

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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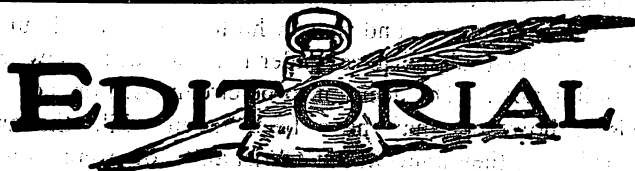
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DOES REPENTANCE DEMAND THAT ONE CEASE HIS ADULTERY

The Bible clearly teaches that if a man or woman should divorce and remarry without a cause then the one that does that commits adultery and the one that marries that party also commits adultery. Furthermore, the cause for divorce and remarriage is limited to fornication or unfaithfulness. (Matthew 19 : 9). Should the reason for divorce and remarriage be for any other cause then the result is adultery on the part of those who become so involved.

Now suppose there is a couple who is definitely living in adultery, but they are not Christians. Then suppose they have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ and they decide that they want to become Christians. The question that arises in the mind of a lot of people is this : Could they obey the Lord and be saved without having to break up their second marriage ? Many are contending that they can. They are basing this on 1 Corinthians 7 : 20 where Paul says, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." To them Paul is saying that if an adul-

terous couple want to become Christian then it is possible for them to begin where they are, that is, with each other, and that on obeying the gospel that the Lord saves them and then as Christians they are to remain together and have a Christian home. But to base this kind of thing on what Paul says is stretching the point. This would not follow at all.

Actually, Paul happens to be dealing with situations where it is possible to genuinely repent and obey God and at the same time to remain in whatever state or calling in which they find themselves. For instance, in Paul's day he gave as an example cases of those who had been circumcised and those who had not been circumcised. Such was of great significance under the law but the law was no longer binding now. The decision to be circumcised or not to be circumcised, however, may have been taken while the law was binding or before they knew about Christianity or were converted to it. Paul says that now that they are Christians that this has nothing to do with Christianity, one way or the other, so remain as you are and forget about it. (1 Corinthians 7: 18, 19). He also brought up the example of being a servant or a slave. Well, he could be a Christian whether he was a slave or not a slave. So Paul advised that man should not allow such things to bother him but to remember above all that he was now a servant of the Lord and that he was a free man in Christ.

Those who would carry this point to the extreme and have a couple living in a sinful state, and then assume that they can obey God without having to give up that state, are in error. They are saying in substance that repentance does not include giving up sin in this case and that baptism is so powerful that it will wash away the sin of adultery without having to give up the adultery. Again, such is false.

The gospel of Christ is powerful but it is not so powerful that one can be saved without having to give up his sin. As far as adultery is concerned, it is a state or a relationship that a couple find themselves in that is said to be a sin. It is an unlawful state. It is where two people are living together who do not have a scriptural right to do so. The Apostle Paul said that those who are living in adultery cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (1

Corinthians 6 : 9, 10). Paul classifies adultery as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5 : 19-21 and again he says that those who do these works cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But the question is : Could one really repent of these works of the flesh without giving them up, and that includes adultery ? Surely not. For sure, those who will repent of their sins in the scriptural sense can proceed with their obedience in baptism, and in doing this the Lord has promised to save them and add them to his church. But it must be on the Lord's terms and not on the basis of man's wishful thinking.

Going back to the argument that some make, that is, that one can continue in the calling wherein he is called, Paul is dealing with cases of where a person is involved in a profession, a work, or relationship of some type that is not within itself wrong. But if Paul means by this that a couple can be living in an adulterous marriage relationship, and that through their obedience to God they can be saved without having to dissolve their marriage relationship, then suppose a young lady is involved in prostitution but she hears the gospel of Christ and obeys God to become a Christian. Does that mean that she can continue with her prostitution or would it mean that in becoming a Christian that it would be necessary for her to give up the sinful practice of prostitution ? We could ask such a question about a couple working in a gambling hall, or what about a couple selling unlawful drugs ? And on and on we could go. Surely if one couple could continue with their living status then the others could do otherwise.

The main question raised here has to do with repentance. What is repentance ? Well, according to the scriptures repentance means to quit or turn away from sin. It means to give it up, to no longer live in it. (Luke 13 : 3; Acts 17 : 30; Acts 2 : 38; 2 Peter 3 : 9). At the same time baptism washes away sins or saves only on the basis that the prior conditions of pardon have been complied with and one of those would be repentance. All of this is to say that a couple living in adultery could not possibly repent and obey God without giving up their adulterous state in which they are living. It is true that there may be children involved, and a lot of other things, but remember the Lord didn't get them into that predicament but rather they got themselves into that mess.

Also, sometimes innocent people have to suffer because of the sins of others and that would be true here.

It might be said that we are asking a couple to break up their marriage. No, we are not asking them to break up a scriptural marriage, but we would ask that they give up their adulterous state. Really, we are not asking them to do this but God demands it of them if they are going to obey Christ to be saved.

Remember, too, that if such a couple could obey God and continue their so-called marriage relationship then such would reduce the Lord's teaching on divorce and remarriage to a meaningless statement. Take warning that there are always those who are trying to find some way to get around God's way to enable them to have fellowship with God's people but at the same time to go on and live as they please. But God will not tolerate this kind of thing and neither can we accept such false teaching and those who practice it.



