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Strong Drink

Man has the tendency to pick up bad habits instead of good habits. He is also prone to find all of the bad things and to carry them to their ultimate extremes. A good example of this would be in the realm of strong drink. Man is not content to drink water, soft drinks, or even coffee or tea. He goes on to beer, wine, whisky, and all kinds of alcoholic drinks. If he cannot afford some of these, he goes for toddy and homemade alcoholic drinks.

There are those who try to justify their drinking on the basis that they only have a social drink occasionally. But have you ever been in a restaurant or on a plane where beer is being served? If so, you will notice that those who have soft drinks usually limit themselves to one, but those who drink beer seldom stop with one. The same is true with other alcoholic drinks. One leads to another and finally the person may become drunk and sick. He may

vomit and later have a terrible headache or hangover. And all of this is done in the name of being sociable and having a good time.

Many equate success with strong drink. They think that drinking shows that they are doing quite well in the world. They think that when they have a party they must have some type of alcoholic beverage available to give to their friends. Again, such people have been led to believe that all high society and well-to-do type people and families do this. So, even if they are not rich, or in high society, they like to take on this appearance for the sake of impressing their friends.

In all of the advertising of strong drink, those who drink are pictured as mature young men and women who are smart, well dressed, and well-to-do. This is suggesting that when you drink, you will be in good company. However, they don't tell about all of those drinkers who became drunkards, murderers, thieves, fornicators, etc., and ended up destroying their lives, their families, as well as others.

Have you ever noticed that strong drink is always associated with all of the bad things, bad places, and bad people? Go to the clubs, bars, gambling places, prostitution houses, and other such places, and you will find beer and alcoholic drinks. Those who drink usually do not limit themselves in other areas of vice and questionable practices.

We, as Christians, are opposed to all forms of strong drink. We are against beer, social drinking, and all types of drinking whether it be in small or large quantities. It is true that there are some who claim to believe in Christ who go along with drinking alcoholic beverages, and because of them the world often thinks of Christians as being drinkers, immoral in their personal conduct, and without limits when it comes to doing worldly and questionable things. But this is far from the truth. Don't measure all by some. True Christians do not drink or do other things that are bad and wrong. They believe in keeping themselves pure and godly.

But why are we opposed to strong drink? There are many reasons, but only a few of them will be given at this time.

First, we are not only told in God's word that we should not drink, but we are warned of the consequences should we do so. Paul said that it is not good to drink wine. (Romans 14:21). He also said that drunkards cannot inherit the kingdom of God or enter the church. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). Drunkenness is listed as one of the works of the flesh, and again, those who indulge in such cannot be saved and added to the church until they repent of their sin. (Galatians 5:19-21). Also, when you take a closer look at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 and Galatians 5:19-21 you will note that the drunkard is listed along with fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, the covetous, revilers, extortioners, and such like. But someone might argue that just because he may take a social drink, or have a beer, that does not mean that he would be thought of as a drunkard. In spite of one's attempt to defend himself, if you would take a survey you would find that the majority who start out with the idea of only having a social drink, or a beer occasionally, end up becoming drunkards or alcoholics. When a person takes that first drink he becomes a potential drunkard. It is like smoking, or anything else; once one decides to do it, there is no end as to how far he may go with it.

The wise man, Solomon, had a number of things to say about strong drink. He said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1). "Who hath woe, who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." (Proverbs 23:29, 30). Don't these words describe the drinker? Certainly the writer is not painting a glowing picture for those who would drink or giving his endorsement to wine and its effects on those who would partake of it.

Paul said that those who would be elders in the church could not drink. (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3). If the leaders in the church could not drink wine, beer, or whatever, then how could others do so?

Second, the drinking of alcoholic beverages is harmful. Those of the medical profession tell us that each drink of alcohol destroys a certain number of brain cells, and once these are destroyed they cannot be replaced. That means that drinking can not only affect one's mental facilities at the time of drinking, but when one drinks over a period of time his mind may be affected more and more. In other words, such people may find it difficult to think clearly. Another sign is that they may not be able to speak plainly and distinctly. Then physically, drinking can damage the liver, the heart, and bring many other harmful effects to the body. Also, those who drink can become violent when they are drunk, cause wrecks and the deaths of others when attempting to drive. Consistent drinking leads to alcoholism and this is recognized as a disease. When one becomes an alcoholic, he usually has to go to a hospital or to a clinic to be treated for a period of time. Even then it is not easy to overcome but one must do so if expects to live for long. All in all, strong drink is not something to be recommended to those who love life and who are concerned about the lives of others.

Third, those who drink lose control of their minds and bodies to the extent that they drink. When in this state, who knows what might happen? There are some questions that need to be asked just here. How is one benefitted when he is brought to this point? Is this a time to make wise decisions? Does this set a good example for others? Surely when one thinks seriously about such matters he can see how foolish it is to drink.

Fourth, drinking not only hurts the one who drinks but it also hurts many others. If one is married, the husband or wife and children have to suffer along with their loved one. One may lose his job, lose his health, or get killed because of his drinking, and this will hurt the other members of the family.

