

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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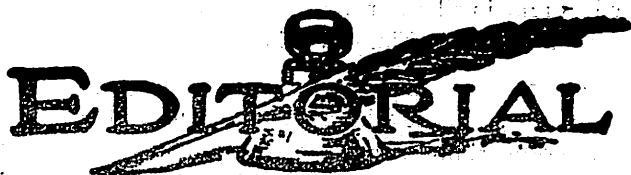
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Support Of Preachers

God has chosen to send forth his message to a lost world through the avenue of preaching. Christ said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15). Paul exhorted, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2). Again, Paul said, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21).

But behind preaching is the preacher. Paul says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the

feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." (Romans 10:13-15).

As we can see, the gospel is to be preached, and there must be a preacher to proclaim it, but how can he preach unless he is sent? This implies then that he is to be supported. There are some who believe that it is wrong to support a preacher. There are others that think that they cannot preach unless they are supported. Here we have two extremes and both are wrong.

In one sense, all Christians are to preach and teach God's word, that is, as they live for the Lord and set a good example. Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16). But in another sense, only men can preach the gospel, that is, through public proclamation. Women are exhorted to remain silent or not to usurp authority over the man. (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11).

When it comes to men, however, they may preach with or without support. Those who have secular jobs obviously, in most cases, are not working with a congregation as a local preacher. In other words, they are not giving their full time to the Lord's work. They can still preach some locally, and in their area of the country, on weekends, holidays, and in the evenings as they are able to spare the time. Some feel that they cannot do this since they want to work full time in preaching and that means that they are after full time support. If the local church cannot support them, then they tend to look for foreign support, and in most cases, these are hireling preachers.

But there is nothing wrong with receiving support, even full time support, for preaching, provided one is able to give his full time to the preaching of the gospel and provided the local church can give him full support. When Christ sent the seventy out on the limited commission, he said that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:7). Paul reasons, "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for Oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt; this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he

that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel; For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." (1 Corinthians 9:9-19). Surely in these passages we can see that it was certainly within keeping with God's will that the labourer or preacher be supported. There were times when Paul received some help from his brethren (Philippians 4:16), other times that he made his living as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), but for the most part he preached without charging for his services. He lived in a time when the gospel was beginning to spread over the country, and the church was either not strong enough to support him in many cases, or else the enemy could have accused him of working only for carnal gain.

In areas where the church is still weak and unable to adequately support its preachers, those who desire to preach must understand the situation and be willing to take secular work, or whatever the local brethren can give them, and go on working, and helping the church to grow, so that the day may come when it will be strong enough to support its own workers. The local members should also be made aware of their duties and responsibilities when it comes to giving so as to enable the church to grow to the point where it will be self-supporting.

While some preachers would reduce themselves to that of being nothing more than hirelings, that is, preaching only for a salary or to fill their stomachs, this does not mean that all who may receive support would fall into this category. Hirelings by all means are a sad group of people and should be rejected. At the same time, as the church grows in numbers and in financial ability, by all means it should support its preachers who are giving their full time to the Lord's work. The purpose of this is to help the local congregation to grow and to send the gospel into new areas.

There are those who still want to look to foreign brethren for support. While this may not be wrong in every case, in most cases it is unwise. If the local church is to be independent and to experience the kind of growth that it needs too, and this applies to the preachers as well, then they need to learn to support their own work. It is usually the hireling that is attracted to foreign support and he will never help the church to grow to the point where it will be able to support itself.

May God help his people to grow and to support their own work in a dignified way. Then it can be said that the church is making progress.



**associate
editorial**

“Every Plant Which My Heavenly Father Has Not Planted Will Be Uprooted”

When Christ said these words, in Matthew 15:13, He was pointing to the commandments and teachings of men. Just before

that in verses 8 & 9 of Matthew chapter 15, He has said, "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men". The Scribes and the Pharisees who were then the religious leaders of the people were teaching them such things as doctrines of God which in fact were not commanded by God, but actually were the commandments of men. Man made traditions and doctrines are such plants which God has not planted, He had not authorised them, and therefore they stand rejected by God, and in the end they shall be uprooted. What a warning! Notice too, the Lord warned "Every plant" that is, every doctrine, "which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted". Not one will be spared.

Whatsoever, God, the heavenly Father has authorised for us to believe and to do today is written in the New Testament of the Bible. God commands that we must abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ, and tells us that if we go beyond that then we stand separated from Him and His Son Christ, (2 John 9), whom he has given ALL authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18). Remember also that we shall all be judged in the last day by what Christ has taught. (John 12:48). Teachings and commandments of men will be uprooted, will not stand.