**associate
editorial**

Just An Immersion Not Enough

The Bible clearly teaches that baptism is immersion or burial in water. In Romans 6 : 3-4 the writer says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." In Colossians 2 : 12 he wrote, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." When eunuch heard the gospel of Jesus Christ through Philip and asked, "See here is

water; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?” then the record says, “.....and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” (Acts 8 : 36, 38).

However, the Bible baptism is for a specific purpose, it is a part of the Gospel of Christ. It is therefore we notice, when Philip preached Jesus to eunuch he immediately wanted to be baptized. Likewise, when Paul and Silas preached the Word to the Jailor and his household in Philippi they were immediately baptized, yes, that very night. Why ? Because baptism, according to the Bible, is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2 : 38), it washes away sins (Acts 22 : 16), it puts one into Christ and in his body, the church, where there is salvation from sin. (Galatians 3 : 27; 1 Corinthians 12 : 13).

Yet there are a number of people today who are immersed but not actually baptized as the New Testament teaches, because they weren't baptized for the forgiveness of sins as the scripture specifically teach. Most churches and preachers today do not believe like Peter, the apostle, did and said that baptism saves us (1 Peter 3 : 21) ; and that every one must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2 : 38). It is widely believed, accepted and taught today that after one has accepted Jesus his personal saviour and has confessed his sins he is saved, and after some time that *already* “saved” person may be baptized to show that he is following Christ or that he is *already* a Christian. Hundreds and thousands of people have done this. But it is wrong. It is wrong because one was **not** baptized, as the Bible teaches, for the forgiveness of sins, but because, as he was told and he understood, his sins were already forgiven and he was a saved person. But, again, where did Christ put salvation ? Before or after baptism ? Of course, if you know the Bible, after baptism. Listen, He said, “He that Believes and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16 : 16). Likewise the Apostle Peter says, as we have already noticed, that one must be baptized **FOR** the, and not because of, forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2 : 38). Saul was told, after he had believed and repented of his sin, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”. (Acts 22 : 16).

Now, in light of what the Bible teaches on the subject, where do you see yourself ? I know, it is possible for some now to con-

clude, since you know the truth now, that you were baptized for the forgiveness of sins at the time you were immersed. But is this really the fact? Are you sure about it? Did the preacher tell you that you were being baptized for the forgiveness of sins? Or did you know that you were being baptized to be saved? I am sure, in most cases your preacher or the one who baptized you himself didn't believe that baptism has any thing to do with your salvation. To them it was just a sign of faith. But if you were immersed thinking you were already saved, you are wrong. It doesn't matter when were you immersed whether last week or thirty years before. Just an immersion is not enough. You need to be baptized precisely for the forgiveness of sins, for salvation, for putting on Christ and becoming a member of his body, the church. (Acts 2 : 47). If we can help you in this matter please write or contact us. We are at your service for Christ's glory.

You Can't Give It Away

By W. RAY DUNCAN

It is rather paradoxical that a person may have a good and sufficient supply of a certain commodity while his neighbour may be completely out and desperate, but there is no way he can share or divide his commodity with him. This is exactly what happened in the parable of the Ten Virgins as told by the Master. It wasn't that they did not want to share their oil with their foolish sisters, but some how or another there was no way in which the wise virgins could divide their oil with the foolish virgins. Outwardly all the virgins looked very much alike, but inwardly there was a difference. The foolish virgins did not destroy their lamps in a fit of anger, they did not even forget to have their lamps with them, they simply did not have enough oil when the bridegroom came! It is interesting to note that they were not even worried because of their scant supply of oil, in fact they seemed as "smug" as did their wiser sisters, and slept no less soundly as did the wise ones while tarrying for the bridegroom.

Most church rolls are long and contain names of people who are quite irregular in any active duties of the church. If you ask

them why they are unconcerned they will most likely reply that they are as concerned as you are, and that they will thank you to attend to your business and let them attend to theirs! If you call to inquire why they miss a service you will offend them because they are not aware that they are "running low on oil." Someday the Bridegroom will appear and they will be terribly concerned because their lamps will be sputtering and "going out" and they have no oil!

Whatever the "oil" was, the wise sisters had a plenty! The foolish sisters cried out, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." It is never wrong to fail to do what you cannot do! The wise sisters simply could not divide their oil with their foolish sisters. They told them to go to "those that sell, and buy for yourself." Whatever it was, it was something that was non-transferable. So far as it applies to the Christian it well may be Christ-likeness that is the "oil in our lamps." If you do not have it now you will not have time to purchase it after He comes again!

It is not likely that the foolish girls went to the mart and made the purchase and returned with their lamps full—and were still denied entrance. The Scriptures plainly say that "Those that were ready went in." To the ready the doors are always open. To the un-ready neither God nor man will open the doors. No greater lesson on preparedness can be found in the New Testament than this wonderful lesson on the Ten Virgins. It has a powerful application to all Christians today.

Countless numbers of good church members are content with the knowledge that they have an invitation to the wedding supper, they have actually obtained some wedding garments, but their lamps are sputtering and they are not aware of it! Their lamps simply will not burn when the need arises—because they are out of oil. We cannot help but wonder if on occasions the wise sisters did not remonstrate with their foolish sisters about their scant supply of oil, and if so, we wonder what reply they received? Perhaps they had never lied to their neighbours, not stolen from their friends, nevertheless they did not enter for the wedding either! To fail to do what God has commanded to be done is sinful! No sin of any kind can be permitted to enter heaven.

