful evil will never choose abortion.

We must work to secure a constitutional amendment that will guarantee the right to life to all human beings, including

the unborn from conception to natural death. An exception should be made in those cases where the mother's life is threatened. Only this will override the Supreme Court's ruling on abortion.

Seventy per cent of all who have abortions are unwed mothers. We must teach and encourage young people to honor God's principles of sexual morality. Virtuous young couples who abstain from sex until marriage are never faced with a decision about abortion. Especially needed are basic facts-of-life teaching in a Christian context. Parents must face up to their responsibility. Our churches need to provide Biblical studies in morality as well if we are going to prepare our young people to live responsibly in our hedonistic age.

Christian compassion must replace judgmental harshness. The old attitudes of ostracizing the unwed mother must give way to compassion and help. When we drive the unwed mother out, the friendly abortionist is waiting to greet her. The government will gladly take care of the abortion expense with our Medicaid tax funds. If we expect the woman with a problem pregnancy to carry it to term, we must be prepared to lend the needed support. Also we need to change our attitudes towards victims of rape. In our attempt to discourage promiscuity by penalizing the unwed mother, we have actually encouraged them to take the abortion route which appears so much easier than enduring the social stigma.

### SHOULD CHRISTIANS ACTIVELY FIGHT SUCH EVILS?

Isaiah was charged by God, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression. . ." (58:1). We have a moral responsibility to aid those whose lives are being threatened. "Rescue those who are being dragged to death, and from

those tottering to execution withdraw not. If you say, 'I know not this man' does not he who tests hearts perceive it? He who guards your life knows it, and he will repay each one according to his deeds.' (Prov. 24:11-12). We cannot hide behind the feeble question of Cain, i.e., "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). The answer is yes! Jesus taught that any human being in distress is our neighbor and we must aid him. (Lk. 10:25-37).

May we who love God rise up in holy indignation and drive this Satanic evil from our midst lest the land vomit us out as ancient Canaan vomited out her heathen inhabitants who filled the cup of moral iniquity. (Lev. 18:24-25; 20:2).

## HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD

God hates hands that shed innocent blood! (Prov. 6: 16-17). To Noah God declared that "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed for in the image of God made he man". (Gen. 9:6). God has proclaimed, "Thou shalt not kill."

### OUR CHALLENGE

Today in our land there is a wholesale slaughter of innocent life. Each day some 4,000 unborn babies are destroyed by abortion. Abortion clinics advertise their business in the local papers. This wanton destruction begins as early as the tenth week of pregnancy and is widely done even in the last few weeks and days of gestation. All of this is legal with the blessings of our Supreme Court and the president's lady. Herod's killing of a few babies in Bethlehem pales before this grisly scene. The Pharaoh who ordered the Hebrew male children slain to hold down the population is made to look like a modern-day ecology hero. Each day Nazi Germany gains respectability in the face of these atrocities.

### WHERE WILL THE TRAIL LEAD?

The same element that has promoted the abortion legislation is now priming for an extension of their victory. Dr. William Gaylin, professor of psychiatry and law at Columbia University told a conference of the American Association of University Women: "It used to be easy to know what we wanted for our children, and now the best for our children might mean deciding which ones to kill. We've always wanted the best for our grandparents, and now that might

mean killing them. We have the awesomeness of knowledge to do these things, and inevitably we shall be forced to act on it." Feb. 17, 1972, as quoted in *The Mercy Killers*, Dr. Paul Marx. Dr. Alan Guttmacher (president of Planned Parenthood) and liberal theological Joseph Fletcher (the father of situation ethics) are both pro-abortionists and members of the Euthanasia Education Council. Dr. Glanville Williams in his book, *The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal Law*, strongly advocates abortion and euthanasia and finally pleads for legalization of "humanitarian infanticide" and "euthanasia for handicapped children." Marx, *ibid*. Dr. R. A. Gallop warns, "Once you permit the killing of the unborn child, there will be no stopping. There will be no age limit. You are setting off a chain reaction that will eventually make you the victim. Your children will kill you because they will not want to support you in your old age. You permitted the killing of their brothers. Your children will kill you for your homes and estates. If a doctor will take money for killing the innocent in the womb, he will kill you with a needle when paid by your children. This is the terrible nightmare you are creating for the future."

