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EDITORIAL

The Ascension And Descension Of Christ

Almost two thousand years ago by God's power His word became flesh, and He dwelt among men, and they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He was the Christ, the Anointed One. He had come on earth with a mission. His task was to die, to give His life for the sins of the world, and thus become the propitiation for the sins of mankind. The record found in the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is commonly known or called: The Gospel, because they contain the beautiful story of Christ's death for sinners and His subsequent burial and resurrection from the dead.

But what happened to Christ, after His resurrection? Where did He go? How did He go? Where is He now, and in what form does He exist? And, what about His descension? Doesn't the Bible teach that He will descend one day? So, how will he descend? Where will He descend? And, why will He descend? These are some of the questions related to Christ's ascension and descension that we would like to briefly evaluate and find their answers from the Scriptures themselves.

Mark, one of the four writers of the gospel account, wrote in the last chapter of his book that the tomb of Christ was found

empty on the first day of the week, Sunday, very early in morning; that an angel of the Lord had announced the wonderful news of His resurrection to the early visitors to the tomb and had told them to tell His disciples that He is risen. He goes on to show that the disciples really didn't believe the resurrection news of Christ. So much so that when Christ Himself had met them several times, and in His last meeting with them He had to rebuke them because of the hardness of their hearts. Finally, He told them to go into all the world and preach His gospel to all people, "So then," says Mark, "after the Lord had spoken to them. He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19). Luke wrote in his book of The Acts of the Apostles, that, "until the day in which he was taken up, after He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God . . . Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:2-11).

While discussing and proving the resurrection of Christ, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

On the same subject, writing to Christians at Thessalonica, the apostle had this to say: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will

by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18).

From all of this we gather the following points: that, after His resurrection Christ had ascended back into heaven from where He had come. When the disciples saw Christ at the mountain of Galilee, where He spoke to them last, and from where He was taken out of their sight, they saw Him in His physical body. But when He was taken up and the cloud received Him out of their sight; His body was changed into spiritual and immortal, since flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. He now sat at the right hand of God, which denotes the sovereign dignity He is advanced to, and the universal agency He is entrusted with. That is, whatever God does concerning us or accepts from us, it is by His Son. Now He is glorified with the glory he had before the world. Remember, that Christ had taught concerning God that He is Spirit. (John 4:24). Christ was and is God. (John 1:1-3). He was with God and is with God, in His spiritual realm. Now, how will He descend? In the like manner, of course, as the angels stated, as we read, in the clouds. He is not going to come back on earth. There is and will be no need. He is going to appear up in the clouds, and remember, as we read, its all going to happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; sudden! As He appears; the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible and those alive will be changed to become incorruptible; they will become spiritual and immortal, and together they all, the Lord's people, will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord up in the air. Philippians 3:21 says, "Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body . . ." 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

So, when Christ reappears or descends up in the clouds, He will be in His spiritual, immortal and glorious body, into which form He will also transform our lowly and mortal bodies so that

we might be conformed to His glorious body. What a promise to those who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb, that when He is revealed they will be like him! Indeed, He will be revealed in His glorious heavenly body!

Self Deceit

J.C. CHOATE

Being deceived has to do with being convinced that something is right when it is wrong. Sometimes one wants to believe in something and goes on to accept it even though all of the evidence is saying that this is not true. We are often quick to accept something or to go along with some line of thinking if we conclude that it is in our interest. It is not always easy to do the right thing. We may never see our mistake in this life but on the other hand we may finally conclude that we were wrong, especially when it becomes so evident and we end up having to suffer the consequences of our decision. Of course it is hard to admit that we have been wrong, even to ourselves, but it is better to find out about it as soon as possible so that perhaps some changes can be made for the better. To refuse to acknowledge such mistakes only compounds the consequences.

I would like to mention some areas where we can deceive ourselves with the hope that we will be on guard and not allow such to happen. If we have already gotten into these things, I would hope that we have enough strength to see our mistake and put forth an effort to correct it.