Fifth, strong drink is very expensive. Those who buy it surely could use their money on themselves, their family members, or for some other good cause that would be a wiser investment. They certainly don't spend money on strong drink to help their health or to be helpful to others, but it is money spent for one's own selfish pleasure and to boost one's pride before others.

In conclusion, nothing good can be said about strong drink when it is improperly used. When used in the form of a medicine, of course, and as prescribed by a doctor, then it may be the means of helping a person. It is in this context that Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. (1 Timothy 5:23).

There are those who would argue that man is going to be drinking, so we might as well accept it and not oppose it. That may be true, but man will also continue to do many other things that are bad and wrong, but this does not mean that we can condone their wrong and encourage it. No, we must oppose it for our sake, for their sake, and for the sake of future generations.

If you are a drinker of alcoholic beverages then I would encourage you to quit it. I know it will not be easy to do, but it is in your interest and in the interest of all of those around you. Above all, you must repent of it, or give it up, to obey God and to go to heaven. If you have not taken a drink up to this time, then please don't take that first one. It is no disgrace not to drink. Rather, you are wise to abstain from it. Don't experiment with it. Don't feel that you have to drink to be smart or to show that you are successful in life. On the contrary, you are not being wise when you begin to partake of alcohol. Please think seriously about these things and determine that you are going to do that which is right.



**associate
editorial**

The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

No. 7

One of the distinctive features of the church of Christ is this,

that unlike denominational churches the church of Christ is spiritual in nature. Please note the following.

In the long ago when Daniel, the prophet, was explaining the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar to him, Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and it shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." (Daniel 2:44). Many hundred years after this prediction, when Jesus Christ began his ministry he told people that the kingdom of God was at hand and that it was going to be established very soon. "The time is fulfilled," said Christ, "and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15). On another occasion when he was talking to his apostles, he said, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1). At the coast of Caesarea Philippi when Peter along with other apostles confessed him to be the Christ the Son of the living God, Jesus declared, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:17-19).

From the scriptures listed above we learn : that Daniel prophesied that God of Heaven would set up a kingdom. He told Nebuchadnezzar that after him there would be a few more kingdoms. (Three kingdoms he especially mentioned in his explanation to king's dream, namely : Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Romans). And in the days of these kings, of the Roman empire, he said, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. It was going to be God's kingdom. Next we learn, Jesus, when he began to teach in the days when the Romans were ruling, said that the time was fulfilled for the kingdom to be established. He also made it very clear that it was

going to be set up or established before the death of his apostles, that is, in the first century A.D. Then giving a definite clue for the coming kingdom, the Lord said that it would come with power. Also, notice that Christ made no difference between the church and the kingdom, when he said to Peter that he would build his church and would give him the keys of the kingdom. Here we see that the Lord used the terms the church and the kingdom interchangeably, making no distinction between the two.

Now, before we go any further we need to stop here for a few moments and turn to our Bible and read from Act 1:4-8. Here we read about Jesus going back to heaven, but just before he was lifted up, the record says, "And being assembled together with them, (*the apostles*), he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard of me But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

From this we conclude, that God was going to set up a kingdom, his kingdom, that it was going to be established during the time when the apostles to whom he was then speaking would be alive. Also, that the kingdom of God and the church of Christ are the same thing, and that the kingdom would come with power, and the power would come when the apostles would receive the Holy Ghost.

Now when we turn to the Acts the second chapter, there we see that it all actually happened. There we read that the day of Pentecost, a Jews' festival, was being observed in Jerusalem. The Jews from all over the world had come together there, and the apostles also, as Jesus had commanded them, were at that time in Jerusalem. The apostles were waiting for the promise of Christ. And then it actually took place. The record says, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to

speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:2-4). Notice, again, that Christ had said then that when the apostles would receive the Holy Ghost then they would also receive the power, and when the power would be manifested then the kingdom of God would be set up or established. Now if Christ spoke truth, and he certainly did, then God’s kingdom is in existence since that day of Pentecost, which took place around A.D. 33, because the apostles did receive the Holy Ghost on that day, as we have noticed. Then, since the kingdom and the church are the same thing, therefore it follows that when the kingdom was established then the church was also established at the same time. That is why we read at Acts 2:47, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” The church or the kingdom was surely established between Matthew 16:18, 19 and Acts 2:47, because in Matthew 16:18,19 the Lord promised to build the church but at Acts 2:47 he had already added the saved to the church. Before his death the Lord had said that God’s kingdom was going to be set up shortly, but in Colossians 1:13 we read that God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” Remember, what belongs to God also belongs to Christ because they are one in essence. Therefore, just as the kingdom of God is spoken of here belonging to Christ, so in Acts 20:28 the church is spoken of as belonging to God.

