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New Translations Of the Scripture

In the last few years a number of new translations of the scripture have made their appearance. What should be our attitude toward these? How should we deal with them? Should we accept them or reject them? Why?

It is wonderful that there is so much interest in the scripture, provided it is sincere and it results in a genuine translation of God's word from Hebrew and Greek to English. If this is not the case, then it can be dangerous. The enemy can use this as a means of attacking God's people and undermining the faith and confidence of the masses in the Bible as being God's word.

Some of the more recent translations have been made by one man. This is usually not good because the one who is translating may allow his own personal opinions and ideas to influence him in his work. For instance, Mr. Kenneth Taylor translated, or more appropriately, paraphrased the scripture and one can very clearly

read in The Living Bible his own personal religious beliefs and practices.

It is far better for several to work together in the translation of God's word so that each one may compare his work with that of others and then agree on what would be the best wording to use. Even here there can be problems as in the case of the New International Bible, Good News for Modern Man, The new English Bible, and others.

Some of these translations teach that Mary was simply a young woman but not necessarily a virgin, that Peter was the rock on which the church would be built (Matthew 16:16-18), that salvation is by faith only (Romans 1:16, 17), to name only a few of the errors.

Not only are these dangers prevalent in English translations but they can be even greater in other language translations. Ofter times there are fewer qualified people in other languages to translate and check the scripture, and sometimes the work is done by some denominational preacher who inserts in it what he believes and preaches. There have even been cases of the translation being made from English to the other language. A translation made from another translation instead of going back to the origina language is dangerous indeed.

No, we are not saying that everyone must learn Hebrew and Greek to be sure that God's word is properly translated from those languages to English or one's own mother tongue, but we are saying that one must be careful that he reads and accepts a translation that is true to the original language.

Through the years the King James Version of 1611 has been generally accepted by most English speaking people as an accurate and reliable translation. The biggest criticism of it has been the fact that with the passing of years some of the English words have changed their meaning. In spite of that, most know the true meanings of these words and therefore no great confusion is caused. Another translation that has met with wide acceptance is

he American Standard Version.

After all is said and done, remember that God has given us is word so that we might know his will. He had the power to ive it and he has the power to preserve it for us. ove not God and his will will stumble on poor translations and he teachings of men, but those who love God and want to know is will can learn it. Paul said that the scriptures have been given by the inspiration of God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter wrote, 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by he will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Again he wrote, "Accordng as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain into life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath alled us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3). We read furthermore, 'But the word of the Lord endureth for ever..." (1 Peter 1:25). Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words hall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35).

We would therefore conclude that we have God's word, and when we read and study it (2 Timothy 2:15), faith develops in our nearts (Romans 10:17), and when we obey it, that truth saves us. James 1:22; Revelation 22:14). At the same time, be not deceived not thinking that every Bible translation represents the pure and inadulterated word of God. If the scriptures have been mis-translated or falsely translated, and one believes and follows error, he will be lost.

How, then, may we know that we have an accurate translation of the scripture? As already suggested, accept that translation, or hose translations, that have been accepted over the years by the najority as being the word of God. Second, beware of translations that contradict the older ones. Third, when a translation clearly contradicts itself, it is obvious that it is not a good translation. Fourth, we have brethren who are learned scholars in these languages, and we can rely on them to warn us against bad translations. And finally, God's word will lead us to believe in Him, to learn of Christ and to acknowledge him as His Son, to accept the death of

Christ, his burial and resurrection, the one church that unites us and the Christian religion that prepares us for heaven.

In conclusion, surely amid all of these translations we can find God's word, believe it and obey it, that we might be saved May God help us to do so.



Why Do We Preach?

We preach God and Christ and the Bible. Cod is the Creato of man and Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of man and the Bible is the Word of God. We want to preach to all the world, to every creature, to every man and woman. We are using the printed page such as this magazine. Bible correspondence courses, tracts and books. We are also using radio, television and other ways and means whenever they are available to preach. W conduct Gospel Meetings, Bible studies, and other services to preach. We believe we are under obligation to preach to all people of all nations. Our message is from God. He has commissioned us to go into all the world to all nations of the world and preach to every human being that God loves all people and that he want to save from sin all people. He wants that his Good News should be preached among all people. Because all have sinned (Roman 3:23), have done and said things contrary to the will of God, sin has separated every man and woman from God. (Isaiah 59:1,2) But God, who loves man, has provided a way to man so that he could be reconciled with God. Hear what the Apostle Paul said "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves ut unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore enceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have nown Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no tore. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Id things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And Il things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, nat God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not nputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us ne word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to e sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the ghteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:14-21). This is ur message.