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

It is truly depressing that so few voices are heard in defense of the unborn victims of abortion. The pro-abortionists have a virtual monopoly of the public news media. We see Catholics protesting. Some Baptists have begun a right to life movement. More of the large, liberal Protestant sects have actually endorsed this bloody practice. I am distressed that so few members of the Lord's church are speaking out. Are there no prophets to protest this evil?

Surely the problem is a matter of education. Likely most brethren are like the author was before he made a serious study of the matter. He just did not realize the awful

implications of the abortion question. For many years, virtually no material was available dealing with the moral, religious and ethical issues involved. The abortionist in the meantime has succeeded in convincing most people that this is a personal individual matter and not our concern. They have sold most people on the idea that the unborn child is not a human being, rather it is only a blob of tissue or a part of the mother's body. While we groped about or slept, the Devil won a great victory. Something must be done and quickly. Today, abortions are the most frequently performed legal surgery next to tonsillectomies, according to Christopher Tietze in an Associated Press release.

### WE ARE OBLIGATED

We Christians have a moral, spiritual responsibility to speak out and work to change this situation. In Nazi Germany, the euthanasia program put to death some 350,000 people which were judged unworthy of life before the government elected to exterminate the Jewish population. Scores of M.D.'s and doctors of social medicine eagerly volunteered to participate in helping to relieve the "suffering" of the unfortunate patients of mental hospitals and homes for defective children by dispatching them with lethal injections or deadly gasses. The churches in Germany offered only a mild, weak protest. "Dr. Karl Brandt stated that it was Hitler's opinion that resistance to the euthanasia killings on the part of the churches would under the circumstances not play a great role. The efforts were sporadic, isolated and fragmentary. At certain levels the attitude was for a long time so passive and ambiguous that a top bureaucrat in the mercy killings, Hans Hefelmann, could state truthfully in court in Limburg that it had been his understanding that the church was willing to tolerate such killings (at the time) under certain conditions." Fredrick Wertham, M.D., *Can This Happen Again?* from his book, *A Sign for Cain*,



*An Exploration of Human Violence*, Warner Paperback.

When the historians write the story of our generation, how will they describe the church's response to this heinous evil? Will your conscience allow you to stand mute or will it force you to cry out against it?

### HOW TO HELP

Information is now available. Look up and get in touch with your local *Right to Life Group*, ask for reading materials and inform yourself. If such is not available, write the author and he will send you some study materials. Speak out in the pulpit and in other public areas against this evil practice. The time is far spent, we must redeem every moment. Send a self-addressed stamped (2 stamps, please) envelope to John Wadley, Rt. 22, Weaver Road, Knoxville, Tennessee 37921.

## FIRST ABORTION, NOW EUTHANASIA

Are we prepared to accept euthanasia as a legal medical practice in America? You may ask, just what is euthanasia? Literally the word means "good death." It is an act directly causing death, painlessly, in order to end the suffering of victims of incurable diseases, lingering illness, or old age. A certain element seeks the right to administer such death to save the family or society the burden of supporting the deformed, the disabled, and the terminally ill. Rather than let this evil practice hide under the euphemism "good death," let us call it what it is in fact: the right to kill; to directly kill the innocent and helpless as a solution to our social problem!

### THEIR GOALS ARE ANNOUNCED

The goals of the Euthanasia cult are announced.

- A. *For the aged.* George Paulson writes, "How long shall life be preserved when there is no redeeming social value? If life has no apparent purpose, perhaps it is to the benefit of others that such lives not be salvaged." "Who Should Live," *Geriatrics*, 28, March 1973, pp. 136-138.
- B. *For infants.* Winston Duke says, "With regard to the specific question of humanity in homo sapiens infants, much is already known. There is little evidence that termination of an infant's life in the first few months following extraction from the womb could be looked upon as murder. . . . It would seem. . . to be more 'inhumane' to kill an adult chimpanzee than a newborn baby, since the chimpanzee has greater mental awareness.