Seeing this great warning from the Lord we would do well to examine ourselves in light of what the Bible teaches as to whether we are in the faith which was once for all delivered to God's people. (2 Corinthians 13:5; Jude 3). The faith under consideration is not based on the doctrines and the commandments of men or the teachings of some church, but it is the faith which comes by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17). We need to therefore question ourselves about the things we believe and practice and see whether we are following the doctrines of God's word or the commandments of men. Not only as individuals but also as congregation or a group of people we need to examine ourselves about the things we believe. When the Lord had passed His judgment, out of the seven congregations or churches in Asia five were found to be on the wrong track.

The Lord immediately told them to repent or change or else they would perish. (Revelation 1, 2, 3).

So much that is seen today in the religious world exists without the approval of the heavenly Father. For example, God through His Son had Planted one church in the beginning, and Christ identified the church by saying "My church". (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22,23). Yet there are hundreds of other different churches in the world which are identified by different denominational names and they believe different things and worship differently. You Can't read about them in your Bible. The heavenly Father is not their author. He never planted them, because if He did He would have certainly revealed about them in His Bible. They exist without His authority. They may be "fine looking", they may be "big", they may be "rich", or even appear to be "very religious". But since the heavenly Father never planted them, therefore they exist against His will and stand rejected before Him. Then, also, we need to ask, has the heavenly Father authorised in the Bible sprinkling or pouring of water for baptism? No. Has He given authority for baptising babies? No. By whose authority men today desire to be called "Father", "Padri", "Reverend" "Pope" . . . Certainly not by the authority of God. (See Matthew 23:9-12). There are many many more such things which may be pointed out here to show how people have drifted away from the doctrine of Christ and have accepted the commandments of men which they teach as doctrines of God.

Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him". This simply means we must do all things by the authority of Christ. Let us not hold on to a doctrine or teaching which the heavenly Father has not planted or authorised in the New Testament of the Bible because in the end such will be uprooted.

Overthrown In The Wilderness

V.E. Howard

Ladies and gentlemen, the Old Testament record reveals a rich and long history of the children of Israel. And the apostle Paul, in the New Testament, tells us that these matters were written for our instruction even today. God worked through His inspired men to record the things that would teach and admonish every succeeding generation.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, the Holy Spirit presents us with a powerful admonition from Israel's history at the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Hear the words of this Bible example, as recorded by the pen of the apostle Paul: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were **OVERTHROWN IN THE WILDERNESS**, Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpent. Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer, Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

GOD AND ISRAEL

There were two prominent characteristics of the relationship between God and Israel in Old Testament days. First, Israel was a people to whom God gave tremendous blessings and privileges.

As with God's people in every generation, they enjoyed many privileges that were denied to others. The second especially prominent characteristic of Israel was her constant transgression of the will of Jehovah. The people of Israel never learned to be constant with God's blessings, but continually lusted after the evil things around them.

In this New Testament passage the Holy Spirit gives this example of Israel to show both the possibility and the consequences of unfaithfulness. The Spirit wants us to be aware of the constant danger of unfaithfulness in our own lives today. He caused the apostle Paul to recognize the necessity of his own faithfulness, as He closed the ninth chapter of 1 Corinthians with the words: "And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things . . . I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected". My friends, there is no more needed lesson today than the lesson of faithfulness!

THE BLESSINGS OF ISRAEL

Do you realize how abundantly God blessed the children of Israel when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage? They had been slaves for 430 years! God then raised up Moses to lead them out of the land of the Pharaohs and the River Nile. God worked the signs and wonders through Moses, concluding ultimately with the ten plagues, and then led the host of Israel out, causing them to pass through the sea. The cruel taskmasters of Egypt sent their chariots after the Israelites, but God caused the sea to rush upon them and utterly destroy the entire army. Jehovah God brought deliverance and victory for Israel!

The Scripture says that they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" This was another blessing from God. He permitted them to be baptized unto Moses, and thus, they came into spiritual union with him and were constituted his disciples. It was an honour and privilege to be disciples of Moses, God's prophet and leader.

God gave them food and drink in their wilderness wanderings. Their supernatural food was manna, according to Exodus,

chapter 16, and more than once water was brought forth miraculously.

Jehovah led them by the cloud on their long journey to the promised land—the place that was said to flow with milk and honey. He provided for their needs day after day; He was ever faithful.

GOD'S BLESSINGS TODAY

In like manner, God has abundantly blessed His children today. Christians are God's Israel in this age, the Christian dispensation, and God has delivered us from the bondage of sin under Satan. Slavery to Satan is far worse than Israel's bondage in Egypt. In Colossians 1:12-14, the inspired writer speaks of the heavenly Father, "who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins."

