

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 28

August 1997

No. 4

EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak"

This is what the Holy Spirit inspired man, the apostle Paul, wrote to the Corinthians Christians, at 1 Corinthians 14:34. He said again, when he wrote in 1 Timothy 2:11-14, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

But what about women being appointed as elders and bishops and pastors in churches today? Are they going to keep silence? Are they going to be in submission? Those who are taking such decisions, and making such appointments, and those who are accepting such positions, are doing so in direct contravention and violation of God's written will. Either they do not know what does the Bible teach about such matters, or they simply ignore what is written in God's book.

We read, further, from 2 Timothy 3:1-7, "This is a faithful saying: If a man (note: a man, not a woman, *further, also note, that the term bishop, elder and pastor are used in the N.T. for the same person and the same office—S.D.*) desires the position

of a bishop, he desires a good work; A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence, (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." At Titus 1:5-9 we read again the same exhortation.

Now there are some who are talking about the liberation of women, and by this they mean that they, that is, both men and women, should have equality on every front. This had begun a few years ago as a social or secular movement, and slowly it crept into the religious world also. But we need to remember, that God is our Creator; He has made both man and woman; He knows them better than they themselves know about their own personalities and abilities. Not only did God make the humans, but He also has revealed His will for them or how they should live with one another. And, those who honor God in their lives, and accept Him as their heavenly Father, then they are always going to abide by His will. How do we know His will today. He is not speaking today through any individual, but His words written in the Bible is His will for us: What does the Bible teach on the subject we are discussing? The inspired man of God wrote in the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 11:3, and said, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." Is there any thing wrong with that? If God is the head of Christ, does this mean that God is going to mistreat Him or use Him as His slave? Where is my head. I mean the physical head of my physical body? Well, it has been placed on my body. What does it do to my body? It protects my body; loves my body, looks after the welfare of my entire body. This is the meaning of head. It exercises control or authority, supervises and directs. Speaking about His head, Christ made the point, when He said, "Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again." (John 10:17). This was the will of God that Christ should lay down His

life for sinners, and He did that, showing His submission to His head, God; and He said, I am doing this because my Father loves me!

Speaking about humans, man and woman, we observe, from God's will, that God placed man over woman. Man is the head, the leader. We read, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." (Ephesians 5:22-25). At another place, writing to Christian women, it says, "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." (1 Peter 3:1-7). Did you notice that the woman is called upon to be submissive and obedient to her own husband, and at the same time the husband is advised to treat his wife with honor and understanding, realising that she is a weaker vessel. Now when God says in His book that woman is a weaker vessel, He didn't mean by that that she is an inferior person, or she is of less importance than man. God loves all humans equally, both man and woman; Christ died for all; in heaven, Christ taught, they all will be like angels of God, and not as man and woman or husband of wife (Matthew 22:30). But He is their Creator. He created them both. And, He knows who is stronger and who is weak. He created them in that fashion. He must have a purpose. In my body He put strong legs, but he also

put some weak members, such as eyes. Are my eyes, in my body, inferior to my legs, just because they are weak? In fact, realising that they are weak and delicate, I take more care of them! Man needs woman, and woman needs man. What, if God had created men only, or women only, that is, if He had created more than one of each one of them in the beginning? He created a man and a woman, in the beginning, and He created them differently. In comparison to man, a woman usually is more affectionate and tender; she could be easily shattered, broken, melted, and conned. Even the devil knew this fact, and that is why he didn't approach Adam to deceive him in the beginning, but he approached Eve and successfully deceived her.

So whether it is the home or the church, God has specified how men and women should live in their respective sphere. At home, woman is the homemaker, and man is the head; he is responsible for looking after the welfare of the wife and the children and protecting them and guiding them in the right direction. And, in the church, men ought to take the lead to lead the worship services, preach and exhort, lead prayers, singing, serve the Lord's Supper. But, let women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak.

The Need For Personal Work

J.C. CHOATE

The Lord has commanded us to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15) and there are many ways to do that. We may publicly preach, go from house to house, use radio, literature, T.V., video, and other methods at our disposal. But one of the greatest needs today in the church, and one of the most effective ways of getting the gospel out, is that of doing personal work.