The kingdom of God is spiritual in nature and so is the church of Christ, being the same thing. Christ, in speaking to Pilate, said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” (John 19:36). The apostle Paul wrote, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink...” God’s kingdom is not of a physical nature. He never intended to establish a physical kingdom on earth. God’s law of reproduction is that every seed should bring forth after its own kind. (Genesis 1:11). This is true in the plant kingdom and this is also true in the fleshly kingdom. But, in the beginning both plant and fleshly kingdoms came into existence as result of a miracle by God. God created by miracle the first plants and the first human pair on earth and he gave them the power that they might reproduce after their own kind. Likewise, the spiritual kingdom of God also had a miraculous beginning, when the Holy

Spirit came upon the apostles endowing them with the word of God (John 14:16), which Jesus said is the seed of the kingdom of God. The word which is the seed of God's kingdom is the means by which God's children, Christians, members of Christ's church, could be reproduced. Just as we read that the apostles in the beginning, (cf. Acts 2), planted the pure word of God in the hearts of men and women, and as a result of it Christians were born. (Acts 11:26). Those, on that day of Pentecost, heard the word preached by the apostles, they believed in Jesus and repented of their sins and were baptized the same day for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:18,41). This is the only way Christians are produced in the church of Christ, or God's children are born in his kingdom. (John 3:3-5). The pure seed of the word of God can never bring forth different kinds of Christians just as pumpkin seed would not produce watermelons.

Christ is the king or the head of the church, the Bible says. (1 Timothy 6:15; Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). His New Testament is the law or the constitution of his spiritual kingdom. (Hebrews 1:1,2; Matthew 7:24-27). The territory of his kingdom is his doctrine, and we are commanded not go beyond it. (2 John 9,10). And, finally, all Christians, members of his church, are the subject of his spiritual kingdom.

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

TO BE A MOTHER-IN-LAW

The whole world seems to share the jokes about terrible mothers-in-law. In many cases the jokes would be untrue or at least an exaggeration. But the old saying, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," is reliable. There would not be universal jokes about bad mothers-in-law unless many were guilty of fitting the description.

Sometimes parents, especially mothers, have problems adjusting to the fact that their children are growing up. Even though

they want this, mentally, they are not emotionally ready to accept a role of lesser importance in the lives of their children. Particularly does this tend to be true of mothers with their sons when they marry and either bring home a bride or when they go out to establish their own home. The mother may see the loved son showing attention and preference to his new wife and, as a result, she may feel rejected. Jealousy can develop and lead finally to bitterness and enmity. This causes quarrels and continual problems between the husband and wife as well as between the son and his family.

An unwise mother-in-law may belittle the new bride for shortcomings in her household work or in her cooking. She may misuse the daughter-in-law, making her nothing more than a servant. The unfairness of such treatment will cause resentment and hatred if it is continued.

But how will the Christian mother-in-law behave? Being a mature woman, she should be well practiced in obeying Christ's command, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise." (Luke 6:31). Every problem in every human relationship could easily be solved if all people would obey these directions. What mother-in-law would have wanted to have been ill-treated as a bride? Or what mother would want to see her own daughter belittled and abused? Of course, no woman choose such treatment for herself or her daughter, so the Christian mother-in-law will not mistreat her son's new wife either.

When a mother-in-law understands God's plan in marriage, she won't feel competition with her daughter-in-law for her son's love. She will realize that there are many kinds of love and that the love of a son for his mother is different and separate from his love for his wife. A new love is developed for each person in one's life, so there is no competition.

But, at the same time, God's plan for marriage is that the husband and wife become one—one flesh, one in purpose, one in heart. If the mother truly loves her son, she will realize that his wife is now a part of him and she will extend the love for the son to include the bride as well. She should understand that to

belittle or abuse the daughter-in-law is actually to do the same thing to the son she loves. And how could there be true happiness between the mother and the son unless the daughter-in-law is included in the love? Of course, it would not be possible.

It is wonderful that even in our human relationships, God's rules provide perfect guidance. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth...let us love one another, for love is of God . . ." (1 John 3:18; 1 John 4:7). When Christian mothers-in-law have God's love in their hearts, they will behave like loving mothers to cherished daughters when their sons bring home brides.

Why We Believe The Bible

Steve Williams

Do you believe the Bible? Why do Christians believe the Bible? Why do they treat the Bible differently from any other book in the world? Why do Christians accept the Bible as the highest authority in matters of religion?

Some people appeal to man's reason for final authority in matters of religion. This is modernism. Others appeal to experience and feelings. This is pentecostalism. Still others appeal to tradition as equal to or higher than the Bible. This is found in Catholicism. The church of Christ appeals to the Bible and the Bible alone as the authority for religious matters. Why do we do this? Why do we believe the Bible?

Paul wrote, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work". (2 Tim. 3:16-17). "Scripture" means "writings" and refers to what we call the Bible. "Inspired" means "God-breathed." It means that the words of the Bible, though written by men, are really as if God breathed or spoke them. This is why we call the Bible the word of God in written

form. How can we know that the Bible is God's word? Let us look at some reasons.

The Bible Meets Man's Needs

I have read many books and articles. Certainly you have also. Some books are my favorites. Different books meet different needs. The Bible, for example, does not tell you how to drive a car or how to ride a bicycle. It does, though, tell us our most important needs. The Bible tells you where you came from. You were created by God. "God said, Let us make man in our image." (Gen. 1:26). The Bible tells us the purpose of life. Mankind is to "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man". (Eccl. 12:13). The Bible tells man where he is going. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement". (Heb. 9:27). If we are faithful to God we know we have a place prepared for us in heaven. (Jn. 14:1-3). The Bible is the book that meets man's deepest needs. It answers the real important questions for us such as where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. We can know that the Bible is God's word because it meets these deepest needs of man.