Murder cannot logically apply to a life form with less mental awareness than a primate." *Biology, Reason*, August 1972.

- C. *Others.* Professor Robert H. Williams of Washington State Medical School said, "There are various levels at which one can consider the indication for euthanasia: a) a group of individuals who will soon be encountering death; b) a group with such severe mental damage as to be unable to express proper judgment with respect to termination of life; and c) a group with varying degrees of cognizance, but with disabilities so incapacitating and so common as to produce great hardship on society." *Our Role in the Generation, Modification and Termination of Life. J.A.M.A.* 209, August 11, 1960, pp. 914-917.

## HOW CAN INTELLIGENT HUMAN BEINGS THINK THIS WAY?

"If God is not, then nothing is morally wrong." Dostoyevsky. If the living God did not create all men in his image and endow them with the right to life, then there is no moral principle that demands that we respect all human life as sacred. Those who do not meet society's standards may be destroyed as a social, economic or political expediency. Mortimer Adler wrote, "... the image that we hold of a man cannot fail to affect attitudes that influence our behavior in the world of action . . . . ." If man is only a highly evolved, tool-using animal, why should not government exercise "management" over him? We do this to our pets and livestock! If there is no God and if evolution explains our being here, then no one can fault the practice. Atheism, evolution, humanism, and materialism are foundation stones of this and the abortion movement.

How can doctors, educators and elected officials allow such a thing to happen? Remember it is from these ranks that we find the chief promoters of this death philosophy. Thomas Merton said, “. . .we rely on the sane people of the world to preserve it from barbarism, madness and destruction. Now it begins to dawn on us that it is precisely the sane ones who are the most dangerous. Merton has authored an analysis of Adolph Eichmann, who headed Hitler's extermination project for Jews.

Dr. Rene Dubos wrote, “A society that blindly accepts the decision of experts is a sick society on its way to death.” We are not dealing with a bunch of ignoramuses, rather we have a cross-section of the elite of the intelligentsia.

We should be reminded that it was the vaunted medical, legal and psychiatric professors (assisted by the university intelligentsia) of pre-Nazi Germany who planted and nurtured the anti-life movement in the German culture. “The German atrocities began as the voluntary deeds of eminent scientists, not as the reluctant response to a mad despot's commands.” Paul Marx, *Death Without Dignity*, p. 29. George Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

## CONFUSION

Many are confused today by the current debate on the legality of disconnecting mechanical life support systems on long-term comatose patients or the patients' right to request that no extraordinary means be used to keep them alive when all hope is gone. This is not euthanasia. Leah Curtain, R.N., writes, “It must be made abundantly clear that the humane practice of medicine has always allowed the physician and patient (or his family) to decide what measures if any should be employed to prolong the patient's life.

There is absolutely no need for legislation to protect either the physician or patient in this regard. If legislation is passed, it must inevitably affect a ) the right of the patient to demand of the state the means by which to commit suicide, or b) the right of the physician to directly terminate (kill) the patient." *The Mask of Euthanasia*, p. 4. Along with Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross we are "totally opposed to any kind of mercy killing, but (we are) in favor of allowing the patient to die his or her own death, without artificially prolonging the dying process.

### SOME REASONS FOR OPPOSING EUTHANASIA

1. It is a default on our responsibility to assist and protect weak and helpless life.
2. It violates the spirit and letter of our nation's constitution which guarantees *life* to all.
3. It cheapens the value of human life, robbing it of its inherent, God given worth "made in the image of God." Humanists see life only in utilitarian value. Notice the recent use of the term, "human resources."
4. Any mistakes made in administering euthanasia are always fatal!
5. The danger that the legal machinery, originally designed to kill those who are a nuisance to themselves, might someday engulf those who are a nuisance to others.
6. It grants to committees and bureaucrats of unknown and unpredictable intentions, the power to determine who can live.
7. It would become an uncontrollable monster that no one

could control once it was loosed. Witness Germany's euthanasia program.