Public preaching is restricted to the men of the church, and that would also include the use of radio, T.V., and video. But all can do personal work.

Personal work is simply that of going to one person or to a family for the purpose of having a Bible study. It is more or less a

one on one type thing. It is not something that you do publicly but rather on a personal level. It can be an informal type meeting at one's home, while having a meal, during a walk, or driving home. You can even correspond with a friend or send a Bible correspondence course.

Don't confine your Christianity to that of merely going to worship each Lord's Day. It is important that you faithfully worship, but there is so much more than you need to do at home, at school, on the job, during a holiday, on a daily basis as a Christian. You need to set a good example for sure, and let Christ be seen in your life, but you also need to take the initiative in meeting people, arranging a Bible study with them, and putting forth an effort to convert them to Christ.

Of course you are going to begin by making excuses. You'll probably say that you are not a preacher, that you don't know the Bible well enough, that people are not interested, that you don't have the time, and on and on you will go. But you don't have to be a preacher to be a personal worker and you don't have to be a Bible scholar to teach it. You know what you did to become a Christian, don't you? Why can't you tell your friend what you did to become a Christian and that the Lord added you to his church. And as you put forth an effort to teach you will find yourself going to the Bible to study and to learn more so you can do a better job in teaching and in answering all the many questions you will be asked. As to time, you have the time if you will just use it, if you have enough interest. Furthermore, a lot of people may not be interested but it is up to you to get them interested. Picture yourself as a salesman. The only difference, you have the best product in the world, souls need to be saved, and the Lord will be with you and help you to be successful.

Once you begin to try to reach people for the Lord, you will find that there are many opportunities. Also, the more of this work you do, the more you will want to do. And once you experience that of converting a soul to Christ, you will find the kind of joy and satisfaction that you never knew existed. Try it and see if you don't find that to be true.

As you enter into this type of work, there are some things that you will need to keep in mind. Remember that you want to try to reach this person for Christ. His very soul is at stake.

Therefore, you will need to be serious about what you are doing. Show love and kindness to this person. By all means, be patient. Don't allow him to say things or ask questions that would cause you to become angry. Rather, take your times and show your concern. Whatever you do, don't show a haughty spirit or that you know it all. Don't be ugly or sarcastic. Rather, have him to turn to the verses of scripture that you are studying. A good way to bring out a point is to ask a question and then have your friend to answer it. Continue the study for a reasonable period of time and then arrange another study within a week or so. Don't wait too long. If you are at his place or at your place, it would be good to begin with a prayer and then end with a word of prayer. If properly handled, you no doubt can leave feeling that you have made progress. But regardless of how it went, and especially if you feel that it didn't go too well, don't let that discourage you or cause you to give up. Just keep trying and in the end it will pay off.

As you study with different ones you will find that those of different religions and various denominational groups will make all kind of arguments to justify their religious beliefs and practices. If you don't know the answer to some question or argument, just explain that you are unable to give an answer at this time but if they will give you a few days that you will give them a Bible answer. Remember that you are having a study with them and although you fully believe that you have the truth, they probably believe the same. So, you must continue to study, comparing your beliefs, and letting God's word have the final say. You are not trying to show them how smart you are or that the truth originated with you. Rather, you are trying to convince them from God's word that the Lord's way is right, that they need to obey the gospel, be a member of the church they can read about in the Bible, and live the Christian life. But as you continue to study with people, and as questions are asked and arguments are made for or against something, you will grow in your knowledge and ability to deal with these matters.

God bless you as you become a personal worker for the Lord. You are greatly needed, and remember as you work at this you will grow and the church will grow. Let Christ, the Apostles, and many others of the New Testament be your example and you will surely succeed.

Is A Woman Inferior To A Man?

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

Some people say that a woman is nothing more than a servant to a man, even though he be her husband. She is good only to bear children, to keep the house, and to prepare the food. Some religions teach that a woman cannot be saved in the body of a woman. She must be first reborn as a man.

In rejection of this thinking, the "Women's Liberation Movement" which has swept through the developed nations of the world declares that woman is in every way the equal of man. Not only does this movement seek to establish equality, but its ultimate goal is to gain power for the women of the world to upset the established authority of men. This attitude has created a sense of competition between women and men which results in enmity and bitterness.