Young Christians often deceive themselves into thinking that they can marry a non-Christian, even one who is not a member of the Lord's church, and that everything will turn out fine. Occasionally it works out where the companion is converted to Christ but according to percentages this seldom happens. The Christian often goes along with the companion or both leave religion out of their lives. That means the Christian is lost, the children, their children, and so on. Many generations are affected. How sad for this to happen. It would be so much better for the Christian to wait long enough so that potential marriage partner can be taught the truth of God and be converted to

Christ. If the member of the church cannot do that by himself, or by herself, then they should call on fellow Christians to help them with this. It would be better never to marry than to marry the wrong one and someone that would cause the Christian, children, and many others, to be eternally lost. The sad part is that often the one contemplating marriage loses all sense of reasoning and doing what is best and right and is determined to marry regardless. If you do this, be prepared to suffer a long series of consequences. Remember that God's inspired word warns that we should not be unequally yoked together. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

When Christian parents of young children fail to take them to Bible Study and Worship, they are laying the groundwork for future tragedy. It will be tragic for them to lose their children but by not taking them to Bible Study and Worship they will in all probability lose their children. Without setting a good example and without giving them the proper teaching, once they grow up and leave home, they will also go their separate ways when it comes to spiritual matters. Don't deceive yourself into thinking that you can ignore the spiritual training of your children but still everything will work out alright. If you love your children and you want to see them grow up to love and respect God, to believe in Him, and to obey him to be a Christian, and a member of his church, then you need to start as soon as they are born to give them the spiritual training that they need for them to grow up to do that. The scriptures exhorts that the children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4).

Young adults often deceive themselves into thinking that the most important thing in their lives is to get ahead. They want to get their education, get a job, get married and have a family, but to continue to up-grade their work and salary. This becomes so important that they put it before everything else. They think they are young and have plenty of time. So they either leave God completely out of their schedule or they take just enough time to go to worship once a week. They also neglect the family. The most important thing is to make as much money as they can so they can purchase all of the material things that they ever wanted. A nice house or apartment, a scooter or car, electronic equipment like a T.V., Video, a Tape Recorder or C.D. Player, clothes, and many other things, seems to be on the list that

spells success. They don't realize how swiftly times passes, how soon the children will grow up, and having emphasized the material side of life, to the neglect of spiritual matters and devoting time to their children, they end up losing the most important things of this life, and that is their children and the souls of their family. You who will listen and take heed are being called on to not make this mistake, and if you are already deeply involved in this life style, I would plead with you to take time out to consider what you are doing and what really matters in this life, and to change your course while you can. If you stubbornly go on with your emphasis being only on the material side of life, you will surely be the loser. On the other hand, if you will begin to think about your family and the spiritual welfare of the members, putting the Lord first in your lives, surely you will have made a wise decision. That doesn't mean that you have to go to the other extreme. You can still be successful with your work, and having a good life, even a better of life, when you take time for your family and for God. This would be a balanced life, one to be desired over the other. (1 John 2:15-17).

Think seriously about these matters and see where you stand in regard to them. You may need to change your thinking and the direction you are going in. Again, if you really want to be blessed in this life and in the world to come, take time for God, and when you put him first in your life, all other things will fall into their proper place.

The Bible Speaks Christianity In Action

BILL BROWN

The most desirable of all characteristics comes into focus in I Cor. 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." In loyalty, fidelity and faithfulness, we see man's supreme excellence. Christians sooner or later encounter three levels of loyalty. 1. Because of; 2. In order to; 3. In spite of. These three phrases reflect three different motivations to loyalty. 1. Gratitude; 2. Selfish gain or lordship; 3. Unyielding faith. The

highest level of stewardship loyalty is the plateau of faith on which a man can say, "I will respond to God's calling regardless." "Here am I, send me." "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job. 23:10). "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies." (Psa. 41:1-2). "He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." (Prov. 14:21).

Christianity in action enlarges the heart when sincerely done, and purifies it of petty scruples and burdensome follies. It opens for those who practice true Christianity, the doorway into the bounties of God's grace. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:7-9). Study carefully II Cor. 9:6-13.

Christ wants followers who have counted the cost, and who have undivided affection, willing to do what the Lord wants done. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." (Phil. 2:14). And those who will follow this exhortation: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life . . ." (Phil. 2:15-16a).

The Lord has made his work possible for man to accomplish and has given very clear instructions, but at the same time trusting man to use his better judgment as to how these things will be accomplished. This, however, calls for man to seek God's wisdom. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5). Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not on thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:5-6). A sacrificing congregation is Christianity in action. Look and study carefully II Cor. 8:1-7.