The Good News of God that we preach consists of the death nd burial and resurrection of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). ect that Jesus died and was buried and rose again is certainly the food News! Jesus Christ, according to the Bible, is the Son of od. He was with God in the beginning. He was the Word, who ecame a man by the power of God to save man through his eath. It is written in the Bible, "In the beginning was the Word, nd the Word was with God, and the Word was God.....And the Vord was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his lory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace nd truth." (John 1:1, 14). Our loving God allowed the Word to ecome flesh, a man, so that through Him we might be saved. low? Through his death. The Bible says, "But God commendeth is love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died or us." (Romans 5:8). And, "In this was manifested the love of fod toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into ne world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not nat we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be ne propitiation for our sins." (1John 4:9, 10). Thus through the eath of His Son Christ, God made the provision for man that rough Christ he might be reconciled to God.

After his death and resurrection Jesus Christ said to his isciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:18-20; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). The Apostles were told not only to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but they were also commanded to teach them, whom the would baptize, to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever Jesus has commanded them to do. This included going into all the world preaching the gospel to every creature, and baptizing the believer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

So what we are preaching is actually the God given massag of salvation. We are not preaching a religion or a church or sect. But we are preaching the Good News of salvation that cam to us from God through Jesus Christ and his Apostles whom h had chosen to be his witnesses after his death and resurrection an ascension into heaven. Some have thought that we are trying t "make" people Christian and members of "our" church. This is not true. The fact is we cannot make any person a Christian People become Christians themselves when they hear the Good News of Christ and believe in him and obey the commands of his Gospel and follow him through his New Testament. We have no church. We are members of the church of Christ. But it is no our church, it belongs to Christ. (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16) Christ himself adds people to his church when they obey his commands. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47).

Mercy In Action

Winfred Clark

If one reads Luke 10:30-37, he will find mercy displayed by a unknown Samaritan on the Jericho road. He did not spend much

time in defining it, but he spent a lot in demonstrating such. Even the lawyer that had tempted the Son of God and had sought to justify himself could attest to that (Luke 10:37). So we get a good look at mercy when we read these verses. Such as is so needed in this old world in our own day.

One May See Mercy Looking. You will see both the priest and Levite looking but they are not the personification of mercy. There was no pity that pierced their hearts. They saw, but they did not see an opportunity to help. They saw something to be shunned, not shouldered. Mercy did not affect what they saw, for it was not in the heart. They did not have sufficient feeling for the fallen. Before we are too critical we need to ask, do we? After all, some around us have been passing the road from one place in life to another and bad health has overtaken them and left them stripped and half dead. These people we have seen but just how have we looked at them? Have we had sufficient feeling to move us to compassion.

The Samaritan saw the same man they did and I don't know that his vision was any better. I do know that he felt for him when he saw his situation. That makes the difference in the way he looked.

One May See Mercy Labouring. The Samaritan went to the man and bound up his wounds (Lk. 10:34). His was more than a look, for it lead to efforts to aid, Mercy would not allow such an one merely to look and pass on. His pity causes him to use what he has to aid the man. He did not sit down and talk of all the things he did not have to work with, but used what he did have.

This Samaritan did not leave the task to others but became personally involved. He assumed personal responsibility. What a difference mercy makes. It does not say, "I will do as much as others," or "I will, if others will." It does, even though it must be alone. It does not wait for the negligent Priest or the calloused Levite to change. It says, "I'll do regardless of others and in spite of others."

One May See Mercy Lifting. After he had poured in oil and wine and bound up the wounds he did not leave the man. Yes,

he has done more than others but the man is still down. What is to be done? He places him on his own beast and brings him to an inn.

We sing the song, "Love Lifted Me," and surely it did. This man could well have said, "Mercy Lifted Me." It was mercy that took him from the side of the road when he had fallen to put him back on his feet again.

How many orphans or destitute children who were down could say the same? Many have been cared for by churches who contributed on a regular basis to provide for their needs. They are placed in a position to live useful lives of love and labour for the Lord because Christians have cared.

One May See Mercy Lasting. It is interesting that the man stays with the man through the night and then on the morrow assumes more responsibility for his welfare. He says to the inn-keeper, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Do you notice that these are the only recorded words of this man. But, oh, what they do tell you of this man's heart! He wasn't ready to rid himself of the responsibility just as soon as he could. He stayed with the job down to the end. He would see it through. He did not have a good start and an incomplete finish. His was a demonstration of mercy lasting.