8. It would place a great temptation upon families, physicians and society to make selfish decisions concerning who should be euthanized.

#### BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES THAT FORBID EUTHANASIA

1. "Thou shalt not kill," Rom. 13:9.
2. "All things therefore, whatsoever ye would that men shall do unto you, even so do you also unto them." Matt. 7:12. Would you want to be destroyed?
3. "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others," Phil. 2:4. Selfishness and personal interest are the chief roots of this problem.
4. The Gentiles of Paul's day were "without natural affection" and stood condemned for it, Rom. 1:31. What is more unnatural than to order the death of one's child or parent?
5. The Lord hates hands that shed innocent blood, Prov. 6:16-17. The paradox of this debate is that the champions of mercy killing and abortion are almost always opposed to capital punishment even for the first degree murderer.
6. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, He also shall cry, but shall not be heard." Prov. 21:13, Rather than kill we must minister to the unfortunate.
7. Job would have been an ideal case for mercy killing, yet look how the Lord blessed him in the end, Job 42:10-17.

8. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man," Gen. 9:6.
9. "Honor thy father and mother," Eph. 6:2. The child who truly honors his parents would never opt for "mercy killing."
10. To legalize euthanasia would complete our journey back to the moral standards of the Pharoah of Moses' day; Herod the Great who killed the babes of Bethlehem; the law of Pagan Rome which allowed the parents to kill unwanted children; and Hitler's Germany.

Are we becoming like the cruel heathen nation described in Deut. 28:50, "A nation of stern visage, that shows neither respect for the aged nor pity for the young?" We cannot stand neutral. We are neither *for life* or *for the death peddlers*. Where do you stand?

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## SUICIDE, A SIN UNTO DEATH

One of the major social problems of our day is suicide. Suicide is self-murder. The term is from the Latin *sui* (one-self) and *cidium* (to intentionally kill). This year some 25,000 Americans will destroy themselves. It is estimated that another 50,000 deaths will be undetected or unproven suicides. *Industry Week*, Nov. 30, 1970. Only about one in ten who attempt suicide is successful. So prevalent has this problem become that one American in ten has had their life touched by a case of suicide. It is not uncommon to hear of Christians who have made attempts upon their own lives. Sociologists have noted that the prevalence of suicide is highest amongst Protestants, and that Jews have a lower rate than Catholics.

This is the kind of problem that we seldom talk about until the tragedy strikes near us. But its prevalence and seriousness demands that we think about it and arrive at a correct understanding before being faced with it. Then it is usually too late.

### SOME CAUSES OF SUICIDES

That *mental derangement* is a common cause is undisputed. However, while many suicide cases are the result of emotional illness, not all could be so classed. Some of the wisest and greatest intellects have chosen this path. Soldiers operating behind enemy lines and spies commonly carry suicide pills to avoid capture and torture. In some societies, especially the Orientals, self-inflicted death is considered preferable to humiliation. China has traditionally allowed condemned criminals to commit suicide. It is still a live

option in Japanese culture. Many important personalities who are found guilty of dishonesty or disloyalty choose death rather than to live in dishonor and be reduced to a level of poverty.

*Pressure of life* and *dread of trouble* are notable causes. Such can cause emotional breakdown which may lead to suicide. But even the sane when faced with intense pain, great misfortune, disgrace, or fear of destitution choose this escape. The Philippian jailor reflects this type. (Acts 16:27.)

*Remorse* and *despair* lead to depression which is a frequent cause of suicide. Judas was such a case. He chose to hang himself rather than live with his guilt and shame. (Matt. 27:5.)

Sometimes a *desire to punish or hurt others* by making them feel guilty or responsible for their death prompts people to kill themselves. Adolescent children have been known to do this to their parents. Aged parents sometimes follow this route. Partners of unhappy marriages have occasionally done this.

