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What Think Ye Of Christ

In the scriptures we have this recorded statement : "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? and no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (Matthew 22:41-46).

The Pharisees were a religious sect of Jesus' day. Although they were conservative, at least believing in angels and the resurrection, still they rejected Jesus as being the Son of God. Often times they questioned the Lord with the thought in mind of trapping him. On this particular occasion, Jesus asked what they thought of the Christ. They, of course, admitted that they believed that he was the son of David. This was true as far as it

went but it did not fully identify the Messiah. In reply, Jesus wanted to know why this great man spoke of Christ as Lord, if he was no more than David's son. Naturally they realized that a father does not ordinarily call his son Lord, but he calls one Lord who is greater than himself. Hearing these words, the Pharisees were not able to make reply, and as a result, they did not ask Jesus any further questions.

Just as the Pharisees misunderstood the identity of Jesus and of the Christ of the Old Testament scriptures, others of that day also misunderstood him. King Herod, who had John beheaded, thought that Christ was John raised from the dead. (Matthew 14:1, 2). Others thought that he was Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. (Matthew 16:13, 14). Then there were those who claimed that he was of the devil. (Mark 3:22). Many viewed him simply as the son of Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth. Some thought of him as an imposter, a false prophet, and one who mocked God.

A small number looked upon Jesus as being the Son of God. Even God spoke from heaven to declare that Jesus was his Son. (Matthew 17:5). The apostle Peter, speaking on behalf of all of the apostles, confessed Christ as the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16, 17). John the Baptist said that instead of baptizing Christ, he needed to be baptized by Christ. (Matthew 3:13, 14). The devil, knowing the identity of Christ, tempted him three times. Each time the Lord was victorious over him, and as a result, Satan fled from him. (Matthew 4). After Philip had preached to the man from Ethiopia, he wanted to be baptized. Philip explained that he could if he believed with all of his heart, so he said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37). Then Philip baptized him, and he went on his way rejoicing.

Indeed, contrary to what some thought, the scriptures portray Christ as the Son of God. He was promised (Genesis 3:15), prophesied (Isaiah 53), was born of a virgin (Matthew 1), proved his power by performing many miracles, and although he was crucified on a cross and buried, on the third day as he had promised, he came forth from the grave. Today he reigns at the right hand of God as the King of kings and Lord of lords. But

that is not all. He is said to be the rock, the sure foundation, and the chief corner stone on which we build our lives (Matthew 7:24, 25; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:2), the word (John 1:1), the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), the bread of life (John 6:35), living water (John 4:14), the light of the world (John 8:12), the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18), the lily of the valley and the rose of Sharon (Song of Solomon 2:1), our High Priest and Passover (Hebrews 9:11; 1 Corinthians 5:7), and our Saviour. (1 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 4:14).

But what about you? What do you think of Christ? Do you look upon him as being just another man, someone who lived and died, just as all others come and go? May be you even see him as a fake, an imposter, or a fable of the past. Perhaps you accept him as a good moral man or as a prophet, at most. It may be that you believe that he came from God, was sent into this world to live among men and to die on the cross that he might be man's saviour. If so, then you would acknowledge him as a resurrected Lord, the Son of God, as one who still lives and will live forevermore. You would further accept him as being the builder of the church, the one who can forgive sins, as being man's only hope, and the one who will come again to receive the righteous and to take them to heaven.

What you think of Christ will determine what you do with him. If you are ignorant of him then you cannot very well accept him. If you have only heard a little about him from different sources then you may ignore him. If you have heard about him only through his enemies you may even despise him. But if you will go to the Bible for the truth about him, the facts of his coming, the evidences of his life, the impact he had on the world when he lived, and the results that followed his death, burial, resurrection, and his return to his Father in heaven, then surely you will believe in him as being the Son of God, as millions do around the world, and you will want to accept him as your Lord and saviour.

Truly Christ lives today. He lives in Heaven, but he also lives on the earth through his word, in his church, in each

Christian. He saves those who believe in him and obey his teaching. He forgives the erring. He has promised to be with his people and to come again one day for them. He is therefore our life and our hope.

Because of Christ the world exists. Without him the world could not stand. His coming has changed the world. All men have been affected by him whether they are aware of it or not.

Again, what think ye of Christ? Hopefully, you already believe in him. But may be, even as a believer, you have not obeyed him and therefore you do not belong to him. If you do not believe in him, please read about him in the Bible. Get acquainted with him. Consider his life, his works, his miracles, his sacrifice for all mankind, and the evidences of his resurrection. If you will do so, surely you will come to believe in him. Then as a believer, you are encouraged to obey him that you might be saved, that you might live for him, and that you might have the hope of eternal life. Remember, there is but one alternative to believing in Christ and that is not to believe in him. If you do not believe in him then that means that you are lost, and being in your sin there is no hope for you in this world or the world to come.

As a believer in Christ, and one who obeys him, you have everything to gain and nothing to lose.



**associate
editorial**

The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

No. 2

To be distinct means, not identical, separate, individual, different in quality or kind, unlike, plain, definite, unmistakeable.