The Influence and Power of the Bible

Another reason we can know that the Bible is God's word is its abiding influence and power. The Bible as the word of God "is able to save your souls". (James 1:21). Paul said the Bible is powerful: "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation". (Rom. 1:16). The writer to the Hebrews said that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12).

We only need to look around us to see this marvelous power of the Bible. Many lives have been changed by the Bible. Drunkards have quit drinking because of God's word. Drug addicts have been able to stop ruining their health by the power of the Bible. Mean, hateful people have been changed into kind, sweet persons by the Bible. Selfish, uncaring individuals have

become loving persons. People from every nation, every generation, and every walk of life have experienced the power of God's teaching in the Bible to change their life. We can know that the Bible is God's word because it works.

There are many more reasons why we believe the Bible. These two, though, should demonstrate the importance of you studying the Bible. It is the most important book in the world. If you study it and follows its teachings, it has the power to save your soul. We want you to spend all of eternity in heaven with God. Please study your Bible so that you will have a home in heaven.

"Writing Out Loud"

James 1:3

Bob Hurd

The text says that God cannot do evil. God is complete love, goodness, kindness, and as such is unable to do such things. Evil is a product of sin, and God is not sinful, but pure righteousness. So, what the writer says is that when we are tempted, don't blame God for it, the blame belongs squarely on the shoulders of Satan, the father of sin and wickedness.

This opens the door for our thought this week. Many feel that if a person is in any type of hardship, suffering and such, then they are being punished for not being as good a Christian as God wants them to be. This is a carry over from an old attitude the Jews believed. It is FALSE. Read the book of Job, and see the result. The three "friends" of Job, saw his affliction as a punishment for sinfulness in his life...but this was wrong. If we read that book again, the perpetrator of the suffering was Satan. We are far removed from that day and time, but the originator of my trials and troubles is the same...Satan. God isn't to blame for my suffering. Satan is ! The Bible states he is the "prince of this world", Jno. 14:30, "God of this world", 2 Cor. 4:4, to mention just two that places him in the limelight. Name the problems we face, sickness ? Sickness is a product of Satan.

Death ? Death is the result of sin. The Bible reveals who conceived sin, that's right...Satan ! Whether it be crippling disease, cancer, heart problems, sicknesses which affect the unborn, the young or old...the finger points to the same place, Satan !

We live in this world...hardships come due to that reason. Don't blame God ! Don't believe that God is revealing a saint to be less than another because of the sufferings and troubles they face...if he can do this, he can make us doubt God, and use this as a means to destroy our faith and love in God. Our God is love. How great to be His child !

Worry

Thomas Premanandam

'WORRY' is a characteristic word for anxiety and care. It comes from the Greek word 'MARIMNAO' which is a combination of two words : MERIZO meaning 'to divide' and NOUS meaning 'mind' including the faculties of perceiving understanding feeling, judging and determining. Thus WORRY means 'to divide the mind'. In other words worry oscillates the mind like a shuttle between decision and indecision, between the right and the wrong, between sense and non-sense and between the worthwhile and the worthless ultimately plunging the victim in a slough of despondency.

The word WORRY is also said to have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon word which means 'to choke'. This meaning spells destructive nature because it chokes normal life.

As such WORRY is the disease of the mind. Its effects are deleterious and not limited to a particular area of the human system : heart trouble, high blood pressure, rheumatism, ulcers, cold, thyroid malfunction, arthritis, headache, indigestion, fatigue, insomania and in extreme cases temporary paralysis and blindness—all these ailments are usually said to spring from worry and emotional tension. It has been said that worry is the grave digger who digs an untimely grave. Care kills a cat, so goes the proverb—even the cat which is supposed to have nine lives.

Worry begets fear and fear begets timidity which upsets normal and steady thinking, resulting in unbalanced behaviour. We feel naked and unprotected against an overwhelming catastrophe. Worry destroys peace of mind and causes stress and strain. A worrying mind eclipses perception, clear understanding, wise judgement and firm determining. Peace requires singleness of mind but the worrier deprives himself of it by dividing his mind. If there is any ailment that haunts man in season and out of season like a devil, it is worry. A man of the world welcomes unawares certain gallowing situations that create worry.

Worry has no respect for time : it accompanies the past, the present and the future. Worry about YESTERDAY is stupidity. Mistakes or wrongs committed whether overt or covert cannot be righted by worrying. Deeds done unawares of their adverse consequences cannot be undone : a step falsely taken can seldom be retrieved, nor the effects of Judas' kiss be erased, nor a lie whether white or black spoken once be transformed into truth. You cannot undo an act that had been wrought nor unsay a word that was said. Then why worry ? Why mental suffering when relief is not within sight ? It is a futile exercise, isn't it ? All the cares, frets and fumes and aches have passed beyond your recall. The only alternative is to reconcile yourself to the irreparable situation and be prepared to meet the consequence with fortitude and be wary about their repetition in the future.