Our concern is to learn what God has to say about the role of woman and her relationship to man. Neither the pagan view nor the Liberation Movement is directed by God. But when we turn to the Bible, we can clearly see the work, the role, and the position of woman, as God intended it to be.

Is woman inferior to man? In the first book of Bible—Genesis—we see the answer to this question: God had created all of the animal life and, last of all, He made man. Then He *"brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him"* (Genesis 2:19, 20).

The words, "a helper comparable to him" tell us what God intended woman to be: a companion, a helper capable of matching man.

In order to bring woman into existence, "... *the Lord God*

caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made (the original language literally says, "He built") into a woman, and He brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21, 22).

When Adam saw the woman God had made he said, *"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man"* (Genesis 2:23).

The concluding comment in the Genesis text is, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"* (V. 24).

From the facts of this creation scene, we can learn several things:

- Adam was created first; therefore he was first, before the woman.
- Whereas Adam was made from the dust of the earth, woman was formed, or built, from a bone taken from the side of Adam. She was, therefore, literally, a part of man.
- The bone was not taken from his head, that she should rule over him, nor was it taken from his foot, that the man should trample the woman; rather, it was taken from his side, that she should be a partner with him.
- God made man and woman literally as two halves of a whole. Without both halves, there can be no reproduction of humanity. Therefore, both halves are of equal importance and necessity in their contribution to the continuation of the race.
- God intended that the two individuals—the man and the woman—leave other family members in order to form a new family unit.
- The man and the woman were to be joined together so that they become "one flesh"—two halves of one whole.

So, from the beginning God formed woman to complete man, to be a helper together with him. In the development of their lives, their family, their work, and their relationships with God and with other humans, the woman was designed to fit

together with the man, so that their lives would be complete. In truth, she was literally of the very essence of man, in no way inferior, or of lesser quality or value.

"His Hour!"

DALE JENKINS

Oh, to have been present in that upper room 2,000 years past and to have beheld all that those twelve witnessed! It pricks the mind to simply consider that night, as we look at it through the inspired text.

Jesus told Philip and Andrew, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23). What a power-packed statement! It reveals so very much to man. Here is that hour, here is the time that all time has been waiting for. Here is the moment that all the prophecies rest upon. Here is the act upon which we build our faith. Oh, to have heard it and know all we know now! It unveils at least three great truths about our Lord.

First, it tells us for certain of Jesus deity. He knew he was God's Son. He knew it was for this purpose that he had come into the world. On at least two occasions prior to this meeting, people had tried to take the Messiah, but they could not. "For his hour had not yet come" (John 7:30; 8:20). Now it is time—and he knows it. Yes, he knows it; and that very fact adds to our assurance that he is "God with us!" Even the very speech-patterns of the Christ tell us something is about to happen. Notice, "... unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it . . . Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father glorify your name . . . And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself . . . A little while longer the light is with you . . . Now the son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him . . . Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer . . . By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another . . . Where I

am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterward . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . ." (John 12:23-24, 25, 27, 32, 35; 13:13, 35, 36; 14:2-NKJV). And we could go on and on with the beautiful meaningful "passion passages." The fact is, Jesus knew who he is. Chapter 13 begins with two statements that further bear this out, ". . . when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he should depart from this world to the Father . . ." and "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God, and was going to God . . ." (vss. 1 & 3). Our faith should be strengthened he knew who he is, yet he went to the cross anyway!

Also, we marvel, second, at our Lord's determination. He knew the hour was come, and could have easily stopped the hour from coming; yet he went to the cross anyway. We see the determined Messiah, ready to face his own unjust death! Ample opportunity was given for our Lord to call the whole thing off. The upper room could have become his military headquarters; and the twelve, his captains. His words in that upper room could have been the commands of a crusading capital instead of those of a re-assuring Lord. The garden could have been his turning point from the cross of Calvary to the earthly throne of David. He could have prayed God's aid in a military conquest instead of "not my will, but thine be done." Instead of replacing Malchus' ear (John 18:10), the swipe of Peter's sword could have served as the first blow in a physical revolution. At the taunting cries of "he saved others, himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42), he still could have turned that hill into a hole! But, no! Our Lord knew "his hour" had come! And with determination he pressed onward—through the painful throes of denial, through the blood-like sweat of Gethsemane (John 18:1-12), and through the mock-filled air of Calvary!