Furthermore, God has blessed us in permitting us to be baptized into Christ. The greatest honor of all is that of being united with Jesus and His spiritual body, the family of God. In two New Testament passages the apostle Paul declares that we are baptized into Christ. Hear him, beloved! Are you listening? "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). And then in Galatians 3:26, 27, Paul revealed; "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

Just as Israel was baptized into Moses—submerged beneath the sea walls on each side and the cloud above—in like manner we are immersed into Christ—buried and covered with water, in New Testament baptism. Thus we become disciples of Christ instead of Moses. We become subjects to the grace and truth that came from Christ, rather than to the law which came by Moses.

Not only has God delivered us from Satan's bondage and placed us in the body of Christ, the church, He has spiritually sustained us through Christ, the Bread of Life and the Water of Life.

Jesus declared: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of his bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:48-51).

God does not lead us today by a pillar of fire or by a cloud, but He does direct us by His word as we journey to that heavenly Canaan. The apostle Paul wrote that the word of God is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). And in Hebrews 4:12, the apostle affirmed that "the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." My friends, the word of God is our spiritual food. All the blessings of Israel were but a type of the greater blessings and privileges which we enjoy in Christ.

THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF ISRAEL

Concerning Israel, however, there was constant unfaithfulness in spite of the goodness of God. The Holy Spirit pointed out the unfaithfulness of Israel in a list of five major sins the people committed in the wilderness. The spirit begins with the sad statement: "Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased for they were **OVERTHROWN IN THE WILDERNESS!**" (1 Corinthians 10:5).

First, the Holy Spirit accused the Israelites of the sin of lusting after evil things (verse 6). The reference is to Numbers, chapter 11, when they tired of God's manna and began to lust after the "slave food" of Egypt. God was highly displeased and He punished them with a great plague.

Second, the Spirit speaks of the sin of idolatry (verse 7). This is in reference to Exodus, chapter 32, when they built the golden calf and began to worship it. Jehovah's wrath was great upon them and 3,000 men were killed as a result.

Next the Bible speaks of the sin of fornication (verse 8). This

reference is to Numbers, chapter 25, the incident of Israel's adultery with the women of Moab. The worship of idols was also involved and God's righteous anger caused 24,000 to be killed by another plague.

Then there was the sin of tempting the Lord (verse 9). This event is recorded in Numbers, chapter 21. Israel tried God's patience at Mount Hor concerning the matter of their food and drink, and God, in His displeasure, sent fiery serpents to bite the people. Again many of them perished because of disobedience and stubbornness. Jesus spoke of this very incident in his conversation with Nicodemus, saying, "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 last great sin catalogued against Israel in this passage is the sin of murmuring (verse 10). Here the obvious reference is to Numbers, chapter 14. This was the time of the evil report of the spies, which caused the people to murmur against Moses and Aaron. Again God was not pleased with them; He decreed that they should wander forty years in the wilderness, during which time all twenty years old and upward would die. Truly, they were **OVERTHROWN IN THE WILDERNESS!**

CHRISTIANS MAY BE OVERTHROWN!

Yet, in spite of this vivid example for our learning, and in spite of God's many blessings, Christians often commit the same sins today! It seems that men would learn from the lessons of history, especially sacred history, but such is seldom the case. Notice the catalogue of sins that we still see among God's people today.

The sin of lust, or evil desire, is worldliness. Such things as drinking, dancing, vulgarity, filthy literature and movies are indulged in by some who profess to be Christians—God's people. Many remember their lives in the world and desire to return to fleshly pursuits. James spoke of such people, saying, "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not,

because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures. Ye adulteresses (that is, you who break your marriage vows to God), know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." (James 4:2-4).

The sin of idolatry is still with us, too. Idolatry is not only bowing down before some heathen image, it is also putting other things first before we consider God's will. Many professed Christians have made idols out of their jobs and money, their recreation and pleasure, or even their families. The Saviour spoke of His Father, saying, "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

Furthermore, the sin of fornication, or adultery, is too often found and even tolerated among professed Christians today! However, the Holy Spirit expressly states that "they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God!" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Christians today frequently tempt God by being discontent with His provisions for them. The New Testament admonishes us to be "free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for He himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5).

The sin of murmuring is the expression of discontent, or dissatisfaction. To grumble and complain today is just as sinful—if not more so—than it was in those Old Testament times. We ought to be counting our blessings and realizing how much God has done for us.

GOD'S ENCOURAGEMENT

The people of Israel were warned against self-righteousness and disobedience, but they would not heed the words of Jehovah and they were OVERTHROWN IN THE WILDERNESS! How many of us today need to take heed lest we fall? The Holy Spirit challenges every Christian in the last words of our text: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!"

What About Christian Freedom?

Roy Deaver

Several passages make reference to the freedom which we have in Christ. In John 8:32 the Lord said "to those Jews that had believed him," "...and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Then, in verse 36 he said: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "Shall make you free" in verse 32 and in verse 36 is from the root verb "*eleuthero*," which means: make free, liberate from sin, make possible salvation. "Free" in verse 36 means "free, at liberty." The *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament* points out that the word "free" in John 8:32 is "a synonym for salvation" (Page 239).