## THE FOOLISHNESS AND SINFULNESS OF SUICIDE

Suicide is a flagrant violation of God's prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill," (literally do not murder). (Rom. 13:9.) It is self-murder. The very nature of the deed makes it impossible to repent and ask forgiveness of it. This is why we style it a sin unto death.

To kill oneself is contrary to nature. The love of life and self-preservation are two of the strongest principles implanted in man by his Creator.

Such a deed reflects a lack of trust and confidence in

God. The prospective suicide obviously believes that God has failed him. The Christian's God has promised, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) To choose self-destruction is a declaration of unbelief in such promises. The person may feel that God has been unjust in assigning his station and work in life.

Self-murder is contemptuous casting away and destroying, as something worthless, God's precious gift of life. Such is utter ingratitude, the opposite of the thankful heart we are commanded to have. (Phil. 4:6.)

Suicide is a refusal on man's part to accept God's assignment if it proves difficult or unpleasant. God expects us to be faithful stewards of whatever responsibilities He lays upon us. The Christian must be willing to "suffer hardship" as a good soldier of Christ. (II Tim. 2:3.) Suicide is a cowardly abandonment of a trust God has given us. We, like Paul, must fight the good fight and keep the faith even unto death. (II Tim. 4:6-8.)

The act of suicide is a serious injustice to family and friends. Our life is not for our benefit alone. It is given for the sake of others as well. Paul argues in I Cor. 7:4 that the husband and wife mutually possess each other. To destroy oneself is to rob and injure them in the most cruel and irreparable way. It is a clear violation of the rule called golden. (Matt. 7:12.) Surely you would not want your loved one to so deal with you.

The Christian's body is a temple for God's Holy spirit. (I Cor. 6:19.) To commit suicide is to destroy God's temple and we are warned that God will destroy one who does so. (I Cor. 3:16-17.) It is fallacious to reason, "It is my life, I'll do with it as I please." God says, "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price." (I Cor. 6:19-20.) I have

no right to destroy God's possession.

Suicide violates all of those scriptures which enjoin patient endurance of trials and tribulations, i.e., Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet. 1:5-7. To enjoy heaven we must be faithful until death comes in its own due time. The crown of life is only for those who are faithful unto death. (Rev. 2:10.)

No misery in this life can compare to that which the victim of self-destruction recklessly plunges into. It is to stand before God guilty of murder. It denies one all possibility of repentance. It brings the judgment of a never ending hell upon the offender.

For a man to do such a deed is to place himself in God's place and take His prerogatives in his own hands. Only God has the right to kill and make alive. (Gen. 50: 19.)

#### PREVENTATIVES AGAINST THIS AWFUL SIN

Strong and constant faith in God will keep one from this desperate act. The faith building promises of Romans 8 will fortify us against the thought of such: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity," vs. 26; "To them that love God all things work together for good," vs. 28. "If God is for us who is against us?" vs. 31; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" vs. 35; "In all these things we are more than conquerors," vs. 37. Read these and others and make them your strength for living.

Moderation in regard to things of this world will help to safeguard us. If we love these things too much, we are overwhelmed when we lose them. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and do not worry overmuch about the material things of life for the Father will provide what we need. (Matt. 6:33.)

Habitual self-control is a safeguard against suicide. The intemperate person is far more likely to commit this rash and thoughtless deed. Keep working to add temperance to your faith. (II Pet. 1:6.) This will help you to accept all of your duties and responsibilities in life.

The continual practice of believing prayer is a powerful protective against suicide. Peter exhorts us to cast all our anxieties upon him, because he cares for us. (I Pet. 5:7.) Paul promises the peace of God which passes all understanding to the man who faces everything in prayer. (Phil. 4:6.) With this help, self-destruction is out of the question.

In addition to this, fellowship with the saints is most helpful. Since many suicides are lonely and feel unloved and unwanted, the Christian family provides those basic human needs. Saints help to bear one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2.) Every Christian is needed and wanted and never lacks for meaningful and purposeful experiences.