Third: All this brings us to our final embodiment of his statement. In it we see Jesus' devotion. Jesus knew therefore he must go forward. He knew there is no other means of sinful man's salvation (Acts 4:12). He knew this was the moment all of time pointed to (Ephesians 3:8-12). And he knew that if the cross could not move man, nothing can. I suggest that he did in fact start a revolution, but it was a spiritual one. That he did become the military captain (Hebrews 12:1-2) of a band of "soldiers" who

war not against principalities and powers, but of spiritual revolutionists whose battle cry is "Salvation," whose mission is to conquer the earth for their Royal King, whose territory is a land much fairer than this one, and whose dream is eternal.

Oh, to have been there and seen our Lord meet "his hour!"
But there is a greater thought still: Has our hour come?

The Dreadful Sin Of Envy

WELDON LANGFIELD

The sin of "envy" has been around almost as long as the human race. In I John 3:12 we read, "Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous." Here the first murder is discussed, and "envy" is what motivated it. "Envy" is one of the most despised sins of the Bible. In Galatians 5, for example, it is listed as a "work of the flesh" (v. 21). God has always considered "envy" to be a terrible sin.

What is a biblical definition of "envy?" W.E. Vine defines the Greek word, "PHTHONOS" as, "The feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing, or hearing of, the advantage or prosperity of others." (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 37). It is similar in meaning to the word ordinarily rendered "jealousy," and is in complete contrast with the spirit of "love" to be possessed by every Christian. "Love" not only knows dismay over the good of others, but to the contrary, LOVE "rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:6-7). "Envy" has been described as the "least-confessed sin,"—and this may be true. When one envies another, he is, in essence, admitting that the object of his "envy" is in some way better off than he himself is. This is perhaps why "envy" is also described as "the loser's emotion." A jealous person usually senses his own inadequacy and lack of accomplishment. The godless Philistines envied Isaac because of his superior blessings (Genesis 26:12-14), yet Isaac didn't "envy" them. The chief

priests and elders of Judea, who saw their popularity eroding as their former admirers began to follow Christ, were "filled with envy" (Matthew 27:18). Christ, however, did not envy them. Few are willing to admit to the sin of envy: it is tantamount to admitting failure or inferiority in the area in which they are envious.

One of the saddest phrases in the vocabulary of the Lord's people is "preacher jealousy." It is not new, however. Paul wrote over 1900 years ago, "Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife" (Philippians 1:15). While the gospel can be preached for the wrong reasons, far more will always be accomplished by pure motivations than by sinful ones. Undoubtedly much of the sin, false teaching, and division that have plagued the Lord's church throughout the centuries has had its roots in envy. Preachers may envy elders because of their authority. Elders may envy preachers because of their influence. Older saints may sometimes envy younger ones because of their youth. There may be jealousy over material blessings or talent.

We must constantly be searching our hearts and examining our own deepest motives. Paul wrote, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith" (II Corinthians 13:5).

On the positive side, an author once asserted, "I'm glad I'm not the best personal evangelist in the brotherhood. If I were the best, we'd be in bad shape." His point was clear: if he set the "high-water mark" for skill in evangelism, the mark wouldn't be very high. What a wonderful attitude! If we could learn to say, "I'm glad I'm not the best speaker, teacher, most athletic, wealthiest, prettiest," etc., how much we would grow, and how much strife would be eliminated from the Lord's church!

Just as God placed within the kingdom all the miraculous gifts he desired to aid early Christians with their development (I Corinthians 12:18), so the talents and opportunities necessary to the on-going of the truth have been placed in the church today. Each of us has a vital role in the Lord's body. To the extent that we can rejoice in what we have been given and do our best with it, productivity, spirituality and a sense of satisfaction await.

An Especially Bad Habit

CHARLES COOK

One man observed, "About the only exercise people get nowadays is running down their friends, side-stepping their responsibilities, pushing their luck and jumping, to conclusions." That is being a little too hard on the human race; but in the case of some it obviously is true. The matter of jumping to conclusions—about people, and things, and what we hear—is an especially bad habit for anyone to fall into.