In Romans 6:18 Paul says, "...and having been made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." In Romans 6:22 Paul refers again to those who had been made free from sin. In Romans 8:2 Paul says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." "The law of sin and death" clearly is not the law of Moses, for in that case Paul would be saying that the law of Moses could not deliver from the law of Moses. Whatever else it might include, it is a specific reference to the law of God set out in Genesis 2:17, Ezekiel 18:4,20, and Romans 6:23—"The soul that sins it shall die." And, "The wages of sin is death."

In Galatians 2:4 Paul speaks of "our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus." He says, in Galatians 5:1, "For freedom did Christ set us free" In 2:4 he speaks of "... the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, not for an hour: that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."

WHAT FREEDOM IN CHRIST MEANS

1. Freedom in Christ means freedom from a law system. With regard to those who had been under the Mosaic law it means

freedom from the law of Moses. The law of Moses did that which God intended it to do. It served its purpose, was fulfilled by the Christ, and was nailed to the cross when the Lord died there. The only way anybody could be saved by a "law system" would be to keep the law perfectly—that is, never be guilty of a single sin! Not even Abraham so lived.

2. Freedom in Christ means freedom from the *guilt* of personal sin. This freedom from guilt is made possible in and through the blood of the Christ, and without the shedding of his blood there could be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). He shed his blood in his death, and we are "baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3).

3. Freedom in Christ means freedom from the continual practice of sin. This freedom is made possible by the following: (1) the *perfect example* which our Lord himself has given us; (2) the divine *Rule-Book*, the New Testament, which will guide us in this life and take us to glory when this life is over; and (3) the *indwelling Spirit*—the holy Spirit dwelling in the child of God (1 Cor. 6 19,10), in and through and by means of the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:17).

4. Freedom in Christ means freedom from other tragic consequences of sin—that is, condemnation, death (spiritual), and hopelessness. According to the gospel plan there is "no condemnation" as there was under the Mosaic system (Rom. 8:1). This is the case because the gospel makes possible actual remission of sins. As we contemplate physical death, we rejoice in the Lord's blessed promise that "...all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28:29). As we think of spiritual death as a consequence of personal sin—we recall the Lord's great promise, "... and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:26). What would otherwise be hopelessness is replaced with wonderful hope—which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into that which is within the veil (Heb. 6:19). "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

5. Freedom in Christ means freedom to become and to be a faithful, loving, devoted servant of Jesus Christ. Paul refers to himself as being "a servant of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:1). I once read the beautiful story about Abraham Lincoln's actually buying a slave girl, for the purpose of setting her free. The girl begged and pleaded with Mr. Lincoln to let her be his slave in consideration of the price which the Lord paid for us, that we might be free; we are honored to be allowed to be his faithful slaves.

6. Freedom in Christ means that we are free from the dominion of sin. Through the Christ, in the church of the Christ, upon the terms of the gospel of the Christ, we can be in control of our lives, and we can be free from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14). Paul says: "Let not sin therefore reign (go on reigning) in our mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:12, 13).

FREEDOM IN CHRIST DOES NOT MEAN

1. Freedom in Christ does not mean freedom from responsibility to divine law. The gospel itself is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). It is "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Thayer says that the phrase "*ho nomos tas eleutherias*" of James 1:25 means "the Christian religion; which furnishes that rule of right living by which the liberty just mentioned is attained . . ." (page 204). Paul was "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). Everything that we do must be authorized by the Lord (Col. 3:17). We are obligated to walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7), knowing that "faith comes by hearing the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17), and knowing also that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

2. Freedom in Christ does not mean that the person in Christ is free from any and all rules and regulations. The "grace only" brethren are stressing that there are no rules, no regulations, no codes! Charles Hodge writes as follows: "Nothing, personally, is given about the family affairs of preachers, elders, deacons! The

family life of anyone! The silence is shattering! There are no interpersonal examples in the epistles about how to handle various Church issues! There is no peek into New Testament worship, work, daily affairs! This emphasizes inspiration . . . This means Christians are not ruled by codes, rules, 'Church Laws', Christians are led by the Spirit, by the nature of Christ, by Christian character, by heavenly wisdom! "There ain't no such thing as Church Laws, Rules, Regulations." Along the same line, Cecil Hook has written a book entitled **FREE IN CHRIST**. This book could be used as a textbook in setting forth the views of the rankest sort of liberalism.