Now, let us suppose that the Priest and the Levite and Samaritan later met this man. Which one of the three would have more influence over him? Which would he be more apt to listen to? The answer is obvious, isn't it? Don't you think we ought to learn a lesson mercy teaches us?

This May Shock Some Of You

Ancil Jenkins

Are you confused about the end of time? Do you expect

some people some day to disappear suddenly without a trace? Are you anticipating a great world ruler who will provoke war between the nations? Do you believe armies will be destroyed with hundred pound hailstones while fighting with sticks and stones on horse-back?

These and many other ideas have alarmed and confused a great number of people. This has been disturbing to many of them. Some fear, "What if I do not make the rapture?" Certain rulers have been pointed out as the anti-Christ and then have passed from the scene of action. This has caused some to be confused.

These views have also polarized the thinking of many people. They have become the bulk of their preaching and teaching. Every event that happens must be studied in relation to their view of the end of time.

Why have these problems come? These are the results of the teaching of dispensational pre-millennialism. This is basically what has been taught: (1) We were told that God has guaranteed to award Palestine to the Israelite, and that not until then will the kingdom of God be fully set up. (2) Some would have us to believe that Jesus intended to set up his kingdom while he was on earth. The Jews, however, did not allow him to do so. The theory says that he returned to the Father and had the church set up here as a substitute. When the Jews get ready then he will return and establish the kingdom originally purposed. (3) This interpretation teaches that the righteous dead will be raised when Christ returns and that the unrighteous dead will be raised at the end of his reign. There is much confusion as to the number of comings and the number of resurrections among many of these teachers. (4) Premillennialists teach that Christ is not on David's throne of Old Testament prophecy, but that he will occupy that throne when he returns, ruling on that throne in Jerusalem over his earthly kingdom. (5) Dispensational premillennialists teach that after his second coming Christ will with his saints reign over all the earth for one thousand years.

This may shock some of you: the Bible teaches none of these things. These views come as a result of a literal interpretation of some figurative lnguage in the Bible and a misunderstanding of the Old Testament prophecies. This does not mean the Bible is to be taken as wholly figurative or poetical. It does mean there are parts of the Bible that must be understood as figurative.

Some have viewed this only as a harmless interpretation. Why would it cause a break in fellowship or a need for discipline in the church? It is true that one's eternal salvation might not be affected by the belief in these views. However, one who believes these doctrines will find them in conflict with other teachings of the Bible. It is therefore dangerous and must be avoided. What of the results of believing in these views?

These teachings make God false to his promise. John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:1-2: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus himself had preached the same thing (Mark 1:14-15). "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." As the result of the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, multitudes believed the kingdom was at hand. The word "at hand" does not mean thousands of years in the future, but means coming in a very short time. Paul anticipated that his death would come shortly, when he said it was "at hand" (II Timothy 4:7).

Suppose a man hired a number of labourers for the day. He tells them if they will work for him eight hours he will pay them Rs. 100.00 each. At the end of the eight hours they come to him to collect their wages. He then tells them that he will give it to them someday but not right then because he has changed his mind. One would be very upset at such an action. However, this is what some would have us believe. We are told by them God intended to set up his kingdom and then changed his mind and postponed the great reward. If this were true, would it not make us question the integrity of God?

One must be faced with these questions. Did God plan to set

up his kingdom and know the people would reject and still send John the Baptist and Jesus to preach it was "at hand"? If he had planned to set it up and knew that people would reject it, we would question the wisdom of God.

On the other hand, did God plan to set up a kingdom and not know the results of what men would do? If this is the case we would question the power of God. To hold to a view that Christ postponed the establishment of his kingdom is not consistent with what the Bible teaches elsewhere on the nature of God.

To accept this doctrine would mean that Jesus would reign on his footstool. Acts 2:32-35 says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool." Israiah 66:1 states, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" This earthly ball of our habitation has always been viewed as inferior to the great eternal home that Jesus has prepared for us. To bring Jesus back to earth to reign on this planet is to rob him of the honor which he is due. In fact, the Bible nowhere teaches that Jesus will ever set foot on earth again.

The implication of this doctrine is that Jesus is a failure. It makes his mission on earth a failure. Paul wrote in Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." God sent his Son for the purpose of establishing his kingdom. To view his kingdom as an earthly reign is to miss the great teaching of the Bible. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In the next verse he shows us that this church is the kingdom that he had planned to establish on earth.

On the contrary, the church is not the failure of Jesus. Paul

teaches us that the church was in the mind of God from the very beginning before the foundations of the world. His plan was that both Jew and Gentile would be united in his spiritual kingdom, the church. (Ephesians 1:3; 3:10, 21).