When Faith Fails

GARY MCDADE

Bible characters like the rich young ruler, Judas, Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Demas portray what happens when faith fails. Thousands of times since the first century their lives have been relived by others. Today the major efforts of many congregations of the Lord's people is "down-reach" to try to lift up the fallen brethren instead of "out-reach" to the lost who have never heard the gospel. A study of what happens when faith fails may help restore the fallen and deepen the faith of the ones who are taking heed lest they fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

When faith fails obedience is lost. The word of God presents the gospel of Christ "for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5, 10:16, 16:25-26). The faithful Christian is "obedient in all things" (2 Cor. 2:9). The first visible sign that faith has failed is disobedience. A common occurrence is "forsaking the assembly" (Heb. 10:25). when a Christian's church attendance is faltering so is his faith. "Take heed lest ye fall!" (1 Cor. 10:12). The kindness, consideration, and humbleness which obedience to the gospel demands (Eph. 4:32) is seen in diminishing amounts when faith fails. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice, murmurings, and disputings creep into the life when faith fails (Eph. 4:31, Phil. 2:14). When efforts to restore the erring prove ineffective the volumes of complaints and excuses do not hide the fact that their faith has failed.

When faith fails trust in God is abandoned. The apostle Paul wrote, ". . . We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). Faith or belief in God is the foundation for trust in God (Eph. 1:12, 13). When faith fails and trust is going a person is directed by his own understanding. The human mind is a wondrous thing. When faith fails a person can direct his or her attention to the world and forget God (Psa. 9:17). The wise man urged, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

When faith fails love grows cold. The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And, "If a man love me, he will

keep my words . . . he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (Jn. 14:15, 23-24). In Galatians 5:6 Paul taught that faith works by love. The Greek preposition *dia* with the accusative case means "through" or "on account of." So, Faith works "on account of" love. When faith fails love is gone.

When faith fails hope is lost. Hebrews 11:1 reads, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." When faith fails nothing spiritual is "hoped for." The soul is lost, "for we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24). Hope for the resurrection of the dead is lost when faith is lost (Acts 23:6, 24:15). When hope is lost it is a shame (Rom. 5:5). All reason for rejoicing is taken away when hope is lost (Rom. 12:12). With no hope one is "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 20-25).

The Cross

W.H. BRYAN

Nowadays it's a piece of jewelry, an ornament, or a novelty. It's worn as a necklace or an earring, a tie-tac or a lapel pin. It is perched atop steeples or affixed to the walls of buildings. Sometimes it is stuck to the rear windows of cars. It's just a symbol that we see everywhere. We are used to it. The cross, has, for the most part, lost its significance.

Long ago, it was a symbol, too. But not the kind that people wanted to have around. They didn't like to think about the meaning of the cross. Its significance then was a cruel, inhumane, torturous, slow death. It was an instrument of terror.

Back then when reference was made to the cross, people shuddered.

Yet the cross, the symbol of an awful, humiliating, and shameful death, became the symbol of Heaven's most precious gift. It is only through the cross that we come close to understanding our utterly hopeless condition without God's mercy and grace. It took something that terrible to demonstrate God's abhorrence of sin. Jesus took our place on the cross. He paid the penalty for our sins. Thus at the cross of Christ, we behold God's redeeming love reaching down and lifting us from our sins.

The cross is a symbol of unity. Jew and Gentile, all men everywhere, are reconciled to God only through the cross (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Just as the cross was the only solution to sin, so also it is our only access to God. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

The cross is a symbol of power—God's power over evil, sin, and death, and of His power to forgive, redeem, and save. By worldly standards and human reasoning, it is rejected as sheer folly. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:24, 25). "Therefore, we proclaim nothing more than Jesus Christ and Him crucified, that our faith might stand in the power of God, rather than the wisdom of men" (1 Corinthians 2:2, 5).

The cross is a symbol of hope. In that Jesus endured the shame and death of the cross, He is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Because Jesus bore our sins on the cross, there is "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). We are freed from the law of sin and death and have become recipients of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2).

The Tongue

JIM WOODELL

The tongue is compared to bits in a horse's mouth, and a rudder on a ship. Both of these devices are for guidance and control. (James 3:3, 4).