3. Freedom in Christ does not mean that Christians will not face God in the judgment. There is the judgment to come, and there is the fact that all accountable persons will be there to be judged (Acts 17:30,31; Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul stresses (in Romans 2) that all persons will be judged by the divine law under which they lived. Men will be judged by the word of God (John 12:48). James says: "So speak ye, and so do ye as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" (Jas. 2:12).

4. Freedom in Christ does not mean that those in Christ have freedom to practice sin. True, children of God will be guilty of momentary acts of sin—sins of judgment, sins of negligence, etc.—but children of God will not live lives of sin. In baptism, one dies to a life of sin and is raised to "walk in newness of life," "becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus," and will not practice sin (1 John 3:9). Paul says, "Even so, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). James, who discusses *liberty*, emphasizes doing, working, fulfilling the royal law, restoring the wayward.

In Galatians 5:13 Paul says: "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another." In sheer blasphemy it is claimed by some that the book of Galatians teaches that the Christian has "freedom" without rules or regulations. It is asserted that this is the teaching of Galatians 5:1—"For freedom did Christ set us free . . ." But, the context

makes it crystal clear that Paul is discussing freedom from the Mosaic system, freedom from the bondage which was Judaism. At least some of the Christians were in danger of becoming "entangled again in a yoke of bondage"—that is, they were in danger of reverting to the Mosaic system.

But, in this very passage—Galatians 5:1—Paul says: (1) "Keep on standing fast" in the freedom into which the Christ has brought you; (2) "Quit"—cease—being entangled in a yoke of bondage. In fact, proper respect for the middle voice would give the literal reading, "Stop allowing yourselves to be entangled in the yoke of slavery" (cf., 4:9). Paul continues to stress the following: (1) availing faith is faith working through love; (2) the necessity of their continuing to keep on obeying the truth; (3) the obligation to "walk by the Spirit," to produce the "fruit of the Spirit," to "live by the Spirit"; (4) the necessity of restoring the wayward; (5) bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ; (6) supporting those who teach the gospel; (7) doing good toward all men. Paul says: "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (6:16).

5. Let it be noted and emphasized that the "liberty"—the freedom—which is to be had in Christ (1) did not allow the would-be lawmakers to make laws which God did not make; (2) did not allow Paul (or others) to bow down to—to submit to—these laws which God did not make; (3) did not allow (with God's approval) for Peter to act as he did when he separated himself from the Gentiles; (4) did not allow for Barnabas and "the rest of the Jews" to act hypocritically as they did; (5) did not keep Paul from severely rebuking Peter, or from pointing out the sins of Barnabas and the others; (6) did place upon Paul the obligation to deal with the false doctrines of the Judaizers.

6. Freedom in Christ does not mean that I, as a Christian, have the option to refuse to fight against false teachers and false teachings. We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even to reprove them (Eph. 5:11). We are to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). The Record still teaches: "I beseech you, brethren mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine

which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ; but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:17,18). We must keep in mind that when Paul "marked" certain ones, at least in some instances he identified them by name: Demas (2 Tim. 4:10); Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14); Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

7. Freedom in Christ does not mean freedom from service. We serve in newness of the spirit (Rom. 7:6). "... and having been made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). Paul says: "But by grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

8. Freedom in Christ does not mean that obedience is not necessary. The liberals among us are stressing that obedience is not necessary—that sincerity is all that God required. But, such is not the teaching of the Bible. The Lord is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). Vengeance will be taken upon those who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord (2 Thess. 1:7,8). God demands obedience from the heart (Rom. 6:17). The availing faith is the live, active, working, obedient faith. Consider: Romans 1:5; 16:26. It was to penitent, inquiring, believers that Peter said: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins. . ." (Acts 2:38). Paul said to the Philippian brethren, "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

God's Watchmen

(Ezekiel 3:17, 18)

Arvel Curtis

In our text God made Ezekiel His watchman. He was to be the watchman unto the house of Israel. One of his responsibilities was to warn the people of their destiny. Our text places a

great responsibility upon (1) those who are to warn and (2) those who are warned. Christians today serve as God's watchmen and have the responsibility to warn both His people and the people of the world. Let us make some application from these inspired words to our own responsibility.

Ezekiel Was to Warn the Wicked (V.17). Men and women all over the world are now lost because of their sins and unrighteous acts. Perhaps we have never seen a greater need seriously to act as God's watchman. It is today as it was when the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans! "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). In Romans, chapter one, he declares the Gentiles have sinned. In chapter two he points to the Jews and their sins. In chapter three, he puts both together and declares all to be sinners. So it is today. The gospel of Christ is the only means of saving those in sin (Rom. 1:16). Those who do not obey the truth will be lost forever (II Thess. 1:7-9). This is why the great commission needs our immediate attention. Our Lord said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). While many of God's watchmen sit, millions die without Christ. If we do not warn them, their blood will be on our hands. God has laid this challenging, awesome responsibility at the hands of the church (Eph. 3:8-11; 1 Tim. 3:15). We are his watchmen.