I saw a cartoon where the coach said to his basketball team: "Well, men, here we are: . . . so far a perfect record . . . no games lost . . . in fact, never scored on . . . a perfect record!—and about to play our first game." Too often we are in the habit of jumping to a conclusion before we get all the facts.

A man was sitting at his window one evening and casually said to his wife: "There goes that woman Billy Smith is so terribly in love with!" Running from the kitchen, his wife dropped a plate, and knocked over a lamp, making her way to the window. "Where, where?" she cried. "There," he said, "that woman in the blue dress." "You idiot," she snapped, "that's his wife!" "Of course it is," he smiled! Too many of us are like this man's wife: we assume the worst, and are all too ready to jump to conclusions, before we get all the facts.

When we hear stories and rumors about one another, and automatically jump to the conclusion that whatever we have heard is true, are we really displaying a Christ-like spirit? Paul taught, "Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God also in Christ hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). Would not Paul's admonition be a good discipline exercise for every one of us to follow? The very next time you hear some "juicy" information that instantly appeals to your lower nature, take control of your thinking processes: take a deep breath . . . think it through . . . and believe the best, until you are forced to believe the worst! Put this into practice right now!

A man was driving his new vehicle up a curving mountain

road. Suddenly a woman driver screeched from around the curve in the opposite direction. As she came past his pickup she put her head out and screamed "PIG!" Angered by that, he screamed back: "BIG FAT COW." As he rounded the curve, he demolished his new pick-up in a collision with the largest pig you ever saw standing right in the middle of the road.

Don't Get In The Habit Of Jumping To Conclusions!

Who Is To Blame?

DENISE HAIRE

We read in the papers and hear on the air
Of killing and stealing and crime everywhere.
We sigh, and we say as we notice the trend,
"This young generation—where will it end?"
How can we be sure it's their fault alone?
Do they ask for bread and are given a stone?
Are we less guilty who place in their way
Too many things that lead them astray?
Too much money, too much idle time,
Too many movies of passion and crime,
Too many books not fit to be read,
Too much evil in what they hear said,
Too many parents who won't stay at home.
Kids don't make the movies; they don't write the books.
They don't make the liquor; they don't run the bars.
They don't make the laws, and they don't make the cars.
They don't peddle the drugs that muddle the brain.
That's all done by older folks greedy for gain.
Delinquent teen-agers, oh, how we condemn!
The sins of the nation—we blame on them.
By the laws of the blameless, the Saviour made known,
Who is there among them to cast the first stone?
For in so many cases it's sad and it's true;
The title "delinquent" fits older folks, too.

He That Despiset The Word

W.A. HOLLEY

"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13).

Zedekiah and his subjects despised God's holy word and, as a result the Babylonian captivity came upon them (II Chronicles 36:11ff).

Jesus refers to those faithful servants of God whose righteous blood had been shed, from "righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias," by wicked men who had despised God's word (Matthew 23:29-39). Thus, the Old Testament contains a list of murderers who resisted the word of the Lord. The failure of the Pharisees to learn the lessons of history and to repent of their wickedness, which had characterized their forefathers, makes them equally guilty. Should one wish to live a long and happy life, let him reverence God's word (Proverbs 3:1-4).

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 is one of the finest quotations in the Old Testament: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Those who despise God's word are certain to be lost. Adam and Eve serve as a wonderful example of this principle (Genesis 3:1-13). As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve were driven from Eden. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed because they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2). The Laodicean church was lost because it was neither hot nor cold, but was lukewarm (Revelation 3:14-22). A lukewarm church nauseates the heart of God! Denominational preachers despise Mark 16:16, or Acts 2:38, or Romans 6:3-5, because these passages do not agree with their denominational doctrines. Such preachers have worked for several hundred years trying to eliminate these verses; but, after all their efforts, the Bible still reads the same way. How much better if they would but believe, obey, and teach these passages!!

Countless thousands despise what the holy scriptures say concerning the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10, Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Such wish to observe what they call "the sabbath day." Only Jews were required to keep the sabbath (Deuteronomy 5:1-15). The sabbath law ended when Jesus died upon the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Since that time no one is required to keep the sabbath!!