If the reins on a horse are dropped and the bits not used the horse can easily run away. If the helmsman on a ship doesn't give particular attention to rudder control the ship will eventually run aground. In either case there is likely to be a loss of property and life.

Likewise, the tongue has a great influence upon the body. If not given proper attention it will bring destruction. The tongue has been responsible for destroying homes and churches. It has caused wars resulting in death and heartache. God says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Pro. 18:21).

James says, "How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!" (3:5) Most people have witnessed the destructive force of fire.

Several years ago my family purchased property in a small Arkansas community in order to build a house. The house was built in what had previously been a cow pasture. It was all grown up in high grass and weeds.

The day after the house was completed the family moved in. About the middle of the after-noon we decided to burn some boxes. Several were carried to an areas where the carpenters had burned refuse the day before. A water hose was lying back of the house just in case! The first box was ignited. As this box began to burn a charred piece of card board, still burning, floated up into the air and was blown by the wind over into the tall grass several feet away. Immediately it was stamped out. As this one was being put out another floating piece of card board was coming down and starting the grass to burn in still another place. It was time to get the water hose! The water hose had been cut and was no good. By this time the grass was beginning to blaze and my wife came out of the house with a broom—I didn't know if she was after the fire or me! The fire was obviously out of control. My wife called the city fire department for assistance and they spent the remainder of that afternoon keeping the fire off of

houses in the area.

Late that night the amber glow of that still burning fire illuminated the horizon. All of this from a "small fire!"

The tongue is an "unrighteous world" because there is so little tongue control exercised. We are told the tongue stains the whole body and sets on fire the cycle of nature (James 3:6). Paul warned, "But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal. 5:15).

James says the tongue is full of deadly poison (3:8). Many of the sins cataloged in the Bible are sins of the tongue—gossip, back-biting, slander, foul talk, etc. Many other sins are made apparent through the use of the tongue—malice, anger, ill-will, spitefulness, etc.

Peter points out that Christians should, "Put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander" (1 Pet. 2:1). Paul says, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

We must be dependent upon God for the tongue to be brought under control. Jesus observed, after the Rich Young Ruler chose his riches rather than salvation, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Those who heard this wanted to know, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." (Luke 18:24-27). God can tame our tongues!

Practical Projects For Taming The Tongue

1. Concentrate on saying what should be said. Learn how to ask questions. Praise good qualities in others. Build others up in private conversation. Express appreciation. Learn to pray precisely.

2. Eliminate from your speech things that should not be said. Profanity, sarcasm, slang, lying, slander, boasting, and exaggeration are some of the things God frowns on.

3. Commit to memory scriptures that encourage tongue control. (Pro. 18:21; 29:20; Matt. 12:36-37; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; etc.)

4. Be very careful about making promises, but learn to keep

the promises you make. Jesus said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

God says, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Tit. 2:7-8).

Fellowship

RONNIE LOWE

Why did the early Christians remain so resolute in the face of severe persecution? What invisible bond held the body of believers so close that even their most ardent critics were compelled to comment in their behalf? Certainly the concept of love, concern, and interest in one another can be embodied in the term "fellowship." In Acts 2:42, the first Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." With the mind's eye, we can visualize the closeness, the unity, the sharing, the love that characterized the lives of the first-century brethren. What joy must have been theirs to be so close to one another.

The word "fellowship" is one of the most interesting words found in the New Testament. The same word that is translated fellowship is also translated "communion," "communicate," and "salute." The word itself means a partnership, joint participation, or to be partakers together. The fellowship discussed in the Bible is a thing which can be shared only by Christian. I John 1:7 emphasizes that it is those who "walk in the light" who have fellowship "one with another." Also it was those baptized believers in Acts 2 who continued steadfastly in fellowship. We have been commanded not to have fellowship with the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11).

Fellowship is a beautiful thing. Let each of us long for that closeness and communion with God and with those who are of a kindred Spirit.

"Walk As Children Of Light"

JOE T. SPIVY, SR.