Following are listed some of the reasons which clearly show why the church of Christ is distinct from denomination churches.

The church of Christ accepts the right authority. Christ's church does not follow a human creed book, such as, catechism, manual, discipline, or the book of Lord's prayer, etc., as most denominational churches do. Christ, after his resurrection, appeared to the apostles, just before his ascension into heaven, and told them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). The inspired John, the apostle, wrote, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17). It is the truth which makes man free. (John 8:32). And Christ said, I am the truth. (John 14:6). Christ is the truth, he has the power and all authority. Men like John Calvin and Martin Luther and John Wesley and Mrs. Ellen G. White did not have the authority. Because Jesus made it plain that ALL power and authority was given to him. Of course, God gave him all the authority in heaven and in earth, The apostle Paul, when he wrote the resurrection chapter of I Corinthians, said, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Corinthians 15:24-26). Surely, he, Christ, has all rule and authority NOW. He cannot put down something he never had.

Also, at Matthew 17:5 the disciples of Christ were told to "hear ye him." Here God, the Father, was speaking and he said concerning, Christ, his Son, that they should hear him. On this occasion Moses and Elias, two prophets of the Old Testament, were shown talking with Christ. The disciples got excited and said we would build three tabernacles here, one each for Christ, Moses and Elias. But God took away the two men and left Christ in their midst and said, "hear ye him." God did speak in the time past by the fathers and through the prophets, but in these last days he speaks through his Son, Christ. (Hebrews 1:1,2). There are some today who are claiming that they are receiving revelations from God, I heard someone say that there is a

prophet or a prophetess in Tamilnadu or Bangalore city. some others believe that William Marrion Branham of America is a prophet of God. But all such are false. Because we know, that God has spoken, and he has spoken unto us in this last days through his Son, Jesus Christ. And he had commanded us not to add or take away any thing from the book of Christ. (Revelation 22:18,19). Of course, Christ himself did not write anything in the New Testament, but those who write had received the power to write those things which are written from Christ, who has all the authority. (John 14:25,26; 16:13; Acts 1:8). Christ had delegated his authority unto them. Because of this it is called the New Testament of Christ, and whatsoever is written in it are the commandments of Christ or God. When we do only what is commanded in the New Testament of Christ, then we are following the authority of Christ. Therefore, show me a church (congregation) which is following the New Testament of Christ and I will show you the church of Christ.

(To be continued)

A Non-Shrinking Faith

Wayne Price

Most Christians, weak and strong alike, ought to be able to answer the following questions with ease : (1) To whom does the church belong ? (Matthew 16:18). (2) What was the purchase price of the church ? (Acts 20:28). (3) To what does the Lord add all the saved ? (Acts 2:47). (4) Of what is Jesus the Saviour ? (Ephesians 5:23). (5) What is the body ? (Colossians 1:18,24). Can anyone read the Bible and come to the conclusion that a person can be saved without being a member of Christ's church ?

When our faith moves us to be obedient to "that form of doctrine delivered" to us (Romans 6:17), and the Lord adds us to his blood-bought church, just why, in the name of common sense, do some of us then turn our back on it, and quit ?

Such individuals ought to pray again : "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief". (Mark 9:24). When something goes wrong in our lives, and the first thing we do is quit the Lord's church,

we immediately cut ourselves off from the means of solving many of life's problems. Besides that, it manifests that our reasoning lacks logic ! To blame Christ for our personal problems is about as logical as being mad at the dog, and kicking the cat !

Christ judges our feelings for him by the way we treat his church (Acts 9:4). Now, just what would it take to cause you to quit the church and forfeit your home in heaven ? Would you sell your birth-right for a bit of pottage (Genesis 25) ? Judas betrayed the Lord for just thirty pieces of silver (Mathew 27:3), yet many today betray the Lord for less !

Some fall away because of temptation (Luke 8:13), while others quit because of wealth and or pleasure (Luke 8:14). Some quit because of a disagreement they have with their companion. Others quit merely because someone else did. What kind of reasoning is this ? Notice that all such explanations are geared to this present world. That is our big problem, is it not ? We major in minors, and minor in majors ! The inspired writer James declares; "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience....Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him". (James 1:3,12).

Abraham's faith was strong enough to move him to offer his own son on the alter (Hebrews 11:17). Moses' faith was strong enough to cause him to turn his back on the wealth of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26), and to resist the pleasures of sin (verse 25). Can you imagine this great leader turning his back on God just because he and Zipporah, his wife: had a dispute ?

Would the following cause you to quit the church : being' imprisoned, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry, thirsty, without sufficient clothing, and in pain ? These things never caused Paul to quit (II Cor. 11:23-28). W.H. Bathurst penned these words of a thought-provoking song :

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Tho pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink,
of any earthly woe....

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
and then, whate'er may come,
we'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss,
of an eternal home."

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed....for which cause we faint not; but though our out-ward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen". (II Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-18).