Others despise the Lord's teaching concerning the church of the New Testament (Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 36:38, 41-42, 47). In apostolic times those who should be saved were added by the Lord to the church. There was no 'joining' the 'church of one's choice.' The church is important even though thousands assert that it is a non-essential—that one can be saved out of it as well as in it. Such ideas can never be found in the Holy Bible. (See Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6).

But he that fears and obeys the Lord's commandments shall be rewarded abundantly. For example, Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, and God took him (Genesis 5:21-24). How wonderful!! Noah built an ark according to God's specifications, thus saving himself and his family (Genesis 6:8; Hebrews 11:7).

Jesus pronounces a special blessing upon those who obey his commandments: "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" (Revelation 22:14). It is in this manner that "we know that we know him" (I John 2:3-4). Being obedient to Jesus Christ is far more than saying, Lord, Lord (Matthew 7:21-23).

In the Great White Throne Judgment, we all shall be judged by his word: "He that rejects me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). We therefore shall not be judged by the whims, notions, ideas, creeds, or feelings of men.

"And I saw the dead, small, and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:11-12; Cf.

Verse 15). Truly, in the words of a grand old song, "There's a Great Day Coming!" (Hebrews 9:27). Amos exhorts all to prepare to meet God (Amos 4:12)—and meet him, we will.

Would you like to meet God in peace? How can the sinner stand justified before God? The answer is a very simple one. In I Peter 4:17 a very uncomplicated question is asked: "... What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" The answer to this most important question is found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9, which reads, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Sadly, some ridicule the idea of "obeying the gospel." Not the apostle Paul, who wrote "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Romans 10:16). The gospel involves facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, promises to be enjoyed, and threats to be feared (Cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20-21).

As strange as it may seem to some, there is no mourners' bench religion taught in the Bible. No sinner ever "prayed through" in the Bible; no one ever "got religion" according to divine truth. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

Outdoing Each Other In Love

ANCIL JENKINS

The speaker got my attention. He said, "There is only one fight God allows between Christians." His next words gave me much to think about. "The only fight God allows between Christians is: who loves the other the most." Suddenly his lesson became so clear. We are to strive to outdo each other in showing

love. Accepting such a concept could revolutionize the home, the church, and every other relationship a Christian has.

Our first thought may be: "But I can't love like that." Our failure may come because we view "love" as a feeling rather than an action. It is possible for one truly to "love" another and have no feelings. Jesus teaches us "love" is not feelings, but action (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-30). This concept is also clearly taught in other scriptures.

We are not to seek our own good, but the good of others (I Corinthians 10:24).

We are to seek to please even our weaker brother, and not ourselves (Romans 15:1). We are to honor others above ourselves (Romans 12:10). We are to treat others as we wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

Love is presented as the primary motive for our Christian actions. Just a superficial investigation shows our responsibilities. We are to walk in love (Ephesians 5:2). We are to abound in love (I Thessalonians 3:12). We are to bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). We are to be knit together in love (Colossians 2:2). We are to work through love (Galatians 5:6). Our labor is to be a labor of love (Hebrews 6:10).

So often we are selfish when we come to love. We think, "If I act like that, how do I know that they will love me the same way?" This is not the purpose of such actions. We are to love with no thought of receiving anything back. "Love seeks not its own . . ." (I Corinthians 13:5).

Our age is most competitive. We are urged to try to be number one, to reach the top, to seek to be first. This is no wrong, so long as it is a striving to outdo one another in the right thing.

Are you ahead of others in your love?

Unnamed, But Not Unnoticed

LEVI SIDES

"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name . . . shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41).

In any army hospital ward there were several World War II veterans reminiscing about their many "bouts" with death. One veteran stated, "I owe my life to a medic who treated me under heavy fire. Later that day he was killed in battle. I do not know his name, but I shall never forget him." Many heroes remain anonymous; but their deeds will always be remembered by someone.