On numerous occasions, the apostle Paul mentioned in his letters to the various churches a BEFORE and an AFTER time of their lives. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators . . . nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: BUT ye are washed, BUT ye are sanctified, BUT ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11). "And you . . . who were dead in trespasses and sins: . . . ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air . . . had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. BUT GOD . . . when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . ." (Ephesians 2:1-5). "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel . . . having no hope, and without God in the world . . . BUT NOW, IN CHRIST JESUS, ye . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:11-13). "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, BUT NOW ARE YE LIGHT IN THE LORD . . ." (Ephesians 5:6-8). The Colossians were admonished to "mortify . . . fornication, uncleanness, . . . for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometimes, WHEN YE LIVED" (past tense!) "IN THEM" (Colossians 3:5-7). I Thessalonians 1:9 clearly shows that they had earlier ("THEN") served idols, BUT HAD "TURNED TO GOD . . . TO SERVE THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD" (NOW).

It appears very clear that there is definitely a difference in the way a Christian walks when compared to the past life (then/now). In Ephesians 5:8 Paul declares, "WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT." Surely there is a declaration that a Christian (one who has been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb

of God) needs to walk differently from one who is described as a child of disobedience.

Because the child of God has been bought with a price (the death of Christ on the cross), he is now "under new ownership." He belongs to Christ and to God. He is to walk as a child of light, to let his light "shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). One who realizes that he is now owned by another (changed from the domain of Satan to that of God) should concentrate his energies in pleasing the new owner.

Jesus said "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). John said "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). When do the commands of God seem to be grievous? When they conflict with that which I wish to do which is not according to the law of the Lord, and of necessity to my LONG TIME benefit! A quick fix in a dull day! When I forget that God loves and cares for me, and that truly, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). It's only when I lose sight of Jesus, as did Peter while walking on the sea, that his commandments seem too hard and grievous!

Because a Christian belongs to God, he IS commanded to "Love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Jesus proclaimed this in Matthew 6:33 when he said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Walking as children of light, as a child of God, one will of necessity love God supremely. He will put God first in all of his thoughts, words, and deeds. He will live among his family in such a way that God is glorified through his every action, his direction, and his decisions. It was said by God about Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Genesis 18:19). This SHOULD be said of every Christian, man or woman. After all, if we walk as "children of light," isn't this what will happen???

When a person belongs to God, having been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13), he has a relationship with the people of God, in the kingdom of his dear Son! Because of his

relationship, he must do many things. Some of them are hard, but are never impossible. God never expects the impossible of us! he has a responsibility to the eldership of "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). Wives are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), and all are to "submit to God" (James 4:7). There is no shame and disadvantage to submitting, when the one submitted to has the love that God and Christ do for the church, and that a husband 'indeed' has for his wife. To fail to submit is to fail to obey God, whether it be that one fails to submit to the elders, to a husband, or to God! "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). Yes, even Christ submitted! Therefore, to submit is to be 'Christ-like'!

Another area of walking "as children of light" would be in one's daily living. A Christian is to be—and act like—a "Christian" on the job, at schools, on the lake, or in the woods, and even in the malls. On the job, one is enjoined to give a "good day's work for a good day's pay," or (as Paul would say), "in singleness of your heart . . . not with eye-service, as men-pleasers" and "to please them (in this case, the employer) well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Ephesians 6:5-6; Titus 2:9-10). There are examples to be set on the job as one lives as a Christian should during the difficult as well as when it is easy. Certain things are wrong wherever one is. It is never right to lie, even a 'little white lie.' "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). "Lie not one to another" (Colossians 3:9). Lying is always wrong, anywhere, anything! It is condemned in the home, in the school, in the plant, or in the woods! Be safe: just don't lie!

As a child of light, a Christian must abstain from "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" and have our "conversation" (behaviour, manner of life) "honest . . ." (I Peter 2:11-12). In this admonition of Peter we have a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE approach to being the light of the world as we should. Certain things we are to leave off, things we must not do as found in I Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-5; Romans

6:12. These are the NEGATIVES—things which must not be done as a child of God. on the other hand, there are many good and wonderful acts which ARE to be performed by the child of God, such as those listed in Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:9-10; Colossians 3:12-17. There also are the POSITIVES—AND WE MUST DO THEM! We have no choice as children of God, BECAUSE THE “COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF” HAS GIVEN US OUR ORDERS, SIGNED, SEALED, AND DELIVERED! To disobey is TREASON!