My friend, this writer will not quit the church, even if the local congregation FIRES him ! Many preachers know what it is to be "in perils among false brethren". (II Cor. 11:26), but dare they quit the church ? The Lord declared that those first century Christians would suffer tribulation, and in one statement, he both consoled and warned them, saying : He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved". (Matthew 24).

Does your faith depend upon outward circumstances ? Now, let us be honest ! Does it ?

A Basic Bible Lesson

W.A. Holley

The church of Christ exists; you can read of its establishment and work and worship in the New Testament. In fact, according to the Bible, the church of Christ is the oldest church in all the earth. The church of Christ antedates all Catholic churches and all denominational churches. The New Testament does not authorize the existence of any Catholic or Protestant church. Book, chapter, and verse, please ! Their names and doctrines are not recorded there.

(1) Jesus Christ is the builder of his church (Matthew 16:18-19). He paid for it with his own blood (Aets 20:28). He is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He will save the

church (Ephesians 5:23-25). He adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

(2) The church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 47; 11:14-15). It was established in the city of Jerusalem, in the year A.D. 33, as we commonly count time. The church of Christ was not established in the days of Abraham, or in the days of the prophets, nor in the days of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:3-12; 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13-14).

(3) God Almighty has ordained certain items or acts of worship which those who desire to worship "in Spirit and in truth" must observe, viz., Bible study, prayer, singing, the observance of the Lord's supper, and making a contribution according to prosperity (John 4:23-24; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47; Ephesians 5:19). This worship includes a special day—the Lord's day—the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10). There is no such thing as a Christian sabbath (Colossians 2:14-17).

(4) The terms of membership in the church of Christ, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, are faith, plus repentance, plus baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38, 41:42, 47; Romans 6:3:4). One cannot Join the Lord's church. The Lord adds the saved to his church when they become such as should be saved.

(5) The work of the church embraces the edification of itself, preaching the gospel to a lost world and providing aid to widows and orphans (Galatian 6:10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:13 I Timothy 5:16; James 1:27). These passages do not contradict themselves. It is as simple as this: if the church cannot help widows and orphans, it cannot practice pure and undefiled religion. James 1:27 tell us what to do and I Timothy 5:16 tells us who is to do it. If the Bible teaches that only the individual Christian can Scripturally help widows and orphans then it follows irresistibly that each Christian must help at least one widow and one orphan or that Christian is not practicing pure and undefiled religion! Hence, a Christian husband and wife would be required to help at least four people, and if they are not doing so, they are not practicing pure and undefiled religion!

Religious division is a sin. Jesus prayed for the unity of his people. Whatever we do, we must do in the name of Jesus Christ.

A Relevant Question

Bob Duncan

King Saul had turned his back on God, and was engaged in an unjust and very shameful pursuit of David, with every intention of destroying him. But as Saul and his army was camping, David and one of his servants walked into the camp, and found Saul sleeping. It would have been so very easy for David to take Saul's spear and to kill him; and this is exactly what David's servant urged him to do. In fact, the servant said to David, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time". (I Samuel 26:8).

But David's reply was: "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (verse 9).

This question of David is relevant in a time when there is a general tendency to rebel against authority—the authority of parents, the authority of civil rulers, the authority of elders, and authority in general.

The fact that Saul had become wicked and was abusing the throne did not give David an excuse to murder him. David could not take the life of Saul, his wicked enemy, without also taking the life of Saul, the king of Israel and the one anointed of God. It was this latter which he was not willing to do. Men do not always do that which is right—even those in positions of authority. But we are taught to honor the position they occupy, whether they are civil rulers (Romans 13:1-5), parents (Ephesians 6:1), or elders in the church (Hebrews 13:17). We cannot stretch forth our hands against them and be guiltless.

A man characterized by less devotion and more unholy ambition than David would have misinterpreted this situation.

This is demonstrated by the words of David's servant : "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day...." The implication of these words is if God has delivered him into your hands, then certainly God must intend for you to kill him. But David very wisely refused to place an interpretation upon the event which would lead him to commit sin, and to kill God's anointed. We must take care not to interpret any situation in a way as to cause us to engage in wrong. Certainly we believe in the providence of God in our lives, but we cannot know what is providential; therefore we dare not allow our interpretation of certain events as providential to lead us into some drastic action. And certainly we cannot afford to allow our interpretation of certain events as providential to cause us to commit sin. David very wisely overcame this temptation.

David had been promised the throne and had been anointed (I Samuel 16:13). He knew what would be the ultimate outcome of Saul's bitterness toward him. For him to kill Saul on this occasion would be but to hasten the inevitable. He could have reasoned after this fashion : "Why prolong Saul's agony ? After all, the throne is mine by divine decree. It certainly cannot be wrong for me to kill him who is trying to kill me, and to take that which is mine already". But David did not so reason. Instead, he reasoned as follows : "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed". (I Samuel 26:10,11). David evidently knew what some in our time obviously have not learned, i.e., that no end, regardless of how worthy or noble, or even inevitable, justifies the doing of anything that is sinful to accomplish that end.