Christian friend, if you habitually miss the worship, fail to study your Bible, are slack in your prayer life, and have no consistent part in a soul-saving activity—**YOU ARE OUT OF OIL!** Nor can this kind of oil be obtained from friends or neighbours—you must make the purchase yourself. You do not have tomorrow in which to make the purchase, nor can you make it yesterday! If you will not make the necessary preparations now—there is no hope for attending the great wedding!

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NOT EVERY SERMON IS PLANNED FOR YOU

One of the ladies of a congregation reported to the preacher a conversation she recently held with another of the ladies. "Well, the preacher sure didn't have much worth hearing today, did he?" asked the one lady. "Why", replied the other, "I was just thinking what a fine lesson it was for Mrs. X, with whom I've been studying." This conversation illustrates a problem with which a preacher must wrestle constantly.

Imagine that you were a teacher in a one-room country school. In the room sat students from the first through the sixth or even the eighth grade. What would you teach them? Would you gear all of your lessons to the youngest children? After all, they would not be able to understand anything else. But what of the older children? Wouldn't they get bored and stop attending class? Of course. But what if you planned all of the lessons for the oldest and brightest? The younger ones would become frustrated and quit. Well, what would you do? Obviously you would spend part of the time working with the older and part of the time working with the younger children. You would try to meet the needs of all the children.

Like the teacher in the one-room country school, we must plan lessons for the church which will meet the needs of some part of the audience. But the sermon needed by the newcomer will leave the old timer unsatisfied, and the sermon enjoyed by the mature one

may leave the novice confused. The preacher can only try to meet the needs of each group in the congregation and audience.

Unknown Author

Asking For Trouble

PAUL HARVEY

Girls' skirts started creeping upward in 1964. The higher hemline was then most conspicuous because it rode up when she sat down.

Simultaneously, however coincidentally, crimes against women began a dramatic increase. FBI crime files show the rate of forcible rape—which had been declining for five years—shot upward in 1964 and each year since.

In England, where the short skirts had a head start the rape rate increased 90 per cent. In the United States, the increase has been 68 per cent. Last year forcible rapes increased more than any other violent crime. Is there a correlation? The consensus of law enforcement officers in fifty states is "YES."

Professional law enforcement officials in fifty states were asked, "Does the short skirt invite sex crimes?" Those in 61 per cent of our major cities reported and 92 per cent said yes. The juvenile division commander of one large city spoke the consensus view when he said, "Some sex crimes are committed by individuals aroused by their sensory perception and short dresses of some girls could provoke such an attack." When forcible rape is now our nation's fastest increasing crime, a separate category of "Molestation of young girls" is also at a record rate.

Mary Quant, London designer and mother of the miniskirt, said on November 13, 1968, "Mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who want to seduce a man. . ." and, if to confirm her conclusion, the year the skirts went up crimes against women demonstrated a parallel increase. This analysis, compiled by Hollywood Social

Studies and analyzed by Chief of Police, Duane Bakes, of Glendale, California, presumes to draw no conclusions beyond the survey's findings and the FBI statistics. New York City presently averages five reported forcible rapes per day. Los Angeles, with a third of the population, also has five per day. San Francisco's rate is up more than 200 per cent in one year, as is Cleveland's. Most rapists are age 18.

Of the lawmen surveyed, 83 percent agreed: "A normally sexed young man will be more likely to think in the direction of overt sex activity by the strip-tease effects of a short skirt wearer, seated, than by any other public fashion in history." Yet many women cannot imagine that it would ever be improper—or even dangerous to follow fashion. Women have allways been delightfully devious in getting themselves noticed. May it ever be so. But in this instance, because they don't quite comprehend, the man's eyevue of what is provocative, seeking attention they maybe asking for trouble.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MAN

Pervie Nichols

One of the most wonderful truths is the fact that God has spoken to mankind. Since the beginning of time God has "at sundry times and in divers manners" spoken to man. Heb. 1:1-2. In these last days Jehovah has spoken to us through His Son, Jesus. His message of salvation through Christ is revealed and written in the New Testament.

A Complete Revelation

The written word of God is complete; it contains all the information man needs in order to learn how to be saved, become a child of God, and prepare for heaven. Please observe the completeness and all-sufficiency of the Lord's word as set forth in the following statement: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17. There is no condition or need of mankind but that one or the other of these statements will adequately apply. Peter declared that we have, through the knowledge of Christ, been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness. 2 Pet. 1 : 2.

Evidently there are those who do not believe in the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures, for they have their creed books, Manuals, etc., as a supplement to the Bible. To accept a creed, manual, or human articles of faith is to reject the Bible as the complete revelation. No one can truthfully say "I accept the Bible as the complete guide into all truth" while subscribing to some creed or manual. We need no articles of faith, rules or regulations and other human doctrines, because the Bible furnishes us completely with all information needed in this life.

Claims of Further Revelation

There are those who reject the Biblical affirmation that the Bible is God's final message to mankind. They think that God is still revealing things to man, and many more are claiming these "new revelations." Many religious cults of today are built upon the idea of continuous revelation.