To fail to act as we should as “children of light” is to invite the wrath of the God of heaven. To fail to act as children of light is indicative of the fact that we are not walking with him of whom it is said, “In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). If we are not reflecting the light as we ought, we need to get closer to the source of light—Jesus Christ—and “walk as children of light.”

How To Attract New Members

KENNETH L. JONES

Christ asserted, “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*” (John 12:32). He spoke of his crucifixion as a “lifting up,” declared the necessity of his death (verse 34), and promised to “draw all men” unto himself. It was necessary for Christ to be “lifted up” as a sacrifice for sins (John 3:14). His crucifixion and resurrection also proved his identity as the promised Messiah, the Son of God (John 8:26-28). He destroyed the power of Satan by his death and resurrection (John 12:31-32; Hebrews 2:14). Having now been raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand (Acts 2:32-36), and having been given all authority (Matthew 28:18), he now draws men through the gospel (Romans 1:16).

Many gimmicks and methods of men have been employed to gain followers. However, preaching the gospel of Christ, and the example of godly means to induce people to become Christians (I Corinthians 1:21; Matthew 5:16; I Timothy 4:16; Philipians 1:27; II Corinthians 3:2).

Some seek to buy allegiance with treats and entertainment. Those who followed Christ for the “loaves and fishes” did not

follow him very long. They turned back because of his distinctive teaching concerning the "bread of life" (John 6:26-27, 66). Outward service may in this way be secured for a limited time, until a "higher bidder" comes along. True loyalty cannot be bought with such things. A congregation is out of its league and out of its place when it seeks to gain members through entertainment. The church of Christ is not in the entertainment business. Besides, one can find better entertainment (from a worldly point of view) at home on television. The church certainly cannot compete with professional entertainers and worldly places of amusement.

Those who are converted to the PREACHER because of his appearance, personality, age, academic degrees, ability to entertain, or even his speaking ability—rather than to Christ—will not remain faithful when he moves away, or is asked to resign. Those who are converted to A CONGREGATION and not to Christ, will become unfaithful when they move to a different locality, or when someone in the congregation disappoints them. And those who would be attracted because of a BEAUTIFUL MEETINGHOUSE can find more elaborate and expensive structures erected by denominational churches than by any church of Christ.

To stoop to such methods is foolish, and destined to fail. Those who would be attracted by such base motivations are not of any value in building a strong, faithful congregation, or of any lasting value to anyone.

People must be pointed to the "lifted up" Christ through a proclamation of his gospel, and through faithful, dedicated, godly living. One's "conversation" (manner of life) must be such as "becometh the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27). Friendliness, righteousness, goodness, kindness, hospitality and benevolence, are requisites of such a life; and when combined with "... *speaking the truth in love* ..." (Ephesians 4:15), will attract the honest and good hearts which seek for truth and eternal life.

The Joy Of Living For Jesus

C.M. (DONA) KARRH

Those who are planning for tomorrow are 'young' at any

age. Christian living should begin early in life. It is advantageous to be brought up in a Christian home (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). One should begin as early as is possible to establish in himself good principles and Christian character. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

The greatest hindrance to the proper development of youth is not inexperience, but impatience. Our youth must not only initiate new programs of reform and blessing for the future, but they must finish all of our well-begun tasks. Instead of standing down in the valley in the lowest dumps, youth needs to get on the highest mountain. Even there, youth should stand upon the shoulders of all the great and good men and women who have ever lived in the past. From that vantage point one can get a clearer view of life ahead, and what it can be, as seen in the light of the past and of the future.

The greatest investment is in people; and the greatest investment in people is in youth and the work of character building. We must recognize the fact that a better world for tomorrow must be built out of young people. It cannot be built out of those on the shelf.

In every chapter of the Philippian letter the apostle Paul speaks of joy, or rejoicing. Paul was a happy man, a happy Christian. Not all joys are limited to youth, nor even to those of good health. Happiness and joy come up from within a person, and do not necessarily enter from without. This is so after the truth from God has properly entered the heart and tuned it to the will of God in all things.

The little things which we do and say daily, from youth to old age, should bring us joy and gladness along the way of life. Of course, those who are not happy in youth and middle life, are not likely to be happy after the infirmities of old age come. But life is made up of our thoughts. Evil people are evil because they THINK evil. Good people are good because the seed-thoughts of goodness find a lodging place in their minds and hearts. Our habits are formed by our training, or environment, from childhood to maturity (Proverbs 23:7).