David was not a situation ethicist. He believed the law of God was to be followed at all times and under all conditions. If there ever had been a time when one could justify in his own mind lifting up his hand against God's anointed, it certainly would have been in that situation. Add to this the fact that it would not have been necessary for David personally to slay Saul. All he had to do was grant his permission; already a servant was begging for permission to do the deed. But David

knew better. He knew there is never a time when it is right to do wrong, or wrong to do right. No amount of rationalization could convince him that it would be right to lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed. May it ever be so with God's people of our time.

Making Havoc Of The Church

Jerri Manasco

Saul of Tarsus "made havoc of the church". (Acts 8:3). Later, this same man, as Paul the apostle, wrote that he had "wasted" and "destroyed" the church (Gal. 1:13,23). He had been a blasphemer, and injurious to the church (I Tim. 1:13). While these statements refer to the actual physical harm done by Paul and others like him to the church, have we ever considered how we who profess to be friends of Christ can be guilty of making havoc of the church?

Disorderly worship is one of the ways to destroy a congregation and its influence. The church in Corinth had those who had received spiritual gifts, but these spiritual gifts became a major disaster for those brethren because of their abuse. Particularly was this so with those who had the gift of tongues. The services were not edifying, for no one understood what was being taught when the "tongue-talkers" exercised their gift loosely (I Cor. 14:1-6, 12, 17-25). Visitors who may have chosen to drop in on their services were forming uncomplimentary opinions of these Christians (I Cor. 14:23). Therefore, Paul included in the close of his discussion of spiritual gifts an admonition to do all things decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40).

While the spiritual gifts do not remain among believers, the *principles* set forth by Paul are still relevant to our worship. Orderliness is still the universal appeal of the scriptures. When the assembly is characterized by undue commotion, such as whispering, snickering, note-passing, playing with babies, etc., distraction is to be expected. How can one worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24) if his attention is diverted from the purpose for which he has come to the service? One case in point

is the abuse of the Lord's supper. Corinth was making mockery of the memorial by their careless attitude. The brethren had transformed this communion into a mere common meal, characterized by selfishness and lack of fellowship. In such cases the minds of the worshipper cannot be properly fixed on the suffering of Jesus and he will be eating and drinking damnation to himself (I Cor. 11:19-29)!! Such irreverence does nothing to improve the spiritual life of the congregation.

The song service may suffer as well from disorderly conduct. Everyone talking, laughing, and in general making merry up to the very moment the first song is announced is not conducive to a very edifying song service. The loud slipping and pounding of songbooks in the book racks testifies to a lack of sufficient preparation for entering into worship. This must really impress our visitors!!

Preachers may contribute to the havoc of the church through less than adequate preparation for sermons and classes. Their divine charge is "preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2). They can do this only through diligent study (I Tim. 4:13; II Tim. 2:15). The preacher who "socializes" too much during the week, then waits until Saturday night to select a sermon outline from someone else's material, and, with little personal study, tries to preach on Sunday, will be of no real value to the congregation. The more perceptive members (and non members who visit) will easily detect the total lack of readiness, and even the less perceptive will see right through the preacher's lack of personal conviction of what he is preaching. The congregation will suffer from spiritual malnutrition, its youth will not be challenged to want to embrace the way of truth, and many visitors will be persuaded never to return!! In short, the influence of the church will be wrecked almost (if not completely) beyond repair. It sometimes takes years to restore what was destroyed in moments or days.

Many other factors could be introduced to show how we may be guilty of destroying our congregations, without realizing it. Such things as incompetent leadership among elders who care very little for the progress of the gospel, or deacons who feel no real compulsion to serve the congregation, members who are lazy in their duty—all these things contribute to the wrecking of a

congregation. It is not our purpose to cast needless negative criticism against the church; but perhaps what we have offered here may serve to lead us into a careful self examination of our spiritual status (II Cor. 13:5). Ponder it carefully and prayerfully.

The Challenge Of Entertainment

John Waddey

It is a unique problem of modern man to determine how to use properly his large amount of leisure time and the abundance of wealth at his disposal. For most of our ancestors, this was no serious problem, as the struggle for economic survival consumed most of their waking hours and money was ever in short supply.

In affluent America, a giant entertainment industry has evolved to meet the need and capture the waiting bucks. Herein lies a second problem: Since most of those in the entertainment industry are devotees of hedonism and Mammon, they are often found in a role antagonistic to true Christian piety. Today the twin evils, lust of the flesh and lust of eye (I John 2:16), tend to dominate much of the public entertainment. This then becomes the challenge for God's children: to "prove all things; hold fast to that which is good; [and to] abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:21-22).