Ezekiel Had to Warn the People or Else Give Account for them. If he failed to warn them, their blood would be on his hands. The sinners would answer for their sins but so would Ezekiel (v. 18). How many have slipped through our hands into a devil's hell without any warning from us? How many of our own relatives? Sometimes people say, "I just cannot talk to my own family." How hard have we tried? Would anyone doubt that the rich man of Luke 16 could have talked to his brothers if given another opportunity. Church members will sometimes even discourage others from talking with their family about their soul's salvation. How sad? What about our neighbours, work companions and school mates? How many of them will be lost eternally without any encouragement from us to be saved? What about foreign nations? While we surround ourselves with the luxuries of life, many die without ever having owned or even seen

a New Testament. Do we care? What kind of watchmen are we today? One day we shall know for we must give account. God said to Ezekiel, "his blood will I require at thine hand" (Eze. 3:18).

Ezekiel was not Commanded to Force Men to Obey. The responsibility of the watchman was to teach and warn. So it is today (Matt. 28:18, 19). If they refused to hear the warning from Ezekiel, their blood would be on their own hands. They would be lost, but not Ezekiel. Jesus Christ did not command that we convert the whole world. This no doubt would be an impossible task. But he did command that we teach the whole world. No man has the right to expect Christians to beg him to be saved. When he hears and understands the gospel, his blood is on his own hands (Jn. 12:48). Friend, church member or alien sinner, count yourself fortunate if others have encouraged you several times to be saved. They have gone beyond their call of duty. Millions have never had the **FIRST OPPORTUNITY** to be saved from sin by hearing and obeying the gospel of Christ.

As watchmen, we as Ezekiel, must warn men and women of their destiny if they do not obey God. We must do all within our power to turn them to the truth that heaven may be theirs. Friend, if you are not saved and understand the gospel, your blood will be on your own hands and you can blame no one for your soul's being lost. What a responsibility God places upon all of us either to teach and warn as watchmen, obey the gospel as alien sinners, or be lost for all eternity. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).

The Gift Of The Holy Ghost In Acts 5:32

Bobby Duncan

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). This verse states the *fact* of God's having given the Holy Ghost to "them that obey him." Like Acts 2:38.

Does Acts 5:32 teach that the Holy Spirit personally dwells in Christians in a non-miraculous way?

In the first place, the statement here is made in a context in which miraculous powers of the Spirit are discussed. Verses 12-16 of this same chapter state:

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people...Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." It was this very fact that caused the high priest and those with him to be filled with indignation (verse 17), and to put the apostles in prison. That very night, by means of a miracle, the prison doors were opened and the apostles were sent to preach in the temple. Against this background, when Peter referred to "the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him, those to whom he was speaking, as well as Theophilus to whom the book of Acts was written, would naturally understand him to be referring to the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit so evident in this chapter.

A second thing that leads us to reject the idea that this passage is speaking of a non-miraculous, personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the fact that Peter's statement is designed to agree that the apostles were obedient to God. These were the religious leaders to whom Peter was speaking. Theoretically, the only thing Peter would need to do to obtain their approval of the actions of the apostles would be to show that their actions were in obedience to God. His argument, arranged syllogistically, is as follows: Major Premise: God gives the Holy Ghost only to those who obey him. Minor Premise: God has given the Holy Ghost to us, as is evidenced by the miracles performed by us. Logical Conclusion: Therefore, we are obedient to God. This argument of Peter would have no strength at all separate and apart from the miracles performed by those to whom the Holy Ghost was given. Hence, what is under consideration in Acts 5:32 is the fact that

supernatural powers of the Spirit were possessed by the apostles to prove that they were not liars and disobedient, as they had been charged.

A third thing that causes us to believe that the gift of the Holy Ghost in Acts 5:32 is the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost is the use of the word "witnesses." How could a non-miraculous, personal indwelling of the Spirit possibly be a witness? Let us examine two other passages where reference is made to the Spirit's being a witness. The first is John 15:26,27: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." We know of none who would say the testimony of the Spirit in this passage refers to something accomplished through a non-miraculous, personal indwelling. But look at the similarity between this passage and Acts 5:32. This passage says, "... he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness." Acts 5:32 says, "And ye are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost..." Is not Acts 5:32 a fulfillment of the promise of John 15:26, 27?

The second passage we mention in this connection is Hebrews 2:3,4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" Here is a clear reference to the testimony given by the apostles of Christ coupled with the supernatural workings of the Holy Ghost. And it is said in this passage that God bore "witness." Are not the events of Acts 5 described in this language of Hebrews 2:3,4? If not, what is lacking in Acts 5? What else would we have to find in that chapter to be able to say Acts 5 is an example of what Hebrews 2:3,4 is talking about?