Many of the things which we consider important in life are not the type of things which bring joy and gladness. Worrying over things which we can neither change nor control, burns us up and wastes our supply of joy potentials. It is like turning on

the motor and burning up a tank of gasoline without ever putting the automobile into gear: it gets us nowhere! We should concentrate on things of most importance, things essential to life and happiness. Often a walk down a country road can give more joy, and get us closer to God and nature, than spending a large sum of money to satisfy fleshly wants.

—And don't overlook the joy of a daily task well done. There is, as it were, a real secret to happiness: it is to forget self, as much as possible, and to share ourselves with others. Bear somebody's burden (Galatians 6:2), and scatter some sunshine in the life of others. When we learn, and learn it well, that sharing other's burdens will lighten our own, we are on the way to true education.

We should solicit the help of God, that we may be strong, able to be patient, able to bear up under our own load of life, and able to lighten the load of others. We need to know the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:1), and borrow some of his spirit. We need to be daily "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4).

"By love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Happy are those who learn to serve others just for the pure love of serving. And to learn to serve "for Christ's sake" is real education. "Doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service . . ." (Ephesians 6:5-7). It is service which comes out of a good will that does us most good.

Many miserable people could have been happy if they had trained themselves to enjoy the laughter of little children at play. Like our Master (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13), we should dearly love little children. It should be a joy to teach and train them for Jesus.

The love of sweet music and the melody of song, even the songs of pretty birds, should be a joy divine. The swish of the wind bringing rain and snow to bless the earth, should make us happy. By properly reacting to our circumstances, we can make everything around us contribute to our happiness. God has provided us with every joy that a well-trained heart could wish; and what a tragedy it is that so many are so lacking in appreciation that they see nothing about them to make them happy! As light and beautiful flowers mean nothing to one totally blind, so a beautiful world full of lovely things means nothing to

people who have developed no love for the beautiful, the lovely, and the artistic things of life.

Above all things, we should cultivate a love for people, just plain people made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). If a boy can learn to love his dog, we all can learn to love our neighbors, even as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-41).

Life is a journey through the years, from childhood to old age (Ecclesiastes 12). We are "pilgrims" and sojourners on earth (Hebrews 11:14-16). This world is not our home. When God gets us trained in this life to enjoy the beautiful, he will take us home to that beautiful city of God, where we can walk the gold-paved street and bask in the sunlight of God's love forever.

Real life is being able to live in the present, with some of the borrowed joys of the next world furnishing whatever is lacking in this world. Hope always sees a star, and hears the rustle of a wing. The Christian is never left unto despair, for Christ is always with us (Matthew 28:18-20). He will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). This faith is the real backbone and heart of life. We should learn to love to spend hours with Jesus, reading his word, and learning from his great wisdom and lessons of life never to be forsaken.

We do not grow "old" by living a certain number of years. But we grow "old" in the true sense of life, by losing the will and the faith to accomplish that which is worthwhile. Years may wrinkle the skin, grey the hair, and warp the frame a bit; but the loss of interest in living is the thing which makes one 'old', and 'wrinkles' the soul.

If you would stay young to the end, keep an unbounded faith in the future. Don't be afraid to live. Face the future with confidence and courage. Don't be afraid to work. God made us to work. Adam had to dress and keep the garden, before sin entered into the world. Work is not a curse for sin. Man was made to work. Those who work are happiest, and live longest. The victory of life is half won when one acquires the habit of joyful hard work. The happy man is a busy man. "The idle brain is the Devil's work-shop" (see Ecclesiastes 9:10).

If there is any lack of present happiness in old age, the lack is balanced and supplied by the sweet memories of past happy days, and the sweet hope of future joys which are eternal (Psalms 16:11). In old age, we count the added opportunities for

doing things which we had always wanted to do as a blessing from God.

But our greatest joy comes from our faith in the God who holds the future in his hands. "Believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory" (I Peter 1:7-8). We know the Lord will never leave, nor forsake, us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Let no one retire from the Lord's service, regardless of age. Let those approaching old age pray as did David when he said, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wonderous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come" (Psalms 71:17-18).