We must accept and have total confidence in the grace and forgiveness of God to remove all the guilt and shame of sin. Despair of forgiveness is a chief cause of self-murder. The grace of God continually cleanses us of all sins when we confess our sins and walk in the light. (I John 1:7-9.) Likewise we must believe in and enjoy the great love of God. Many who make an attempt on their life believe that no one loves them. With David, we believe, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then Jehovah will take me up." (Ps. 27:10.)

Fear of punishment beyond the grave provides a strong defense against suicide. Catholics, who are taught that suicide means certain damnation, have a very low rate of it. It is healthy to fear Him who can destroy both body and soul

in hell. (Matt. 10:28.) This will help us balance our thought when problems arise.

No matter how heavy the burdens, how dark the night, nor how intense the pain, let us promptly and resolutely reject the very idea of suicide. It is in no wise an option for the child of God who wants to live with God in eternity.

## WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:24. In this brief statement our Lord sets forth the essence of Christian worship.

### TRUE WORSHIP

It is man the creature's responsibility to worship the Creator. Worship is defined, "to make obeisance, do reverence to . . . an act of homage. . . to God." *Vine's Expo. Dict. of New Test. Words*, p. 235. Our worship then must be God-centered and not man-centered. More than a duty, it is the exalted privilege and honor of man to worship his God. However, not all worship is acceptable. Jesus tells us that God seeks "true worshippers," John 4:23. This must be our goal and desire. It is not enough to worship; it **MUST** be true worship! The term *MUST* is exclusive. There is no alternative; no personal choice, it *must* be of a certain nature, i.e., "in spirit and truth."

### INGREDIENTS OF TRUE WORSHIP

The Lord gives two qualifications of true and acceptable worship. We shall notice the last first. It must be "in truth." There is a true worship. It is regulated and guided by God's truth. It is prescribed by God. Man, unaided by divine Revelation, could never know how to worship acceptably, (see Eph. 3:1-6.) God's Word, the Scripture, is TRUTH, John 17:17. Therefore our worship must be found in the Book of God in order to be in truth.

## “WHAT IS TRUTH?”

We arrive at the same conclusion as above from another course. Rom. 14:23 states, “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” The same author gives the only source of faith, Rom. 10:17, “so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” We can make the following logical deductions from these truths.

1. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (including worship).
2. But faith comes by hearing the Word of God.
3. Therefore if our worship is not directed by the Word of God, it is not “of faith” and is therefore sinful.

## TRUTH AND TRADITION

Our worship must be in truth as contrasted with all forms of idolatry and paganism. But it must also be in truth. . . according to God’s written direction, in contrast to the varied forms of Protestant, Catholic and cultic worship that have originated from man. Jesus declares that worship based upon man’s traditions is vain, Matt. 15:9. This principle, when recognized and obeyed will sweep away all human innovations to worship and leave only the pure New Testament worship. All special holy days of worship such as Easter and Christmas will be laid aside, leaving only the Lord’s Day. No more will men burn incense, light candles, use holy water, make the sign of the cross, count beads, kneel before “sacred” images or pray before “holy” relics. No instrument of music other than the human heart will assist those who worship in truth. The Lord’s Supper will be a simple memorial, not a mass, not a transubstantiation. Our giving will be a sacrifice well pleasing unto God, given cheerfully and liberally; not a tax paid or a chance on a price; not the



purchase of a meal or some entertainment at a "church carnival."

True worshippers worship God in truth. Sincerity is not enough in itself. We could not question the sincerity of Muslims, Hindus, Jews, or Buddhists; yet their worship is rejected because it is not in truth; not as God directs in the Bible. This is no less true of the human innovations in the worship of those who profess Christ.

### WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT

Acceptable worship must be "in spirit." Spiritual worship is opposed to the carnal modes of worship of the pagans and even the physical-centered worship of Moses' law. Christ taught there would be no more earthly temples, animal sacrifices, material altars, incense or other items made by men's hands. There would be no more feasts or fasts nor rituals, pomp and pageantry. Now it is a spiritual worship of God who is Spirit.