Such a belief robs the church of its dignity and power. It becomes an afterthought of God. It is a temporary substitute put in place of the kingdom. Such teaching makes the bride of Christ his second choice.

The Bible teaches of the great importance of the church. The church today is the true "Israel of God". In it are his chosen people. (Galatians 6:16; Romans 2:28, 29). The church is the dwelling place of the saved (Ephesians 5:23. The love of Christ for the church is an example for the husband to love his wife. (Ephesians 5:25). It is in the church that God receives his glory (I Corinthians 10:22, Ephesians 3:10). Can one believe the church is only "The vestibule of the kingdom" and "an afterthought of God" and still hold to these great teachings?

Such teaching denies the Lordship of Christ. The great thrilling statement preached by the apostles is that Jesus is Lord (Acts 10:36). To believe that Jesus was unable to set up the kingdom without the cooperation of the Jews is to deny his power. To say that he is not now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords in heaven is to deny that he is the Lord of all. There is no way one can preach Jesus is the Lord if he is not the Lord of all men and of all things.

What does the Bible teach? What are God's plans for the end of time? This is the chronology as presented by Jesus:

Jesus is coming again. We do not know when since there is no sign given. Matthew 24:36, 37 says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

There will be one general resurrection at the time of his coming. Both righteous and wicked will be raised. John 5:28 29 says, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the 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."

There will be a judgment at which all will appear. (II Corinthians 5:10). "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."

There will be an everlasting reward for the righteous and everlasting punishment for the wicked. (Matthew 25:46): "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Believing that the Bible teaches only one resurrection we must be prepared for it. There will be no further opportunity; there will be no second chance. Let us learn to trust God and his word and not the speculations and theories of men. The key word of the New Testament concerning the last day and the last hour is watch. Are you ready?

Slack Service

Hoyt Bailey

"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord slackly" (Jer. 48:10). The foregoing words refer immediately to the terrible work of destruction. We are fearful of a curse; but if the slaughter were believed to be in accordance with God's will, there could be no excuse for neglecting it. This is a most forcible argument against slack service. If such slackness could appear curse to the lew, how much more guilty is it in the Christian work of love!

One indication of slack service is what we might call negative goodness. Great care to avoid all forms of impurity may be found ogether with a reluctance to make any sacrifice or put forth any exertion. Another indication is conventionalism. A man follows in the rut of his predecessors, evinces no originality, has no device with which to meet an emergency, never inquires into the suitability of his work to its end, never thinks of improving it. A third indication is working at half-power. What service is rendered does not come up to the level of requirement nor to the measure of ability. It is done in a slow, dreamy style. A fourth indication is failure before difficulty. The molehill is magnified into a mountain. The opposition, which is the spur to enthusiasm, puts a complete stop to slack service.

One cause of slack service is worldliness. The clay of selfishness is mingled with the strong metal of devotion. A man would serve God and mammon. He tries to do the work of God with one hand, while he advances his own interest with the other. Such is not acceptable with God. Another cause is unbelief. This paralyzes much of our work - more than we are ready to admit. Under such condition, the God served is a shadowy being, and no wonder the service is faint and feeble. Another cause of slack service is want of devotion. The service of the hands is given without the love of the heart. This mechanical work is a poor, spiritless thing. It is love and love only that can inspire a service of unwearying energy. Another cause is cowardice. There is a fear to do difficult and dangerous work. We pity this for its weakness. We should condemn it as wicked. Should not the servant of Christ be willing to suffer all torments and die for his Lord who suffered and died for him? "Be thou faithful unto death." Another is indolence. Some men are habitually tardy and dilatory. They should learn to resist these tendencies as temptations to fatal unfaithfulness.

Slack service is no slight failure to be gently rebuked. The curse of God lies upon it. "Cursed be he..." It is very wicked. We are God's servants, and bound by ties of nature and of gratitude. Negligence in work may imperil the whole results of it. It the ship is carelessly steered it may be wrecked. It injures the man who works negligently. Our manner of work reacts upon ourselves. Indifferent service produces a low tone of life, coldness, lethargy unspirituality.

Our text calls from the curse of slack service. This curse is a

solemn warning. The evils that necessitate it should terrify us from incurring it. We are called by the obligations of duty. "We are not our own; we are bought with a price." When we do our best we are unprofitable servants. Solemn voices of time and eternity bid us "work while it is day." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." We are called by the need of the world. Our Christian service is no profitless treadmill drudgery. It is for the good of mankind. The call in the text was to execute wrath; ours is to do deeds of mercy. The world in its darkness, its misery, its sin, cries aloud for the Christian mission of consolation and redemption. Can we sleep while such calls pierce our ears? We are called by the constraining love of Christ. He died for us; he only asks that we shall live for him. But the least we can do is to live faithfully, earnestly, and devotedly, serving the Saviour with all earnest zeal. We are also called from slack service by the heavenly reward (Heb. 12:1, 2).