Some who believe Acts 5:32 is talking about an ordinary, non-miraculous personal indwelling of the Spirit will even concede that those who originally heard this statement made

by Peter probably did, at the time, think he was referring to the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit, but later learned he was speaking of the ordinary, non-miraculous, personal indwelling. Such a thought not only seems far-fetched, but also raises another difficult question; i.e., where did these later learn they were mistaken in their understanding of this statement?

Before closing this article we will make some brief observations concerning Ephesians 1:13,14, which states: "...ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance,..." These verses have been used by some to sustain the idea of an ordinary, non-miraculous, personal indwelling of the Spirit. But it should not take a great deal of reflection to conclude that the words "sealed" and "earnest" could not refer to an ordinary, non-miraculous, personal indwelling. The very nature of a *seal* and of *earnest* demands they both be something visible and tangible. It is easy to understand how the supernatural powers of the Spirit could be referred to as a "seal," for such constituted God's "seal" of approval of those who were preaching the truth. It is easy to understand how supernatural gifts could serve as the "earnest" or guarantee of the Christian's inheritance, for the supernatural gifts actually confirmed, or guaranteed the authenticity of the gospel being preached. How could a non-miraculous indwelling do such?

There are numerous other passages which make reference to the *fact* of some's receiving the Holy Spirit; and in some cases the immediate context does not make clear what it means to receive the Holy Spirit. It seems to this writer that these references to receiving the Holy Spirit simply must be understood in the light of what we know from other passages it meant to receive the Holy Spirit during the time the New Testament was being written.

Preach The Word

Jerry T. Bramlett

I believe the admonition Paul gave Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort

with all longsuffering and doctrine" to be as binding on the gospel preacher as Mark 16:16 is binding to the alien sinner. The reason for my believing such is: "All scripture is given by inspiration to God . . ." (II Timothy 3:16). We are living in a time when modernists, liberals, and even some who claim to be gospel preachers, have gotten so hung up on the Holy Spirit issue that it is taught that the Holy Spirit works separate and apart from and independent of the word of God. Therefore many, many preachers have gotten away from preaching the word of God, and there is a strong tendency to disregard the Bible today.

In this article I am affirming that we can be saved by the word of God, and that it is sufficient for us in the 20th Century to know and to obey and be children of God. If my child should go to school and have a perfect attendance record, how could he do any better in attending? If he should have perfect attendance, he could not improve in that area. The Psalmist says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul . . ." (Psalm 19:7). If the law is perfect, and the Psalmist acknowledges that it is, how then can the law be improved? The law will also convert the soul, and a person must be converted in order to have his sins blotted out (Acts 3:19). Therefore, if a person is converted, how can he be any better off than having his sins blotted out?

Jesus taught in John 3:3, 5 that a person must be born again. I have never heard a person disagree with Jesus by claiming that one could be saved without being born again. So the question is not: "should we be born again?" but the question is: "how is one born again?" The answer is found in I Peter 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." If we are born again as Jesus stated for us to be, and this birth is by the word of God as recorded by Peter, then we can conclude that the word of God is sufficient for us to be saved. What more could a person want than to be born again and be saved?

Jesus taught his apostles that, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Jesus also said, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). What is there that the Spirit can do for us

that the word of God cannot do, in that the apostles were led by the Spirit, and we have in the word of God what the apostles taught? We can know this truth and be free of sin, and this truth is the word of God which we have in the Bible. To deny the word of God today, one would deny that the Spirit led the apostles into all the truth, that we can be free of sin, and that God's word is truth. We must accept the truth to be saved, and the word of God is truth.

The Apostle Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ." (I Peter 1:22). What is truth? ". . . thy word is truth" (John 17:17). In obeying the truth one's soul is purified which means he is pure or clean. If your soul is pure or clean from sin through obedience to the truth, then there is no contamination in your soul. It is not possible for your soul to become more pure than when it obeys the truth, the word of God.

James writes, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Why would anyone, especially preachers, get away from the word of God when it will save one's soul? Through the inspired writing of James, we can learn the importance of hearing, believing, and obeying the word of God because it will save a person's soul. Yes, the word is sufficient for us to obey, live by and then go home to live with God. If the word of God will save, and James indicates it will, the inevitable conclusion is that we will be lost without the word of God.

Jesus warns that, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. Can you feature man's being judged by Jesus Christ with an imperfect standard? That is the conclusion one must draw if we are to be judged by the words of Christ and if the Bible is not sufficient to save one's soul.