According to Funk and Wagnalls, "To *entertain* is to engage and pleasantly occupy the attention: to *amuse* is to occupy the attention in an especially bright and cheerful way . . . to *recreate* is to engage mind or body in some pleasing activity that restores strength and energy for serious work" (*New Practical Standard Dictionary*). Surely everyone—including Christians—needs some entertainment, especially the kind that restores strength and energy for serious work. Though not inspired, it is a true proverb that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Our entertainment can be pursued either privately, or with our family, or in broader social groups such as friends, church, or club. In whichever relationship it be it must be to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31). Most of us tend to think of entertainment only as a commodity to be purchased and enjoyed in some

public theatre. In reality some of the most meaningful entertainment is enjoyed in the home setting with friends and family. What a joy it is spend an afternoon or evening playing games or working with a mutual hobby! How wonderful for Mom, Dad and the kids to travel, sight-see or go hiking or fishing together. What a delight to gather around the piano to sing together or to break out the old family movies! The Mormon program of a regular, weekly family night is a worthy suggestion for any family. There is rich fulfilment in reading a good book or listening to one's favourite music. All of these things entertain, amuse and recreate without the expense or the setting of a movie or stage show. They are some of the best memories that many of the older generation have, for in a day of hard work, little money, and limited transportation, that is how people met their recreational needs.

In connection with home recreation, we must mention television. That which was once a thrilling, enlightening and beneficial medium of entertainment has now largely degenerated into a sensuous and gaudy parade of needless violence. Beyond those objectionable aspects, it often insults the intelligent mind with its endless hours of worthless drivel. Of course, there are yet a few worthwhile programs the Christian can enjoy, but there is a crying need for careful editing of what is viewed. The negative influence of bad T.V. programming on impressionable young minds is no longer a debate. It would do most families good to station a poster above the T.V. screen with this inscription: "Keep thy heart with all diligence : For out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23).

When the serious Christian contemplates any avenue of entertainment, the following questions will help him determine whether or not to pursue it :

1. Does it violate any precept or principle of God's word? Such movies and stage show that have as their primary theme approved adultery or homosexuality would be wrong.
2. Will this form of entertainment strengthen me as a Christian, or will it weaken my conviction and dim the

light of my influence ? Some things of the world have the ability to choke God's word in our life and make us unfruitful (Matt. 13:22). While some things may not be wrong in themselves, the place, the associations, and the environment might make them undesirable for the Christian.

In connection with the above, we should ask "What kind of people will this cast me with ?" Both Scripture and experience teach us that evil companions corrupt good morals (I Cor. 15:33). Bowling is certainly an innocent form of recreation and entertainment, but in the company of ruffians, drunks or "pot" smokers, that innocent thing would be inappropriate.

3. Will my engagement in this activity cause others to stumble ? Some things are innocent in themselves, but because of the negative views held by good folks, we would cause offence if we did them. A game of cards (without gambling) is not wrong, but in some areas I have encountered brethren who felt that only a sinner would play such a game. Paul writes of such things in Romans 14: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself; save to him that accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (v. 14). He then urges "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died" (vs. 15b).
4. Will this interfere with my service to God and his church ? A perfectly honorable form of entertainment that keeps me from Bible Study and worship assemblies keeps me from seeking God's kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).
5. Is this a good stewardship of the Lord's money which he has provided for my use ? He expects us to be good stewards (I Cor. 4:2). Some hobbies and entertainment shows are extremely expensive. The Christian must weigh the needs of God's kingdom and the poor before consuming his resources on such trivial things. The

\$ 500 for a ringside seat at a championship boxing match would provide 1,000 Testaments for hungry souls in Africa. This does not condemn a moderate use of our means for entertainment, only extravagance.

6. Does this interfere with my duty to my family? We see some parents so involved in their bowling league or golfing that they fail to provide proper attention to their mates and children. Parental responsibilities surely are paramount to entertainment privileges. To train a child in the way he should go demands some time (Prov. 22:6). Loving a mate is more important than "keeping one's average up." (Eph. 5:23).
7. Does this respect the rights and property of my neighbour? Some find it entertaining to let the air out of other folks' car tires. Some find pleasure in destructive pranks and tricks that are costly, frightening or inconveniencing to others. Some delight in ridiculing and "cutting down" their friends or loved ones". The golden rule plainly forbids such thoughtless entertainment. (Matt. 7:12).
8. Does this exploit other people? Ancient Romans thronged to their colosseums to watch men fight to the death for their entertainment. Many of our early brethern perished as a spectacle of entertainment for those bloodthirsty mobs. Such entertainment was wrong, not simply because Christians died; it was wrong because it treated human life with disrespect. Men were but toys to perform for a vulgar crowd. Their maiming or death was of no greater consequence than an animal's. Man made in God's image deserves a greater respect (Gen. 1:26-27). Today, we Christians need to ponder any entertainment that similarly exploits a fellow human being. A crowd that screams for blood at a boxing or wrestling match is a near relative to those Romans 1900 years past. That same ugly attitude is sometimes seen at an ice hockey game. Many current movies, stage productions, and TV's shows exploit young

women by presenting them as sex objects for lustful eyes. We should reject all such, not just because it is lewd (Gal. 5:19), but because of its insulting use of people.