Again you fall a victim to the worries of the MORROW. The possible adversities, its perils and burdens, large promises and failures, the expected visit of a money lender and the problem of meeting on the morrow the various demands on the limited purse—all these are yet to be realized and experienced because tomorrow is yet to be born. Then why worry today ? The biggest problem that you perhaps have got to face is that which never may happen : after all, anticipated worries and baseless fears and perhaps the worst bogies. If a problem or a temptation is likely to face you in the future or if you have a premonition of it, you have time enough to plan possible devices to successfully meet it.

Worry takes a thousand and one shapes in the gamut of human life. Among them the worries of TODAY are numerous. Worry sets in on any of life's innumerable adverse situations as,

when ill-health dogs your steps and may become threatening; when financial reverses greet you; when grim reaper snatches away a dear one from your bosom; when serious fluctuations of conditions and circumstances lash at you or when you are deliberately fleeced by a subtle and trusted friend of yours and so forth.

Likewise childlessness in a family, the absence of a son in a family of daughters, or a daughter in a family of sons, failure to marry aged daughters, breach of wed-lock, unfulfilled parental aspirations for children's future—all these situations invariably causes worry to a sensitive mind. In a word, life is productive of countless worries. The worried fails to realize that the ups and downs of life are not absolute but relative. Some worries are unwittingly purchased by a thoughtless word or by an untidy deed.

It is not the right attitude for the child of God to suffer worry and get restive without seeking an effective remedy to combat it. The worried develops a tendency to embrace loneliness. He feels all alone as if he is ostracised. He eats his heart out. He loses the charm in life. He is one with Job who having tasted suffering to the full said, 'Let me alone for my days are vanity'. He seems to forget that the LORD IS NEAR to those that call on Him in the exigencies and vicissitudes of life. (Phi. 4:5-6; Isa. 55:6 & Ps. 91:15).

People of little faith distrust the fatherly care and love of God. So is the worried. The desired relief and the expected comfort can come only from God, the Father. The supreme example of a man whom worries harassed in multitudes was King David : compounding his own short comings are his numerous enemies and his won indisciplined children causing him untold worries and mental agony. Peace deserted him but never his great faith in God which stood him in good stead so that he would sing, "Trust in Him at all times pour out your heart before Him". (Ps. 62:8). Worried brother, can you make the Lord your trust ? (Ps. 40:4).

A man who falls a prey to worry loses his poise and casts about for a human staff to lean on. Reposing confidence in man who is himself a victim to worry is stupidity. Depend upon the

Lord, not on man or even on princes. (Ps. 118 : 8-9). Our dependence is acceptance of God's ability to solve our problems.

Peace and worry are poles apart and they cannot co-exist. The world promises you worry and the Lord promises you peace, the peace that passeth all understanding. This eternal inheritance the worrier loses if he does not depend on God.

Again worry steals the joy of life. It cuts life short but cheer prolongs it. Cheer, the index of a clear mind, deserts the worried. Activity, the mark of bubbling life gradually dwindles : then into his life descends gloom and despondence. He slips into misery and despair. At this crucial moment, should not the worried brother listen to the still small voice of God and 'rejoice in the Lord alway' and declare his readiness to sing in the midst of anxiety and baffling adversities ?

The panacea for every type of worry is prayer. This is the only weapon that a man of faith can successfully wield in the hour of worry and concern. Each care that harasses you, every anxiety that robs you of peace and cheer and every shade of mental disturbance can be done away with by this divine cure. Confess to the Lord your helplessness and cast all your cares upon Him. (Ps. 55:22). Then the lost balance is regained, the restive soul is calmed, the joy of life is restored and the lost peace is re-established.

Dear worried brother, the heavenly father assures us of His care and concern for us. He asks us not to worry, because by worrying, we cannot add a cubit to our height. Seeking the kingdom of God and doing His will are suggested to be the way to defeat worry. How strange it is that man, a rational being is exhorted to learn lessons on the fatherhood of God from irrational beings like the birds of the air. (Matt. 6:25-34).

Said the Robin to the Sparrow, "I should really like to know why these anxious human beings rush about and worry."

And the Sparrow replied, "I think that it must be that they have no heavenly Father such as cares for you and me."

Worried brother, how sweet it is to remember that the heavenly Father stands with us in our Gethsemane.

Feeding The Mind

John Waddey

The Creator designed the mind so that we learn by experience and observation, instruction and reading. How could we ever begin to thank the Lord for the marvelous gift of a written language that makes it possible for us not only to communicate but learn the wisdom of the ages as well? It is God's will that his children feed their minds and grow by using the gift of reading.

Paul charged Timothy, "Give heed to reading". (I Tim. 4:13). We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. (II Pet. 3:18). Like Jesus, every child needs to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. (Lk. 2:52). To grow intellectually we must fill our minds with the accumulated wisdom which is available. Paul wrote the Ephesians, "When ye read ye may understand..." (Eph. 3:4). This is true not only of the Scriptures but all topics as well. Jesus said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy..." (Rev. 1:3). The same principle is true of all worthwhile reading; it transmits its own blessings.