Because I do not believe that the Holy Spirit works separate and apart from and independent of the word of God does not mean I do not believe in the Holy Spirit. I certainly believe that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Bible to write what God wanted man to know and we have today in the word of God all

that we need to go from this life to a life with God beyond the grave. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:12-13). Inasmuch as the writers of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit and they wrote what the Holy Spirit wanted us to know, there would not be any reason why the Holy Spirit should work separate and apart from the word of God.

As I let my pen rest from this article, let me exhort, plead and encourage every preacher to preach the word of God with all the boldness that you have. Why? "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house *shall be saved*." (Acts 11:14).

Be Ye Doers Of The Word!

W.C. Quillen

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

The doer is the person who accomplishes things. We need thinkers, planners and designers, for without such we would be in confusion, turmoil, disarray and get nothing done. But just thinking about something doesn't get the task done. And the best of plans are ineffective until put into use.

It is easier to hear a sermon than to preach it; and it is easier to preach a sermon than to practice it. Because this is true, there are far more sermons preached and heard than practiced. It is possible for people to attend worship services regularly and listen attentively to the lesson delivered, drinking in every word spoken, and yet be profited none; because they don't become doers of the word.

They may approve what is preached, commend the lesson heartily, and thrill at the thought of how wonderful it would be if that sermon were put into practice, and the good things taught were done. In the course of the lesson many may think, "That's

right: I could do that and I should do that, and I intend to do it." But they do not do it: they go away and soon forget it. Such action is called procrastination, or putting it off. With the good intention of doing better later, many of us never do so well as we should.

It may be that we apply the lesson to others, and think, "Well, they are not doing anything about it either. They are members of the church, too, and they heard what I heard." So we attempt to excuse ourselves for not doing what we know we should because of the inactivity of others. And these "others" may be thinking the same way about us. Thus we tend to stand in each other's light, and to hold each other back. Where such conditions exist, we have a situation of people "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12). Together they may hurt and hinder the very cause which they claim to love most.

One is to be commended for his interest in hearing and studying the Word of God, else he could never know it (II Tim. 2:15), nor believe it (Rom. 10:17). If he is not a doer of the word, he deceives himself.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

Loving In Deed And In Faith

Ray Hawk

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

The book of I John is an interesting book on the subject of true love. John shows that his fellowship is with the Father and the Son (I John 1:3). To have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, one must follow that which John and the other apostles and prophets have delivered. To follow the writing of the apostles is to have full joy (I John 1:4), know his commandments (2:3, 4), know we have passed from death unto life (3:14), know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (4:6), know we dwell in him (4:13), and to know we have eternal life (5:13).

How can one know that he is of God? John said, "He that knoweth God *heareth us*; he that is not of God *heareth not us*" (I John 4:6). How are the "us"? The apostles! We hear the apostles today by hearing (reading) the apostles' doctrine or New Testament (Acts 2:42). There were those in John's day who were members of the Lord's body, but were lost. They said they had no sin (1:8,10), kept not his commandments (2:4), hated their brethren (2:9, 11:10, 14, 15; 4,20), loved the world (2:15-17), were anti-Christ (2:18,22:4:1-3), kept on committing sin (3:8, 10), were false prophets (4:1), and sinned the sin unto death (5:16).

Although God loves all men (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8), He still commands that certain men be marked (Rom. 15:17,18; 2 Thess. 3:6;10-15). John was the apostle of love, yet in I, II and III John he still described those in the church who were not in fellowship with Jehovah. We can do no less.

W. Carl Ketcherside, in a recent issue of *INTEGRITY* (March, 1977, pp. 119-120), had an article "The Scattered Sheep" in which he overlooks the very principle found in John's letters! Ketcherside ended his article with these words: "And I shall try to love, not merely in word and in speech, but in deed and in truth!" Our brother thinks it is unloving to deny that sectarians are Christians and ridicules the idea of there being the true body of Christ. Our brother thinks we have painted ourselves into a corner. This is unwarranted on his part. We have neither painted ourselves into a corner nor build any walls. Those who reject the truth point themselves out of God's grace and build a wall to keep others from entering in!

Ketcherside seems to think that if one teaches the one holy, apostolic, and catholic church of God he is a legalistic sect. I wonder if he is able to get his "scattered sheep" into one fold if that will be a legalistic sect? Since Christian went back into Judaism in the first century. I wonder if brother Ketcherside would say the church was a legalistic sect because it taught salvation was found only within its fellowship?

I used to be a Methodist preacher, and Ketcherside is using the same arguments now that I espoused almost twenty years ago! it is nothing but Neo-Denominationalism! He accuses us of preaching ourselves, when in reality we preach Christ and his body, the church. Ketcherside thinks he can preach Christ without preaching the doctrine of Christ, but he is as mistaken as were those John wrote in his three epistles.

There may be Christians in the sectarian churches, but they are in error and should repent and return to God's fellowship. This is what Ketcherside and other like him needs to do.