"Samuel Told Him Every Whit, And Hid Nothing"

BOB DUNCAN

The statement which serves as the title of this article was made in connection with the revelation which God made to Samuel concerning the house of Eli. According to Josephus, Samuel was fully twelve years old when this revelation was made, and to this agrees the *Pulpit Commentary*. The statement of what Samuel did in telling Eli about the revelation is a remarkable statement: "Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him" (I Samuel 3:18). In telling Eli everything that God had said, and withholding nothing from him, Samuel established himself as a faithful prophet.

What Samuel did not do in connection with this matter is implied in the statement of what he did, and it is from this standpoint we will consider his action.

Samuel did not withhold a part of God's revelation because it would be unpleasant for Eli to hear. Certainly it was unpleasant for Eli to hear. It involved a rebuke to Eli for a failure to restrain his sons. It involved a pronouncement of punishment which would come upon the house of Eli because of sin. For Eli to hear such pronouncements was bound to be unpleasant, and it must have been unpleasant for Samuel to reveal these

pronouncements to Eli. But Samuel performed his task faithfully, and told Eli everything.

Samuel did not withhold the message of God from Eli out of respect for Eli's age or physical condition. Eli was getting on up in years (I Samuel 2:22), and his eyesight was not good (3:2). There is every indication that Samuel had respect for Eli. But his job as the messenger of the Lord demanded that he tell the whole truth, and hide nothing. This he did despite his respect for Eli's age and his physical infirmities.

No doubt, Samuel loved Eli. Eli had been his constant companion and guardian from the time Samuel was weaned (I Samuel 1:24). But Samuel did not have the perverted concept of love that some have today, i.e., that love for one demands we withhold from him that part of the revelation of God which reproves and rebukes his sin or which warns of future punishment. Samuel "told him every whit, and hid nothing" despite the love he must have had for him.

Samuel did not allow Eli's station in life to keep him from telling him all that God had said. Eli was the high priest. This was by divine arrangement the highest position one could occupy in the nation of the Jews. No doubt, some would have denounced the wickedness of the poor and of the obscure. But Samuel faithfully delivered the message of the Almighty to the most influential man in the country.

Samuel did not try to soften the language so as to make God's pronouncements against Eli and his sons sound less severe. He obviously did not feel the compulsion which some seem to feel to make the word of God more palatable on sin less offensive.

Samuel did not couch God's message in language which Eli could not understand. These seems to be a calculated effort on the part of some to denounce sin without ever letting those who hear know the sin of which they are guilty has been denounced. Samuel was not of this number. Eli knew exactly what Samuel had said.

Is there something in the example of Samuel that preachers of our own time need to follow? Indeed, there is! Neither the unpleasantness of the truth, the age, physical condition, or station in life of the hearer, our love for those to whom we preach, nor anything else should be allowed to influence us to do

anything less than to tell every whit, and to hide nothing.

Paul In Athens

WINFRED CLARK

When we speak of Paul in Athens, we speak of Athens' Greece, where he stood before those who were given to idolatry. There he speaks of God and identifies himself as a believer in God. Notice carefully a statement he makes in Acts 17:24. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that HE IS (emphasis mine) Lord of heaven and earth." Pay close attention to the fact that he says "HE IS." Of course, this speaks of his existence; but it also speaks of his activity and position.

1. Paul Could Well Say, HE IS GREAT

Surely the one who "made the world and all things therein" must be called great. His great power is surely demonstrated in the creation. When we consider the greatest feat of men, such as putting men on other planets, this is small indeed compared to the power and strength of God. When man arrived to set foot on the moon, he found a place that God had made.

God is not only great in his power, but he is great in his control. He is Lord, or ruler, of heaven and earth. There is thus no place beyond his control. Man is thus answerable to God everywhere.

2. Paul Could Well Say, HE IS GOOD

We learn from verse 25 that he is not only the source of life but also the sustainer. Again, it is in him that we live and have our being. We are reminded of the language of James when he speaks of every good and perfect gift being from above (James 1:17). Yes, Paul could well say that HE IS GOOD.

3. Paul Could Well Say, HE IS GRACIOUS

God had in the past been gracious to man in overlooking some of his ignorance; but now Christ has come, and provision has been made. Man must now do the will of the Lord in order to enjoy the benefits provided. It is wonderful that even in Athens some did just that. Certain men did believe. They would thus turn from idols to serve the living and true God.