It is the shame of all that so few people read and possess good books. Of those who do read, much of their material is worthless drivel that likely does more harm than good. We cannot begin to assess the damage television has done to our youngsters who have been so dominated by the tube that they have had no time to read. Our public schools have too often failed to impart basic reading skills. Few nations have as easy access to free education as we. But few are as negligent in reading. Henry W. Beecher said, "Let us pity those poor rich men who live barrenly in great bookless houses."

We must learn to appreciate the value of good books. Consider the following statements: "A great liberty contains the diary of the human race". (G. Dawson). "No possession can surpass, or even equal, a good library". (Langford). "Books are the legacies that genius leaves to mankind, to be delivered down

from generation to generation, as presents to those that are as yet unborn". (Addison). "Next to acquiring good friends, the best acquisition is that of good books". (Colton). Thomas Carlyle wrote that "The true university of these days is a collection of books."

We owe a tremendous debt to the great authors who wrote their wisdom in books for us. "Blessed be the memory of those who have left their blood, their spirits, their lives, in these precious books, and have willingly wasted themselves into these during monuments to give light unto others". (Hall). "A library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which a man may take counsel with all who have been wise, and great, and good, and glorious among the men that have gone before him". (G. Dawson). Concerning good books it is appropriate to say, "Thanks be to God..." (II Cor. 9:15).

Books are of little value unless they are used. Well over 300,000,000 books have been written by men. None of these will benefit me until I make use of them. Tryon Edwards observed, "My books are my tools, and the greater their variety and perfection the greater the help to my literary work." Some preachers collect books to grace and adorn their shelves, but seldom read from them. Such is valuable only for pride's sake. Stale, lifeless sermons could be filled with power and excitement with a few additional hours of reading. Dwarfed and sickly spiritual lives could be healed and made strong by proper devotional reading. [Not all good books, however, are of the same quality. "Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested". (Bacon).

Christians should be discriminating in their choice of reading materials. "We are as liable to be corrupted by books as by companions," wrote Fielding. "Bad books are like intoxicating drink; they furnish neither nourishment nor medicine...Both ruin : one the intellect; the other the health; and together the soul". (Tyron Edwards). Solomon warns us to "Keep [our] heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Since everything we read is funneled into our heart (mind), it cannot help but influence our life for weal or woe. Some literature is worthless,

other is absolutely harmful. In reading, as in other activities, we should "prove all things, hold fast that which is good and abstain from every form of evil". (I Thess. 5:21-22). In choosing religious materials to read, the novice would do well to ask for recommendations from a well-read preacher or elder. H.W. Grant says, "In good books is one of the best safe-guards from evil." This is true only in the case of the reader.

Especially is it critical that Christians make use of good religious materials. This has not been our strong point. Daniel Webster wrote: "If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in the country, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation: and the thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and Christian. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and his word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the gospel is not felt through the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end."

To develop fully our minds for optimum use we must learn to read widely. A preacher needs to read for more than his Bible or even religious print. Everyone should be an avid reader of his daily newspaper. Jesus chided the Hebrews for inability to read "the signs of the times". (Matt. 16:3). Of course, one can go to heaven without a newspaper. He can do the same without modern housing, electricity or automobiles. But to be able to communicate the gospel with the sinners of the world, we must know something of the world in which we live. This author recommends that a preacher subscribe to *Reader's Digest* and *National Geographic* to stay informed and in touch with the real world. Too many ministers live in an unreal world and are thus largely ineffective in their evangelistic outreach.

Every Christian family should subscribe to one or more brotherhood journals. There are numerous papers designed to appeal to various interests. Ask your elders or preacher to recommend some of these to you. A preacher especially should be receiving several of these papers so he can be informed of the

progress of the kingdom and our internal problems. From them he can get many good ideas for local programs. Most importantly, they contain valuable teaching materials.

We need to promote the reading of good religious books, especially those written by our own brethren. Our faith will be strengthened when we read biographies of great Christians of the past. Our usefulness as a teacher will improve as we read rich books of doctrinal instruction. Our Bible knowledge will grow as we read commentaries.⁸ Our soul-winning skills will be enhanced by reading books on evangelism. Our knowledge and appreciation of the church and her past joys and sorrows will be strengthened by reading church history books. Again, ask your Christian leaders for their recommendations. Use your church library. Write or visit our Christian bookstores and select your own copies of these wonderful books.

The great reformation scholar, Erasmus wrote : "When I get a little money, I buy books and if any is left, I buy food and clothes." Horace Mann observed, "No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family." All Christian parents should ponder this wise man's words and check the family bookshelf. May all of God's children give heed to reading. (I Tim. 4:13).