Under Christ, the worshipper himself is the temple of the Holy Spirit which he has from God, I Cor. 6:19. Paul speaks of serving God in his spirit, Rom. 1:9. The Christian is to pray at all seasons in the Spirit, Eph. 6:18. We must present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God which is our spiritual service, Rom. 12:1-2. Together, Christians form a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, I Pet. 2:5. We pray with the spirit and with the understanding; we sing with the spirit and understanding also, I Cor. 14:15. God bestows spiritual blessing on those who are His children, Eph. 1:3. Mature Christians are spiritual but the spiritually immature are carnal, I Cor. 3:1.

## SPIRITUALISM VERSUS EMOTIONALISM

To worship God in spirit suggests several things. Worship must be of the highest motives, the most sublime sensibilities of the soul. Yet it certainly is not emotionalism, not mere animal excitement or sensationalism such as is seen in Pentecostalism. It requires no gimmickry; no mystic effects of special lighting; no images or crosses. Such gimmicks betray a search for a "cheap spirituality." Some want "instant spirituality" like instant food that requires little effort to enjoy, rather than a true devotion of the heart unto God. The New Testament gives not the slightest hint of anything remotely resembling the modern Pentecostalism type of worship. True worship makes no attempt to display itself before men and seeks no worldly recognition, Matt. 6:1-16. It seeks only to please God, Gal. 1:10.

True spirituality in worship is "doing the will of God from the heart," Eph. 6:6. It is sincere in every motive and void of offence, Phil. 1:10. There must be a deep and abiding love for God, Matt. 22:37. This certainly involves the deepest emotions of the heart yet does not by-pass the intelligence which God gave us. The fact that God's written revelation must pass through the intelligence of man's mind before his emotions can respond to its appeal proves the important role of reason in true worship.

Spiritual worship will sometimes bring *tears*, Lk. 6:21; both of joy and sorrow. Again we will make a *joyful noise unto the Lord*, Ps. 100:1. *Spiritual worship may express its approval with an "amen,"* I Cor. 14:16. Acceptable worship involves the whole personality; all the heart; all the soul; all the mind; all the strength, Mk. 12:30. It is not limited to church meeting houses. I have as meaningfully worshipped with brethren under a tree in the burning heat of Africa as ever I have in an air-conditioned church house.

## TRUE WORSHIP IS NOT . . .

True worship is not bound to a *traditional arrangement of services*. Often we have unconsciously slipped into a rote manner of worship that allows us to engage in a ritual affair with hardly a serious thought or moment of concentration. Worship is no heartless practice of watching others perform and then paying our dues for the privilege. It is a personal spiritual involvement in songs and prayers, communion and study and the giving of gifts unto God. It is not just in adherence to customary practices; for example, the invitation song, the 30 minute sermon, the fancy communion ware and the like. It is worshipping in spirit and truth as God directs in the New Testament!

## BETWEEN TWO DANGEROUS EXTREMES

We stand in danger of two extremes in the church. One, the extreme of cold, lifeless, formalistic ritualism: scripturally correct in form but spiritless and dead. The other, emotionalism, with no regard for the authority of Scripture. This from the heart, perhaps, but wrong by transgressing God's word. Everything must be done in the the name of (by authority of) the Lord, Col. 3:17. God rejects either extreme. (See Amos 5:21-24; Lk. 6:46; I Cor. 14:40.)

Sadly, the rising trend of emotionalism has likely been triggered by a blind reaction to the spiritual deadness of many congregations. Extremes beget extremes. Can we not see the true path of acceptable worship down the middle path between the extremes? Brethren, we need more spirituality in our worship: for the good of our own souls and to remove the stumbling block that may drive others to the opposite extreme. Unadulterated New Testament

worship of God will satisfy the soul-needs of mankind. May we correctly perceive it, offer it up to God and teach others to do the same.