Mr. William Miller, leader in the Seventh-Day Adventist movement in the nineteenth century, claimed to have had supernatural dreams and visions. When these proved false he finally gave up. Then Mrs. Ellen G. White, one of his followers, modified his prophecies, added the seventh day Sabbath doctrine, and thus introduced another religious order. She claimed to have been caught up to heaven and while there, received a special revelation regarding the keeping of the Sabbath.

Joseph Smith claimed that an angel showed him where to find the Mormon plates which, he said, were hidden in the ground. He said the angel told him that he could read and translate them only by using the spectacles he said he found with the plates. From this claim has come "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," which is unknown to the Holy Scriptures.

The Catholic Church teaches progressive or continuous revelation. To that church the highest voice in the church is not the Word of God, but the Vatican head, the living pope. That church claims that the Catholic Church is the mother of the Bible, that the Bible is the product of the church. And since the church continues, revelation continues. Whatever the pope speaks "from the chair" to Catholics that becomes a new revelation. If the Catholic church were to abandon its human traditions and claims of continued revelation it would cease to exist. It is noteworthy that not one doctrine peculiar to that church can be found in the Bible.

Written Message Final

There has been no divine revelation since the New Testament was revealed and written by the Holy Spirit in the first century. Christians are urged to "earnestly contend for the faith . . . once for all delivered." Jude 3-R.V. "The faith" here means the gospel—the teaching or doctrine of Christ, God's final message to man. "The faith" has been "once for all delivered," and confirmed, Heb. 2 : 1-4, and a curse is pronounced upon anyone who would deliver anything different than that which was delivered to those inspired men of long ago. Gal. 1 : 8-9; 2 Jn. 9. This proves that (1) there is no need of further or continued revelation, and, (2) God has delivered no revelations since the first century when the New Testament was revealed, confirmed and recorded for all time to come.

Let Us Be Satisfied With God's Message

Today we are confronted with the fact that the Bible is covered with the creeds and manuals of men. These contain things not in the Bible. Yet many religious people are willing to accept them without question, even though they often contradict the Bible. Let him who claims to love the "Faith once delivered" demonstrate his love by uncovering the Bible; let him take away the creeds and human doctrines and let people see the "faith once delivered" in all of its purity and power. If we claim to respect, reverence and love the Bible, then let us accept it as God's completed and final revelation, and as our only standard in religion. Let us be satisfied with it and diligently follow its divine guidance.

SOUL WINNING—THE REAL WORK OF THE CHURCH

By Dan Flourney

The greatest need in the church today, or any other day is, that of soul winning. The church needs people who are willing to talk about Christ and his gospel. However, the kind of passion for souls as displayed by the first-century Christians seems to be completely lacking in most congregations today.

The early church was involved in a daily evangelism. They "ceased not" to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. Even when persecution came upon the church, "they therefore that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

Somehow, we have misplaced our values. It seems that many are more interested in impressing people than implanting principles. Some, it seems, are afraid offending folks with plain talk about the commands of the gospel. We must, however, get our values in proper perspective. Nothing is more valuable than a soul. Our personal popularity is worthless compared to the soul of a friend or relative. Jesus was not running in a popularity contest and neither must we!

The mission of the Master is the mission of the church. Jesus said, "for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Soul-winning is therefore the real work of the church. The various acts of worship such as singing and praying are important, but the real work of the church is not passing the communion trays or ushering. These things are helpful and necessary, but the work of the church is to seek the lost!

There is no such thing as a congregation where there is no work for anyone. There is something for every member of the body to do . . . each one can win one. This does not mean every member must teach a "cottage class." One can tell the story of Jesus on the job, at coffee break, at play, over the back-yard fence, or in the privacy of the home. There are opportunities every day to

influence someone for good and to direct one's thinking toward God and his word. Our problem, often times, is that we do not see and seize our opportunities.

We need to "think souls" as we go about the business of life. It would help us if we would think about people as souls that need to be saved. How can we win people to Christ? This question should always be upon our heart.

May we overcome fear and discouragement through constant prayer and persistent effort. Realizing the urgency and importance of soul winning, let us not hesitate to speak to others concerning their need of salvation. Soul winning is the real work of the Church.

Wool Blind

Westover Worker

Recently I was visiting with a relative on a ranch. A remark was made that one of the sheep in the pasture would neither come to the sheep pen nor follow the herd. Upon investigation, the sheep was found to be "wool blind." Wool had grown over its eyes until the sheep could no longer see.

The thought came to me that many persons are "wool blind." They let material things blind their eyes to spiritual values . . . the things that really count in life.

This type of blindness comes gradually. The wool that blinded the sheep did not grow overnight. It was a gradual growth. One is not blinded by material things all at once.

Achan was "wool blind." He let the sight of material things blind him to the message of God. Although God had told him not to take any of the spoil, Achan could not resist the temptation. In Josh. 7 : 21, we read . . . "I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent."

The rich man in Luke 16 : 19-23, was "wool blind!" Lazarus was laid at the gate daily, hungry, sick, needy and suffering; but the rich man could not "see" him, yet he himself was faring sumptuously every day.

The rich fool was "wool blind" (Luke 12 : 15-21). His ground brought forth plentifully until his barns could not hold his grain and yet he could not "see" to put God or his needy fellowmen into his plans.

HOW WELL ARE YOU SEEING????