Someone Has To Tell Them

John M. Grubb

Doctors have commented, on occasion, that telling families of the loss of a loved one is the hardest part of their job. No doubt, it is difficult also to tell potential terminal disease. The Doctor has the responsibility to tell his patient or that family the truth. To lie to a patient about the seriousness of his disease would not help the patient. It is the doctor's responsibility to explain the situation so the patient has all the information available so he can make the right decision. *Someone has to tell them.*

In the religious realm, a person has a right to have access to all the information, so he can make the right decision. The Bible

has all the answers to any religious question. It has in it "all things that pertain unto life and godliness". (II Peter 1:3). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works". (II Timothy 3:16, 17). It is up to us, as Christians, to see to it that a person has all the information from God's word in reference to his life. *Some has to tell them.*

The world is filled with people who are lost and dying in sin. We have the opportunity to talk to people daily about their spiritual condition. All men must do the "will of God" in order to go to heaven. (Matthew 7:21-23). Men cannot save themselves. (Ephesians 2:8, 9). The Bible teaches us to hear God's word (Romans 10:17), believe it (Hebrews 11:6), repent of all our sins (Acts 17:30), confess our faith in Christ (Romans 10:9, 10), and be immersed in water for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). It is then that we are "in Christ" (Galatians 3:26, 27; Ephesians 1:3), new creatures (II Corinthians 5:17), walking in the light of God (I John 1:7), and children of God. (Galatians 3:26). There are billions of people who need to know God's will for their lives. God has given that job to the Christian. (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:4; II Timothy 2:2, 25-26). Just as the doctor has the responsibility to tell the truth to his patient, we must tell the truth to the lost. (John 8:32). *Someone has to tell them.*

The Bible clearly teaches of a coming judgment. (II Corinthians 5:10; Jonh 5:28, 29; Hebrews 9:27, 28). In that day, God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous. Those who obey God's word will enter into life eternal, and those who "know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:8) will be sent to eternal punishment. (Matthew 25:31-46). All roads do not lead to heaven. All but one road leads to destruction. The "many" are on the wrong road. If they continue on that road, they will be lost. (Matthew 7:13, 14). They must be warned. *Someone has to tell them.*

Someone has said, "if all the members of the church who have fallen away would come back, we would have to build a larger church building." The Bible shows the tragedy of the lost church member. (II Peter 2:20-22; Luke 15:11-32; II Timothy 4:10).

The Bible points out the responsibility of the "spiritual" to restore the erring. (Galatians 6:1). Church discipling was designed to save souls, keep the church pure, and for the general good of the church. (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15). It is a command of God that must be obeyed. The elders of the church are responsible for every soul under their care. (Hebrews 13:17). If we do not talk to the erring about their souls, they will go to hell unwarned. (Ezekiel 3:20, 21). *Someone has to tell them.*

There is an attempt being made today to nullify the teaching of our Lord in regard to divorce and remarriage. The theory is set forth in various forms, but the result is the same—fornication is not the only scriptural cause for divorce and remarriage. The Bible teaches that marriage is for life. (Romans 7:1-4; Matthew 19:4-6). Divorce for the cause of fornication on the part of the guilty party is the only stated exception to this rule. That there are many who believe that baptism "sanctifies" an adulterous marriage, ignoring the Biblical teaching on repentance, brings us to the realization that many will not be taught the truth in this regard. It does no good to obey sincerely false doctrine. (Matthew 15:8, 9). Therefore, *someone has to tell them.*

It is never easy to tell people they are in error. But the "love of Christ constraineth us" to warn people of their destructive course. (II Corinthians 5:14; II Peter 2:9). Someone has to preach the gospel to a lost and dying world; someone has to warn of the coming judgment; someone has to try to restore lost brethren; someone has to point out firmly and lovingly God's will concerning scriptural divorce and remarriage; *someone has to tell them!* Is that someone you?

What Happened To The Brazen Serpent ?

Raymond Elliott

The children of Israel became very discouraged and impatient as they traveled from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to

compass the land of Edom. They began to speak against God and his servant Moses. Complaints could be heard as to why God had brought them out in the wilderness to perish. Because of this display of a lack of faith, fiery serpents were sent among the people. Many were the people who died that day. The children of Israel cried to Moses to ask God for mercy and deliverance. God instructed Moses to make a brazen serpent and put it on a standard. Those individuals bitten by the serpents could look upon the brazen serpent which Moses had built and be spared certain death. (Numbers 21:4-9).

This act of God's grace and salvation from death was a type of that greater deliverance from eternal ruin and destruction. Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life". (John 3:14, 15). The brazen serpent certainly was something sacred to all those Israelites spared from death.

But what happened to be brazen serpent erected by Moses? Some seven hundred years later we find that Hezekiah began to reign in Judah. In his great effort to walk in the likeness of David, he made every effort to please God. "He removed the high places, and brake the pillars, and cut down the Asherah: and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan". (II Kings 18:4). That which had been sacred had become an object of superstitious homage. There is nothing definite as to the length of time involved in such idolatrous worship, but it must have been for many years. And there is no doubt that this was the same brazen serpent and not an imitation, because the Scripture reads, "and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made." Man is prone to worship the creature rather than the Creator. (Romans 1:25). It may be the golden calf which Aaron made or the golden calves which Jereboam set up Dan and Bethel. (Numbers 32; I Kings 12:22,29). Even that which was ordained of God can become a snare and a temptation to the people. This was true in the case of the brazen serpent.