Did you know that there are thousands upon thousands of unnamed people in the Bible? Many of them can be called 'God's anonymous children.' Too often we fix our attention exclusively on the greater characters of the Bible, yet the vast host of the inconspicuous and unnamed has been preserved by the pen of inspiration as being worthy of our meditation. The unknown saints—unknown, that is, to human fame—must not be passed by. While full consideration must be given to those God called into the lime light, we dare not ignore others who remain in the shadow of obscurity or anonymity.

The writer of Hebrews depicts a great company of noble believers who were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, afflicted, tormented, made to wander in mountains, deserts, in dens, and in caves, had trials of cruel mockings and scouragings, and bonds and imprisonment (Hebrews 11:36-40). We are told nothing else about them and they are simply referred to as "others" (Hebrews 11:37). Yet we can be certain that God knows who they were, and that some day he will honor them for their faith and their loyalty to the Saviour.

The widow mentioned in Mark 12:42 was also unidentified by name. She may have hoped that no one would see the two mites she dropped into the treasury box, but Jesus noticed her and said to the disciples that she was the most generous of all the people who gave their offerings that day.

God does not measure a gift by the amount of money given;

he measures the gift by the amount of money one has left after the gift is made. According to this standard, the widow had given more than all the rest, because she had nothing left on which to live.

Do you feel insignificant and almost worthless because you have not received public recognition, or your name has never appeared in a publication? Do not be discouraged! If you love the Lord and are doing your best for him, you can be sure that he takes special notice of your faithful service. Some day you will be rewarded, and he will acknowledge you personally. Though you may be "unnamed" here on earth, you will not go unnoticed in Heaven.

The world may not thank you or notice your walk.

Yea, few here may care when you die:

But Jesus will mark all your labor of love,

And give you his praise by and by.

Worship God

ROGER JACKSON

In Revelation 22:8-9 John fell down to worship the angel who had been speaking to him. He was forbidden to do so; the angel responded, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." The final two words of this section contain a command in the imperative mood. God's creatures are obligated (and privileged) to worship him.

"Worship" is "homage paid to one considered to be divine." The word comes from the Greek PROSKUNEO, which means literally "to kiss toward" (Vine, page 235). "Worship" is not everything we do—or else the concept of authorized worship would be without significance (Matthew 15:9). If everything we do is worship, the counting of beads and lighting of candles would be worship; there would be no such thing as "forsaking"

worship; and there would be no end to the additions to the worship of the Lord's day. The idea that the totality of life is worship fails to recognize the difference between worship and service (Romans 12:1). "Worship" is the union of the human spirit with the divine in order to express our praise and thanks giving.

All of God's creatures are obligated to worship him. The Father desires that all men worship him (John 4:23). On Mars' Hill Paul stated that all men must seek after God (worship him) though he is not far from us (Acts 17:25-27). According to Hebrews 1:6 even the angels in heaven worship God and the Son. Revelations 4, 5 and 7 picture a host that no man can number worshipping God in heaven.

In what manner are we obligated to worship God? May we select the means and expressions of our worship? And if we may, where will it end? Some among us falsely imagine that there are no such things as "authorized acts of worship," and there "are no restrictions regarding those acts named" in such places as Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19; et al. The services, according to this point of view, would be characterized by spontaneity (another word for confusion!) and surprises. Somehow this is to make the worship more "spiritual" in spite of the fact that I Corinthians 14:40 condemns such fallacious folly. If we have two songs, a prayer, another song, the Lord's Supper and preaching, we are "tradition bound," according to this concept.

We are obligated to worship God scripturally. There is such a thing as unscriptural worship. Our worship must be directed to God, the proper object. It must not be directed to Mary, the "saints," some creature (Romans 1:25) nor even take the form of a "memorial service" for anyone except Christ (Matthew 26:26-28). The communion is authorized for the Lord's day, i.e., the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), and that is all the authorization we have regarding it as respects the day. Our worship is expressed through (1) singing, (2) giving, (3) communing, (4) praying, and (5) teaching (preaching) (Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 20:7; Acts 4:31; I Timothy 3:15). The right motive is extremely important. Many people go away from worship services stating they did not get anything out of it. They

have the cart before the horse. One comes to worship to give, not to get. If the worshiper gives his heartfelt praise to God, he will receive a blessing; but the motive must be to give unto God, not what we can get for our deed.