HELL, THE END OF THE WICKED

By John Waddey

A cardinal doctrine of our faith is that a hell of fearful punishment awaits every lost soul in eternity. Modern man fondly hopes that there is no such thing. Satan gladly encourages this vain and foolish dreaming. Even many apostate preachers and denominations boldly deny this divine teaching, i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses and Unitarians. Jesus warned, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25 : 41).

1. Does Hell Really Exist ?

Man is universally conscious of sin. Every tribe has its totem, its altar, its sacrifice. The guilty conscience is experienced by every responsible soul. All sin and know the condemnation of their own heart. (Rom. 3 : 23). The universal cry of every lost person is, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. 7 : 24). The reality of sin cannot be denied. Every marker in the cemetery is a silent witness of it. Every war fought is a demonstration of it. Every crime committed perpetually proclaims it. Every liquor store and beer parlour testifies to the fact of sin.

But there can be no sin without law. The great English doctor of jurisprudence, Blackstone, wrote, "Where there is no law there

can be no wrong, or violation." *Commentary*. Paul said the same : "Where there is no law, neither is there transgression." (Rom. 4 : 15). If there be no law to break then no one can commit sin. But God's law is manifest to all men. (Rom. 2 : 11-16).

Law is of any consequence only when there is a penalty for disobedience. We quote Blackstone again, "Where there is no penalty, the law is null and void." If the state has a law against speeding while driving a car, yet when one is found guilty, no penalty is imposed, then that law becomes null and void. No one will feel obligated to obey it. A law without a penalty attached for violation is inconceivable and absurd.

Now if there is no hell or punishment for wickedness, then there is no law, for "law without penalty is null and void." If there is no law, then there is no sin, for where there is no law there can be no wrong." If there is no sin, then there is no moral or spiritual responsibility incumbent upon man. If there is no moral or spiritual responsibility upon us then why do we find all over the earth churches, courts and prisons? Even Christianity itself is a useless joke if there is no punishment for disobedience. To deny hell is ridiculous for to do so is to deny that which is every day demonstrated before our eyes, i.e., sin and law.

Jesus declared the existence of hell : "I will warn you whom ye shall fear : Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell....." (Lk. 12 : 5). Our Lord makes no idle threats. He uses no vain repetitions, yet this theme is mentioned continuously in his teaching.

2. Hell is a Future Punishment.

Some claim that the pangs of a *guilty conscience* constitute all the hell there is. A little thought will show the folly of this assertion. It is well known that the more one commits sin the easier it is to do so. The conscience grows calloused with repeated sin. (I Tim. 4 : 2). If this theory were true then the worse a man is the less hell he will suffer. On the contrary, the more devout a person is the more sensitive will be his conscience about sin. Per this theory, the more

spiritual a man becomes the more desirous he is of pleasing God, the more hell he will experience. To escape hell, one would simply harden his heart and plunge into unrestrained sin. The theory is absurd. Believe it; who will?

If conscience is our hell, it would also be our heaven! As a rule, however, all those who deny hell want to cling to a literal heaven. The same verse proclaims the reality of both heaven and hell. (Matt. 25 : 45).

Others claim that we get our *hell here on earth* through pain, suffering and misfortune. But often the wicked prosper in this life while the righteous suffer. The psalmist was envious when he saw the "prosperity of the wicked." He wondered if it really paid for him to be righteous because of the apparent inequities of his life. (Ps. 73 : 3-5, 12-14). Consider righteous Job and his suffering. Absolute justice is rarely seen here on earth. There must be a future judgment to right these wrongs. Martyrs for Christ are seen reigning in glory. (Rev. 24 : 4a, 6). The wicked who escaped justice in this life will pay their price in hell. (Is. 14 : 9-11). If this foolish theory were true then the godly mother who because of her saintly life deserves heaven, receives hell on earth because of the thoughtless follies of her wicked son. Our lives are so interwoven here on earth that it would be impossible for a wicked husband to suffer hell while his wife enjoyed heaven in the same house. To properly be rewarded and punished they must be separated so far that one can have no influence on the other.

The truth is, hell will be experienced only after Jesus raises the dead and judges them. (Rev. 20 : 11-15).

3. What Is Hell Like ?

The Lord used numerous comparisons to teach us the reality and nature of hell. Hell is like the valley Hinnom or Gehenna. (Matt. 5 : 22). This was the refuse dump of Jerusalem. It was no modern sanitary landfill. Sewage, carcasses of dead animals, even the bodies of executed criminals, were cast there and left to decay. Perpetual fires smoldered throughout the valley. Hell is like that.

Hell is like a lake of fire and brimstone into which sinners will be cast. (Rev. 20 : 10).

It is like unto a bottomless pit such as we often dream of in our nightmares. (Rev. 20 : 3).

It is like an oriental death house with weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. 8 : 12).

Hell is like outer darkness. (Matt. 8 : 12). Seldom do we experience outer darkness but the horrors of hell will be like that. Such conveys an idea of lostness and hopelessness.

Hell is a place of immeasurable loss. Those who end up in hell will have lost all the pleasures of this life. All things they were fond of will be lost. Their place with Abraham and the righteous in Paradise will be forfeited. (Lk. 16 : 19ff). They will lose heaven and the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son. (Rev. 22 : 14-15). All hope will be lost, even the hope of dying. In hell "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mk. 9 : 47). The smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night....." (Rev. 14 : 11). There is no annihilation of the wicked as so many fondly wish.