In a word, when considering entertainment, saints must "prove all things, hold fast that which is good [and] abstain from every form of evil". (I Thesss. 5:21-22). Rather than being swept along in the current with a pleasure-mad throng, we seek out "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report..." (Phil. 4:8). Our commitment is to be like Christ in word, thought and deed. Any item or program of entertainment that fails that test is not suitable for the disciple of Jesus. May God grant us good judgment and moral strength to live up to that holy standard.

When Disappointments And Discouragement Come

Wayne Cobb

One of the everyday problems of life is the problem of disappointment and discouragement. God does not lift his children into a realm where trials are non-existent. In no place in his word has God guaranteed that we shall not have to travel over the rough places of life. Sooner or later all men have their burdens. As Longfellow said, "Into each life some rain must fall. Some days must be dark and dreary." Job concurred with this thought when he said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble". (Job 14:1). Adversity and trouble are as universal as humanity.

Since discouragements and disappointments are a very real part of life, all of us need to learn to cope with these problems when the ugly face of trouble suddenly intrudes itself into life. Different people respond to it in different ways. Our success in

living the Christian life hinges to a great extent upon how well we weather the storms of life.

There are some who utterly collapse in the face of adversity. During the Great Depression of the late 1920's and early 30's, there were many who simply could not face the sudden evaporation of their fortunes, so they jumped out of windows to their deaths all over America. Every year millions of people around the world develop a feeling of hopelessness, decide life is no longer worth living, and act accordingly. This is one of the classic response to the onset of adversity in life—to be overcome by it and utterly defeated. But this is not the solution to the problems of life.

No one likes to undergo adversity, but it is a fact of life that each of us must grapple with. What should be our reactions? What should we do in the hour of trial? God wants us to be victorious over the disappointments and discouragements of daily living, not crushed by them.

Remember that some of the greatest people of history have suffered much. Moses was often disappointed in Israel and discouraged, but he was victorious and established himself as one of the greatest men this world has ever known. The apostle Paul must often have been discouraged. He was disappointed in people (II Tim. 4:10,14) and suffered many things (II Cor. 11:22-12:10) but Paul was faithful unto the very end. John the Baptist became discouraged (Lk. 7:19-23), but the Lord's estimate of him was that "among those that are born of woman there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (Lk. 7:28).

It is interesting to know that Abraham Lincoln failed in everything he set out to accomplish until he was past forty years of age. He was a failure in business and for many years struggled under heavy indebtedness. In 1856 he was defeated as a candidate for the vice-presidential nomination. In 1858, as a candidate for the United States Senate, he was defeated by Stephen Douglas. But despite these failures and many other

obstacles, Lincoln became one of the most honored and revered Presidents this nation has ever known.

Realize that the difficulties of life can be stepping stones in the development of greater character. The storms of life can actually be a means of strengthening us for some great responsibility and opportunity further up the road. Trials produce patience, patience leads to experience, and experience leads to hope (Rom. 5:3,4). All these are necessary in the development of greater character. As Alfred Montepert wrote in his book. *The Supreme Philosophy of Man*, "Adversity does not break men; it makes them."

When discouragements come, don't give up. The pathway of life is strewn with the bones of those who made an excellent start but fell away. Jack Dempsey, former heavy weight boxing champion of the world, once said, "A champion is the one who gets up when he can't". We must be persistent in doing that which is good, despite the many discouragements and disappointments along the way. This is what Paul had reference to when he wrote, "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not". (Gal 6:9).

During times of adversity keep faith in God and cast your burdens upon him. We must learn, as Job did, to show our faith and trust in God no matter what we face. The Psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear..." (Psa. 46:1,2). God knows our every problem and every situation in life. We are exhorted to cast our burdens upon him (Psa. 55:22; I Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:6,7). He will not fail us (Heb. 13:5).

We need to be like the man who was undergoing severe trials. However, despite his difficulties he was able to sleep each night. When asked how he could sleep under such stress, he replied, "I've handed the matter over to the Lord who never slumbers or sleeps. There is no use for both of us staying awake all night." Faith in God helps to bear us over the rough spots of life.

There Is No Escape

Hoyt Bailey

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM GOD. It is foolish to expect to escape from the presence of God. Everyone should keep himself conscious of the continuous presence of God. (Psa. 139:1-12). "Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? saith Jehovah. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith Jehovah." (Jer. 23:23,24). "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith Jehovah, and they shall fish them up; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity concealed from mine eyes". (Jer 16:16,17). "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do". (Heb 4:13).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM CHRIST. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God". (Jno 1:1-3). "For by Him [the Son] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth...and he is before all things, and by him all things consist". (Col. 1:16,17). We find Christ wherever we find God, and we find God wherever we find Christ. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...." (Jno. 17:20-21). Through Christ, the invisible God becomes visible to man, according to our Lord's words. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father he hath revealed him". (Jno. 1:18). It would be strange if Christ did not see every person all the time—since: he came to seek and save the lost. (Lk. 19:10). His love is for the whole world (Jno. 3:16); his death was for every person. (Heb. 2:9); Christ's propitiation is for the sins of the whole world. (I Jno. 2:1,2).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Godhead includes, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit. "For there are