Have you ever wondered why we do not have the ancient relics (Ark of the Covenant, etc.) in our possession ? What about the original manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures ? Did you ever desire to have a true painting or likeness of Jesus Christ ? People are still searching for Noah's Ark. How about the cross on which Jesus was crucified ? And there is the robe of Christ. Men are wanting something tangible to touch and to see. So there appears from time to time something like the "Shroud of Turin" in order for people's faith to be ostensibly strengthened. But we do not have to have that which we see in order to have assurance. Christianity is a religion of faith. "For we walk by faith, not by sight". (II Corinthians 5:7). Jesus said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed". (John 20:29).

It would appear that in the providence of God, those items previously mentioned, along with others, have not been handed down from generation to generation. God knows that man's nature never changes. There would be the likelihood of doing exactly what Israel did with reference to the brazen serpent, and that is of worshiping the inanimate object instead of him.

"If Not Us, Who ? If Not Now, When ?"

Bob Duncan

The above words were spoken by the President of the United States as he addressed the nation on the night of September 24. These two questions, he said, are questions which he and the heads of the various departments kept asking themselves during their deliberations concerning certain things which must be done, but which would be unpleasant and would call for great sacrifices. Should this administration be the one to do these things ? Is the time right ? "If not us, who ? If not now, when ?"

These two questions should have come to the minds of the Israelites when the spies returned to them at Kadesh, in the wilderness of Paran. (Numbers 13 & 14). The promised land was before them, and all they had to do was go in and claim it.

But when they saw the obstacles, they became discouraged and fearful. Though the land was everything they had been led to believe, and though they had the promise of God that the land belonged to them if they would take it, they allowed the obstacles to turn them away. Perhaps they reasoned: "We are not the ones to capture the land. Now is not the time." They should have given serious consideration to two questions: "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

Perhaps the apostles of Christ asked themselves these two questions as they contemplated the enormous and astounding assignment Jesus had given to them: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". (Mark 16:15). In our own affluent time, characterized by jet travel and mass media communication, we have talked about the obstacles to world-wide evangelism, and have done little to accomplish the task. Perhaps we have deceived ourselves into thinking that future times will be more opportune, and future generations will be better prepared to do the job. But the longer we wait, the more difficult the task will become. By the time Paul wrote the Colossian letter, the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven. (Colossians 1:23). The apostles must have said, "If not us, who? If not now, when?" We should be asking the same two questions of ourselves.

But this matter needs to become personal and individual with each Christian. There are those whom I know personally who are lost and without a knowledge of the truth. I know that without a knowledge of the truth they cannot be saved. But am I the one to speak to them about their soul's salvation? Are there not many others who could do a much better job than I? And is this the time? It really does not seem convenient. But, "If not I, who? If not now, when?"

With reference to all the things which need to be done, and yet which are unpleasant, and call for great sacrifices, we would do well to ask these questions. If we do not restore the erring, who will? And if this is not the time, when will it be? If we do not discipline the disorderly, who will? And if we do not do it now, when will we do it?

Those of us who preach need to give consideration to questions of this nature. There is a great tide of worldliness flowing into the kingdom of God. Unless this tide is stemmed the church of Christ will surely be destroyed. Most of us who preach are perceptive enough to know this is so, though some pretend it is not. But it is not popular to preach against social drinking, gambling, cursing, dancing, wearing immodest clothing, etc. Perhaps we should be patient and hold our peace. Perhaps now is not the best time to deal forcefully and clearly with these matters. And there is a possibility that we are not the ones to deal with these matters. But "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

Some Things Are Still Wrong !

Dalton Key

Some things have always been wrong, are wrong now, and will always be wrong ! Though true, this idea is not popular. It does not mesh with current philosophy. The much lauded "situation ethic" suggests there are no absolutes in the realm of right and wrong; the rightness or wrongness of an act is to be determined solely upon the situation. It was Tilich's thesis that, in any given situation, the most loving thing to do would be the right thing to do. Yet he admitted there were no absolutes; each individual, he said, must determine for himself what is right and what is wrong.

This kind of thinking quickly led to the demise of sin. No, sin still exists; in fact, it flourishes ! Folks have just stopped acknowledging it. Sin is no longer seen as sin. The third chapter of Carl Menninger's book, *Whatever Became of Sin?* is entitled, "The Disappearance of Sin : An Eyewitness Account."

We may well have compromised ourselves into a corner. Remember when a drunkard used to be a drunkard ? No more. Now he's an alcoholic, suffering from the disease of alcoholism. A thief was once just that—an out and out thief. Now the poor unfortunate is suffering from kleptomania. If he steals cash from

the register he's guilty of "petty larceny." "Should he drain the company's bank account and head for Bermuda, he's just "misappropriated funds." Sodomy and homosexuality, once vilified as perverse, are now glorified as "gay." They are but "alternate lifestyles" we are told. As goes one explanation, you may be right-handed and I may be left-handed; accordingly, some are heterosexual, others are homosexual. What has happened to sin? It's still with us. We've just coated over the garbage heap with whitewash.

Listen to James: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death". (James 1:14, 15). According to Paul, sin is real, sin is universal, and sin pays the wage of spiritual death. (Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23).

Yes, sin is serious business! Let's not be deceived into believing otherwise.

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