Hell is a place of repulsive, horrible people. Look around you at the most abandoned wretches on earth.....they will be there. Here there is hope for any person. There is a little good in the worst of men. There they will be completely abandoned in their wickedness and you in their midst. There will be no more restraints upon them for God will have given them up forever.

It will be a place of painful remorse. Sorrow, shame and self-condemnation will be in every heart. The hopelessness and despair will be overwhelming.

The duration of hell will be eternal. "And these shall go away into eternal punishment." (Matt. 25 : 46). Every link of the chains of hell will be stamped "forever." Hell is no reform school from which you will graduate. Purgatory is but a wistful dream. Hell is not a preparation for heaven. No missionaries will ever be sent there.

We leave this dreadful scene with good news. No man or woman has to go to hell. You may choose heaven if you so desire.

The cross of Christ stands as a flaming beacon squarely in the path of every hell-bound soul. Every sinner who goes to hell must walk over the crucified body of Jesus and trample the blood of the covenant under foot.

Only the tender mercy of God has spared us thus far from the hell we justly deserve. Will you not turn away from that dreadful cliff on whose edge you have stood so long and with a thankful heart accept the salvation he so graciously offers?

Don't Over React

By Joe Goodspeed

A Naples business man was telling me something interesting about his wife. As she was driving home one day she was abruptly hit from behind. The first thing she knew a blue pick-up tore out around her on the right. Not to be out done she tore out after him. She raced to keep up with him and finally ran him down at a curb store.

"You should be ashamed," she said.

"But, lady....." he said, trying to explain.

"There's no excuse," she said. "It's people like you who are tearing up the whole country. You, mister, are bad, bad news for all of us..."

"But, lady, listen..., he said trying to keep his voice down.

"You're the one who should listen, and if you had listened to your mother and dad, and your teachers who were trying to raise you right, you'd drive safely, and if you should accidentally hit someone, you'd never, ever think of leaving the scene of the accident and trying a cheap, cowardly escape."

"But, lady, that's what I've been trying to tell you," he said. "I was on your right—not behind you. You were hit by a red

Chevrolet, and the last time I saw the guy he was getting out of his car. If you hurry back may be the police won't give you a ticket for leaving the scene of the accident."

Then the narrator went on to tell about her getting back just in time to explain to the police, who by that time had arrived, her funny, yet understandable story of jumping to a hasty conclusion.

Though most of us may not have had such a humorous and dramatic personal object lesson, we have been guilty, all of us, of making snap judgments—being down on what we're not up on—making a 95% judgment on 5% of the facts.

When Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged," He meant for us, in matters where judgment is involved, to look out and be careful.

IS NOTHING PERMANENT ?

By John Gipson

Mohammed Ali is not the same fighter he was a few years ago. He may fight again, but he cannot recall the strength and reflexes of ten years ago. Time takes its toll.

In visiting such places as Corinth, Ephesus and Athens, you can still detect some of the glory which once belonged to these cities, but the splendor has faded.

Nothing remains the same. Trees grow old and die. The best of athletes eventually become infirm or die. The surgeon's hand loses its prowess; the preacher loses his dynamic appeal; and the housewife becomes unable to keep her house the way she once did. All things perish. "Change and decay, in all around I see." Nothing is permanent.

A member of his congregation once came to see the famous Andrew Bonar. This lovely lady was bereaved of all she held dear, and she was seeking solace from her preacher. He spoke words of comfort and offered prayer for her peace. But nothing

seemed to help. Her eyes were still filled with tears, her face was etched with suffering and pain, and her hands were listless in her lap. Amid this turmoil she lifted her eyes and caught a glimpse of something above the mantel. Turning to Dr. Bonar she said, "You need not say any more! I have got it!" "What have you got?" asked he. "There it is up there," she said. He turned to look and saw above the mantel-piece the motto, "Thou Remainest." One of these days things are going to come crashing down around your head. It may be the loss of your job; the breaking up of your family; the loss of your health; or the agony of seeing your life's savings vanish. When that hour comes I hope there is one thing you can remember when all else is gone—He remainest.

FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER

By Dick Cupp

The master carpenter, with a feeling of deep satisfaction, gazed at his completed work. It was a beautiful chest, with every piece exactly the right size and perfectly joined together. He tried the drawers; they opened effortlessly and closed precisely. It was a job well done.

Paul describes the Lord's church in such terms. In Ephesians 2:19-22 he talks of the church as a building carefully and lovingly put together by God, the Master Craftsman.

Paul, speaking to the Gentile church, reminds them that they weren't always in the family of God. They had been strangers and foreigners (from God and the church), but now were fellow-citizens with the saints, and "of the household of God." The Gentiles and the Jews, who for centuries had been separated and alienated from each other, had now been brought together in one body—the church.

Just as a building has a foundation and a cornerstone, so also does the church. The foundation, Paul says, is the apostles and prophets. The chief cornerstone is Christ himself.

What Christ had to work with as he built his church was "living stones" (1 Peter 2 : 5). People, Jews and Gentiles. Men and women. All races and nationalities. What a tremendous task before him—to take all this rough, raw material, so different in nature and background, and mold it into the most beautiful building ever constructed—the church of our Lord.