three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit : and these three are one". (I Jno. 5:7). We observe in the Old Testament both an identification of God and the Spirit of God, and also a clear distinction between them. The identification is seen in Psa. 139:7 where the omnipresence of the Spirit is declared: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" And Isa. 63:10 says, "But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit...." In a great number of passages, however, God, and the Spirit of God are not spoken of as identical, as, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". (Gen. 1:2). (Also Psa. 51:11; 104:30). The Holy Spirit was present when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). The Holy Spirit is present as we "live, move, and have our being in God". (Acts 17:27-29).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ONSELF. "So God created man in his own image; male and female created he them". (Gen. 1:27). Man consists of both body and spirit."...therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6:20). Adam and Eve could not escape from God. (Gen. 3:1-13). God reminded Cain that his "brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Lot's wife did not escape from herself. (Gen. 19:26). Nadab and Abihu did not escape from God nor from themselves. (Lev. 10:1,2). Achan could not escape from himself (Joshua 7). One is still with himself in the other world. Moses, Elijah, the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham were all with themselves in the other world. (Matt. 17:1-5; Lk. 16:19-31).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM LIFE (LIVING) Enoch continued to live : "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death". (Heb. 11:5). Before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Elijah went to heaven alive. Elijah and Elisha walked together, "and it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven". (II King 2:11).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM PHYSICAL DEATH. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the

judgment". (Heb. 9:27). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". (I Cor. 15:22). "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecc. 12:7).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE RESURRECTION. The Bible does not teach two bodily resurrections. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (Jno. 5:28,29). "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust". (Acts 24:15).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE JUDGMENT. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad". (II Cor. 5:10). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecc. 12:14). Those involved include Angels, Devils, and men, and the what includes deeds, words, thoughts and secrets.

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM OUR OWN WORKS. Jesus said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works". (Matt. 16:27). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil". (Ecc. 12:14).

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE FINAL SEPARATION. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear". (Isa. 59:2). Sinners are separate from Christ : "That ye were at that time separate from Christ". (Eph. 2:12). Areas of separation are between righteousness and iniquity; between light and darkness; between Christ and Belial; between the believer and the unbeliever, and between the temple of God and idols. In the other world, there is a separation between the evil and the good.

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THE FINAL VERDICT. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every one will receive in his body the things done, whether good or bad. On the one side we read that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction". On the other, "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, to be admired in all them that believe." On the one hand we can see why the second coming of our Lord is "the blessed hope," while on the other it is "the great and terrible day."

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ETERNITY. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place..." (Isa. 57:15). There is no escape from God while in the flesh, nor in eternity. Scripture clearly informs us that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:27). The eternal nature of man continues alive in God, because it is in God that "we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17:28). The Psalmist reminds us that there is no escape from God (Psa. 139:1-23).

The Power Of The Tongue

(Part 1)

Raymond Elliott

The story is told of a man in ancient times who sent a servant to the market place to buy the best piece of meat for a meal. The servant returned with a tongue of a beast. For some unknown reason, the man again sent his servant later to buy the worst piece of meat. This time the servant returned with a tongue of a beast. The principle we want to emphasize from this story is the fact that the tongue is tremendously powerful for good and evil. Though the tongue is a very small member of the human body, it can cause a great deal of misery. The wise man wrote in Proverbs 18:21 that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." History is replete with orators who swayed millions of people to do good or evil. Demosthenes

overcame a handicap to become a great Greek orator; Patrick Henry stirred a great feeling of patriotism with his exclamation; "Give me liberty or give me death"; Winston Churchill led his people through the dark days during World War I; Hitler and Mussolini swayed the peoples of Germany and Italy in accepting their ungodly ideas; Martin Luther, John Calvin, Alexander Campbell and other religious leaders have influenced multitudes with their orations in times past. Today, men and women in politics endeavour to convince the citizens of this nation to accept their particular views on different matters.

Morally speaking, a person speaks as he thinks "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he". (Proverbs 23:7). "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies". (Matthew 15:19). At least three of the above sins mentioned by the Lord which defiles a man are committed by the misuse of the tongue. No wonder the wise man gave the exhortation: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life". (Proverbs 4:23). A man is what he thinks and as he thinks so will he speak. The sins that deal with the disposition of the heart are listed among the base and dark sins of immorality. Such sins are mentioned as being the works of the flesh. They are "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings". The tongue is involved in committing these sins. Paul said that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Paul, in writing about the depraved conditions of the Gentiles in his day, mentioned that "whisperers" and "backbiters" were among these ungodly people. The apostle John wrote: "But the fearful, and unbelieving and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death". (Revelation 21:8). Many religious people fail to see that one can lose his soul in eternity by misusing the tongue as well as committing the sins of immorality.