We are obligated to worship God regularly. Although our worship is not restricted to the Lord's day (except some expressions like communion) we cannot substitute a "worship in the heart" for the required assemble with the saints (I Corinthians 11:20). When our worship is a joyous expression of praise we will gladly assemble for that purpose as regularly as the opportunity is offered by wise and thoughtful elders (Psalm 122:1; Acts 2:42, 46; I Corinthians 16:1-2).

We are obligated to worship God REVERENTLY. The word "reverent" means respectful awe. Talking, jesting, writing, reading and sleeping in our assemblies (especially on the back rows of most congregations) indicates there is little respect for God among too many, and no fear. The disgrace is compounded when it is learned that visitors refuse to return because of this, and others leave because of it. Mothers and fathers need to seat misbehaving children (most in their teens) in front of them to observe their behaviour. It would be an "eye-opener." David spoke of the fear of God in Psalm 89:7, stating, "God is greatly to be feared [revered; R.J.] in the assembly of the saints . . ." Habakkuk said, "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20). (It is not to be supposed that "temple" here refers to our buildings). In I Corinthians 14:23, 40 decency and order are to characterize our worship services.

We are obligated to worship God enthusiastically! I have always been opposed to comparing the Lord's church with a denomination, but I can understand the letdown experienced by a "Pentecostal" sectarian when he visits our services and sees the difference in disposition during our worship. It is true that they are tied to emotionalism and sensationalism; and no one is advocating that we follow their lead. But we can put a smile on our faces, sing out heartily, listen attentively, and stay in the worship in spirit. We need to let people know we ENJOY what we are doing, instead of giving the impression we have come to a place of misery for the purpose of suffering for our sins of the

past week. In the days of the prophet Amos the people were so engulfed in the love of the world, and how to make another "dollar" (they didn't use dollars!) that they could hardly wait for the Sabbath to end and the feast days to be over so that the restrictions on work these feasts demanded could be lifted. It sounds a lot like some of us who cannot wait for the final "amen" so that we can get back to the ratrace. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath that we may set forth wheat . . ." (Amos 8:5). Such pew-warmers are only fooling themselves if they think there is no such thing as "vain worship" (Matthew 15:9). To these people, worship has become like the service offered in Malachi's day: "Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it . . ." (Malachi 1:13a). Jesus spoke of a people who worshipped God but whose heart was far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

May we all seek to worship him scripturally, regularly, reverently and enthusiastically, so that we may avoid this soul-damning error.

Can We Find The Lord's Church?

DABNEY PHILLIPS

What Is The Church?

The church is the called out (Colossians 1:13; II Thessalonians 2:14). It is the body of people "called out" of the world. The church consists of the saved (Acts 2:47). The church of our Lord is produced by the word of the Lord (Luke 8:11; John 16:13). The church is not a recreational society, nor is it a political society.

False Principles In Selecting The Church

A "church" should not be selected because it is conveniently located. This may be true of a bank or store, etc. Another false

principle is to select the church that has the largest membership. Millions can be wrong. In Noah's time only eight (I Peter 3:20) were saved from the world-wide destruction. Others select a congregation due to the fact that they like the preacher. This could have some bearing in selecting a doctor, or mechanic. Even the recommendation of parents, spouse, or neighbor is the improper way to identify the Bible church.

Correct Principles In Finding The Church

One must first go to the right source, and in religion this is not the almanac, nor World Book, et. al. The New Testament is the text-book of salvation today. One must in the word of God seek for identifying marks, both internal and external identifications. Internal marks are love, benevolence, discipline, and missionary zeal. External signs are the organization, worship, plan of salvation, doctrine and the work of the church.

What Keeps People Apart Religiously?

Religious tradition provides a dividing wedge. We have inherited doctrines that are not found in the New Testament. Ignorance is a prime problem, and some folk just accept the preacher's word without question. There is a difference between "faith" and "opinion" There is one faith (Ephesians 4).

The Church Is Important

Mankind is reconciled to God in the one body (Ephesians 2:16). We are to give God the glory through the church (Ephesians 3:21). The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). Jesus died for the church (Ephesians 5:23-25).

Dear reader, you are urged to search with diligence the word of the Lord, as it does involve your salvation (John 12:48).