But Christ was up to the task. In verses 21 and 22, Paul says "In whom (Christ) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord : in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

THE CHURCH MOVES OUT

By Ken Samuel

Jesus had said to his apostles, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1 : 8). The church began in Jerusalem, spread throughout the immediate province of Judea, and in this chapter we shall see the gospel expand into Samaria. The principal character in this operation for God is Philip, the evangelist.

The day Stephen was martyred, Jewish opposition began to take a strong offensive against the church. The leadership in the persecution swung from the Sadducees to the more militant Pharisees. Saul (later to be converted and known as the apostle Paul) was a Pharisee and a ringleader in this persecution (Acts 8 : 3; 23 : 6).

Under the fire of this strong persecution, the church, except for the apostles, evacuated the city of Jerusalem and scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Notice however, how God works good out of evil. The Scripture says, "Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever, they went" (v. 4). Since the apostles remained in Jerusalem they could encourage the Christians Saul had dragged off to prison.

Philip, mentioned in the text, is not the apostle Philip since they all remained in Jerusalem, but is one of the seven mentioned in Acts 6 : 5. In Acts 21 : 8 he is called an evangelist. He was not only an effective evangelist but could also perform miraculous signs. Obviously, this was made possible by the fact that the apostles had earlier laid their hands upon Philip and the six other men selected to serve the church (Acts 6 : 5-6), thus empowering him to perform these signs.

One of the individuals most interested in Philip's signs and preaching was a man named Simon who had practiced sorcery in that city for some time amazing the people. He had even convinced them that he was some "divine power known as the Great Power" (v. 10). The obvious purpose of Philip's miraculous powers was but an illustration of what the writer Mark stated, "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it" (Mark 16 : 20).

The remainder of the text is a passage which serves as a "key" to a proper understanding of many other New Testament passages, and I encourage you to study it closely. Let's notice four obvious facts : (1) The Samaritans, believing and being baptized, were pardoned of sins and had received the "gift of the Spirit" according to the promise of Mark 16 : 16 and Acts 2 : 38. (2) After their conversion became known in Jerusalem the apostles there sent Peter and John to Samaria. (3) Previous to the arrival of Peter and John, the Holy Spirit had manifested none of His miraculous powers upon any of the Samaritan converts. (4) After the imposition of apostolic hands, the Spirit did come upon them, however, in an observable way, for "Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands" (v. 18).

From the above facts we can conclude : (1) Whatever purposes the apostles had for their Samaritan journey, the chief purpose was to impart the Holy Spirit. What they did when they arrived would explain why they were sent. If Philip could have imparted the Holy Spirit with its miraculous manifestations, then their trip was needless. Hence, this is evidence that only apostles could do

this. (2) The Samaritans obviously enjoyed remission of sins and the "gift of the Holy Spirit" promised to baptized believers in Acts 2: 38, but, this miraculous power gift had no connection with these blessings. (3) The statement, "The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (v. 16), shows that there was and is no connection between baptism and miraculous gifts.

Why, then, was the Spirit imparted? It was imparted to assist in edifying an infant church in an age prior to the full revelation of the Gospel. Two events conspicuously coincide in history: the death of the last apostle, and the completion of the New Testament books.

This section includes Simon's wicked offer, which should serve to teach us that holy company and religious activities do not exclude nor isolate us from temptation and sin. Also, the passage shows us what might be styled, "God's Second Law of Pardon." Simon, who had earlier been baptized for the remission of his sins, now needed spiritual cleansing again. Peter said, "Your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin" (vs. 21-23). Thus, when a Christian sins he is to repent and pray for his forgiveness. It is also proper to ask others to pray for us as Simon asked of Peter.

The text concludes, "When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages" (v. 25). It is interesting to compare the attitude of Peter and John in this passage with John's earlier attitude toward the Samaritans recorded in Luke 9: 51-55 when he wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy them. Yes, the Gospel has a wonderful power to change men. May you allow it to work the necessary changes in your life.

THE MAN OF SORROWS

By David Ferneyhough

The world in every age has had many sorrowful men, but there has been only one "Man of Sorrows, Jesus of Nazareth." The prophet Isaiah has written, "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53 : 3). And again the prophet said, "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53 : 6).

Certainly there have been many men throughout history who reduced themselves to poverty and even shame for one cause or another, but no one ever had so much to give up as Christ did when he tempted himself and took upon him the form of a servant.....becoming obedient unto death" (Phil. 2 : 7-8). Christ was rich but for our sakes he became poor that we might become rich.

During his earthly visit Christ truly became as one of us, son of men, though he ceased not to be truly the divine Son of God. His whole humiliation from the incarnation to the cross was one of complete voluntary act : "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (John 10 : 17-18).

While in the flesh he truly was the Man of Sorrows. The opposition and contradictions that he met in his own people, the Jews, surely bore heavily upon his heart. Even as it is written, "He came to his own and they that were his own received him not" (John 1 : 11). His very nature as holy and divine made him compassionate toward sinners and sorrowful when they rejected him.

What will you do with this "Man of Sorrows" ? To accept him means life, and to reject him means death. "Today is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6 : 3).

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE

By J.J. Turner

Why study the Bible? This is a very good question, and one that is asked very often. Some have the mistaken idea that since they have obeyed the gospel, there is no need to do any more studying in the Bible. "After all," they say, "I have done the important part." The important part does not end here.