The Word of God condemns the misuse of the tongue. The following verses teach that such abuse can wound or injure the hearts of others. "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and

they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." "All that hate me whisper together against me : against me do they devise my hurt". (Proverbs 18:8; Psalms 41:7). How little do people realize that words spoken as gossip can bruise the hearts of others ! Sometimes it would be easier for one to receive a physical blow to the body than to learn what others are saying about him. Unkind words can strike deeper than a sword. The fact is that most people do not live by the "Golden Rule" given by our Lord as recorded in Matthew 7:12 : "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets." One should ask the question, "Would I want others to speak of me in this manner?" Of course, the unregenerated person could care less about the principles of right and wrong, of fairness and mercy. Even among professed followers of Christ, the tongue is constantly misused to destroy the reputation of others.

The apostle Paul wrote that Christians are "to speak evil of no man". (Thus 3:2). But rather, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice". (Ephesians 4:31). The true story is told about a widow who called a preacher to come to her home and explain some Bible passages to her. He did visit her and the Bible study for approximately three hours. After the visit, the preacher made a call to the home of a Christian family and related that he had a very interesting Bible study in the home of the non-Christian lady. All rejoiced because of her interest in spiritual matters. However, some member of the church where this man preached saw him make the visit to the home of the widow, and assuming the wrong intent, began gossiping about this matter. It wasn't long until the preacher and his family had to move from that particular city. Thus much harm was done by people who used their tongues in the wrong manner. Such evil speaking should never be a part of the Christian character. There are times when the truth should not be related if there is the wrong intent involved.

The Lord God will hold each one of us responsible for the words that we have spoken in this life, "And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account

thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned". (Mathew 12:36,37).

Our Message

Dalton Key

Just prior to his ascension into heaven, Christ commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and "preach the gospel". (Mark 16:15, 16). From this account, together with the other accounts of the same commission, we learn that "the gospel" included faith, repentance, baptism and remission of sins. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47). Peter and the other apostles carried out this commission for the first time on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts' second chapter. On this occasion Peter's message was the gospel of Christ; and yet he preached repentance, baptism and the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). On that Pentecost day long ago, some 3,000 souls were obedient to the gospel message, were thus saved from sin, and were added by the Lord to his church. (Acts 2:41, 47).

This same message, the gospel message, is still "the power of God unto salvation". (Romans 1:16). This message, being God's word, is still "quick and powerful". (Hebrews 4:12). It still works as spiritual seed, begetting children into the family of God. (Luke 8:11; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23).

Because God has commanded we preach the gospel, and because God's power to save is in the gospel, we have neither right nor reason to proclaim anything save "Jesus Christ and him crucified". (I Corinthians 2:2). To project our own opinions is not to preach Christ. To harp on our own pet hobbies and programs is not to preach Christ. God's power to save is not in our will, or our wit, or our wisdom; his power to save is still where it has always been—in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Woe be unto us should we ever lose sight of this fact.

We must agree with the inspired Peter who wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God". (I Peter 4:11). Again, we recall the awesome charge of Paul to young Timothy to "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Notice Paul didn't suggest Timothy share a few thoughts "about the word". Neither did he urge his young helper to talk his way "around the word." Paul solemnly charged Timothy to "preach the word"—just that and nothing more.

May this message, the simple message of Christ, ever be the theme of our preaching. As. T. B. Larimore said long ago, "I would be afraid to be ashamed, and ashamed to be afraid, to preach on anything this is part of the divine message that Jesus

has commissioned his apostles to preach to every creature in all the world."

Is Man Wholly Mortal ?

Jim E. Waldron

Is man a rational spirit being or is he wholly mortal ? Atheists, evolutionists, and communists declare man is the product of this earth, having had his beginning with the dead matter in a primeval ocean ; thus, the end product is wholly mortal and when man dies the whole person returns to the ground as so much fertilizer.

Some breed of evolutionists (theistic) of course are hybrids in their concept of man, and claim there is a creator, but he was so incapable at his task he had to strain man through the sieve of the beast of the field over millions of years before he could bring him to his present state. This would make God deceitful as he claimed to have created all creatures on this earth in six days. (Genesis chapter one) when in reality (according to them) it took eons.

Yet, there are those around who are militantly religious in spreading their propaganda from house to house, mass media, etc., but they too teach man is wholly mortal; these are the soul-sleeping sects. Though they oppose the doctrine of the evolution of man and affirm man was created by God, they still line up with the unbelievers in declaring man as a person is wholly mortal.

The scriptures declare, "God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26). Thus according to the scriptures, God said, "let us". (Father, Son and Holy Spirit, see Matthew 28:19), make man after our image. That is, God who is Spirit. (John 4:24) created man a similar being and clothed him with flesh made from the dust. Again the scriptures say, "Jehovah . . . formeth the spirit of man within him." Zechariah 12:1), and "we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). Since man is the offspring of God, who is absolute spirit, men ought not to think themselves of declare mankind is wholly mortal.

After Solomon had expressed the vanity of all life under the sun. (see Ecclesiastes 9), he then said, "the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7). There is no such place as purgatory; it is a figment of a business-like mind from the dark ages and obscures the Biblical teaching about the final place of punishment (hell), resurrection and judgment.

We urge you to realize you are a rational spirit having been made in God's image and prepare to meet your maker, for there is no second chance after this life.

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !

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