We should study the Bible not just to win arguments or display our great knowledge of the Bible, as some do. But, rather, we should study the Bible for the great spiritual benefits that are to be derived from such studies. We should study the Bible because it is interesting, unique, and without equal in the literary field. But above all, we should study the Bible because of the value it has upon the souls of men; more especially, the value it has on MY soul. A few reasons for studying the Bible are as follows:

1. We must study God's Word because a lack of knowledge leads to destruction (Hosea 4 : 6).
2. We must study God's Word because an error will condemn (II. These. 1 : 7-9).
3. We must study God's Word because it will make us wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3 : 15).
4. We must study God's Word because we are commanded to do so (II Timothy 2 : 15).
5. We must study God's Word because it is the "seed" of the kingdom (Luke 8 : 11).
6. We must study God's Word because it will assist us in spiritual growth (1 Peter 2 : 1,2).
7. We must study God's Word because it helps us keep our souls saved (James 1 : 21).
8. We must study God's Word because it helps supply virtues to our faith (II Peter 1 : 5-8).

9. We must study the Bible because it was written for our learning (Romans 15 : 4).
10. We must study the Bible because it helps us "be doers of the word" (James 1 : 22).
11. We must study the Bible because man is not able to direct his steps; therefore, the word provides guidance (Psalm 119 : 105; Jeremiah 10 : 23; Matthew 15 : 14).
12. We must study the Bible because it contains God's will for time and eternity (His will for my life) (I Corinthians 15 : 51-54; I Peter 1 : 2-5; Hebrews 5 : 8, 9).
13. We must study the Bible so that we may be able to teach others (Matthew 28 : 19, 20; II Timothy 2 : 2).
14. We must study the Bible because it provides comfort (Romans 15 : 4).
15. We must study the Bible because it is true (John 8 : 32; 17 : 17; Acts 17 : 11).
16. We must study the Bible because in it, we learn about God and His attributes (John 17 : 3).
17. We must study the Bible because Christ set the example (Luke 24 : 27; 24 : 32).
18. We must study the Bible because it is our spiritual diet (Hebrews 5 : 12-14).
19. We must study the Bible because it will keep us from falling (Hebrews 6 : 1-6).
20. Read Psalm 119 to see many other things that the Word is able to do. These serve as additional reasons for studying God's Word.

"Study the Bible to be wise ; believe it to be safe; practice it to be holy."

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Finding yourself

John A. Mays

We are reading today more and more about people trying to find themselves. Millions of people are joining the consciousness revolution. The following are some excerpts from an article in Newsweek Magazine, Sept. 6th. "The goal of the movement is to put seekers progressively in touch with themselves, with others, with nature and...at its most ambitious...with the fundamental forces of the cosmos." "According to one popular handbook on the consciousness movement, there are more than 8,000 ways to awaken in North America. Although techniques vary widely (Page 60), all are directed in some way toward releasing the self from the domination of the ego. Some disciplines focus on liberating emotions in the crucible of encounter groups. Others use deep message or physical exercise to restore awareness to the body. Most employ some form of meditation or breathing exercises as a means of conditioning the autonomic nervous system and expanding consciousness beyond the routine of everyday intellectual experience. "It is a religion without a creed, a catalyst for new life-styles, a tournament of therapies in which powerful gurus joust for converts even as they press forward in their cultic quest for self-transcendence. "To hear many founding gurus tell it, God is nothing more than a wizard of oz who assures us that we already possess within ourselves whatever divinity there may be."

The programmes and training systems designed to "enlighten" people and help them find themselves such as Silva Mind Control, Transcendental Meditation (TM) and Erhard Seminars Training (EST), has boomed into a multi-million dollar business. Most of this is paganism of some form or other. People have become bored with our way of life. They are searching for something to give them peace and happiness and do not know where to look. Solomon the wise man tried every thing he could think of to try to find happiness. He concluded with these remarks. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity." (Eccl. 12:8). "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandment for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

The only way people can truly find themselves is to find God. This is done by looking into the perfect law of liberty, the mirror of the soul, the Bible, which reveals to us both God and man. (James 1:22-25). The Bible reveals to us the God of heaven and earth. It reveals unto us man's condition and that we all need

(Contd on next page)

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salvation from sin. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). The Bible tells us of the loving God of heaven sending his Son Jesus Christ to this earth, and tells us how Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. The Bible reveals what God requires man to do before he will save him from his sins. One must hear the Word of God. (Rom. 10 : 17). He must believe the Word and believe that Jesus is God's Son. (Mk. 16 : 15, 16; John 8 : 24). He must repent of his sins. (Acts 17 : 30; Acts 2 : 31). He must confess Jesus to be the Son of God. (Rom. 10 : 9, 10; Acts 8 : 37). He must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. (Rom. 6 : 3-6; Acts 2 : 38). He must live faithfully until death. (Rev. 2 : 10)

Man finds himself only when he obeys the commands of God. As Solomon said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man." The word duty is in italic showing that it has been placed there by the translators. The meaning of the verse is clearer when the word duty is left out. Keeping the commandments of God is the whole of man. It is what makes man complete. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3 : 16, 17).

If you want to find yourself, study the Word of God and be obedient to it. Paul said, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanks-giving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

TO:

From :

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