The apostle Peter wrote, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (II Pet. 1:12-15).

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Several examples of Biblical characters have been employed to show how they overcame temptation. Emulation of their sterling example will enable us to do the same. If not, why not??

We can overcome daily temptation if we, like the Sweet

Singer of Israel, will meditate upon the Scriptures and do such daily. The beautiful book of Psalms is prefaced with an eloquent appeal to what we should not be and then with an ardent appeal to what we should be. The Bible says in Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scorn-But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The man who meditates daily on the Scriptures has the finest weapon ever devised to meet and conquer his daily temptations. A later Psalm contains the beautiful statement, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). It is the man who never meditates or hides Sacred Scripture in his heart that is in real danger of succumbing to the temptations that are his day by day. The man who meditates on God's word daily and carefully hides what he studies in his heart is in position to know the nature of sin. He is in position to know what the guilt of sin means to his soul and to his eternal interests in the sweet by and by. He is constantly under God's power. He can be like the man who was a great admirer of the Bible and paid this unsolicited tribute to the Grand Ole Book: "Every hour I spend with you either kills a vice or lets in a virtue to fight it." Reader friends, that is the very heart-beat of the successful combating of temptation in our daily lives.

We can overcome daily temptation if we, like Daniel, will determine to avoid the things that are designed to defile and wreck us. The Bible says this about the youthful and determined Daniel shortly after he was taken into the land of Babylonian captivity: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). Daniel formed this resolution while he was but a young man. We need desperately an entire crop of courageous young men and women who will form the same noble and courageous resolution relative to the imbibing of alcoholic beverages and to the participation in the wicked world of

drug addiction. The person who stays completely away from alcoholic beverages will never become an abject slave to alcohol. The person who never goes after the first fix will not be tomorrow's drug addict with a wrecked mind and a warped soul on its way to a devil's hell. Daniel witnessed in the king's wine and in his dainties harmful ingredients to his better interests. In view of such he said a loud and decisive NO to participation therein. The Lord blessed him richly for so doing as the sequel of Daniel fully relates.

We can overcome daily temptations if we, like the Lord Jesus Christ, will faithfully rely upon God's word in the hour of temptation. Just subsequent to his baptism in the waters of the Jordan the Bible says in Matthew 4, in Luke 4 and in Mark 1 that Jesus was tempted by Satan. Matthew and Luke detail these temptations. Matthew 4 opens with the inspired observation: "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:1-4). How did Jesus go about meeting the devil with this power-packed temptation? He did not perform a miracle. He depended upon the word of God. Again "the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And said unto him. If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:5-7). How did Jesus go about the successful meeting of this power-packed temptation by the determined tempter? Again he relied totally and submissively upon the power that resides in the word of God. Again he performed no miracle. He depended upon something to rout the devil that is open and available for you and me. Matthew continues by saying, "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And

saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt. 4:8-11). How did Jesus go about the meeting of this temptation-the ace that Satan saved till the very last? Again he employed the word of God Almighty. Again he did not perform a miracle. popular singer and actor of our country, Pat Boone, has written a book entitled. A Miracle A Day Keeps The Devil Away. There is a vast difference between how Jesus chose to meet temptation and to defeat it and how Mr. Boone has chosen to do it. Jesus had power to perform miracles and chose not to do it in the meeting of temptations. The current singer and actor does not have any miraculous powers at his disposal, though he had laid claim to such, and yet contends that this is the very way to meet and defeat temptations to sin. Such shows a naiveness toward miracles and their purpose and toward temptations and how to meet them properly. Jesus successfully met and overcame temptations because he knew God's word, he trusted God's word and he fully depended upon it to see him through. And it did!! In the heat of temptation use the Bible to meet and defeat the devil. God's word is the one thing that will send him reeling in abject defeat every time. Even if you and I had miraculous powers, and we DEFINITELY DO NOT POSSESS SUCH, we would still need to meet temptation by resorting to the word of God and remaining faithful to the same.

We can overcome temptation if we, like Paul, will maintain proper control over our body at all times. He wrote, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." We can overcome daily temptation if we, like Paul, will dedicate our lives wholly to the Lord. The Bible says of Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." To the Philippians Paul penned the sobering and soul-guarding sentiments, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain...But what things were gain to me, those I counted

loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death...I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 1:21; 3:7-10; 4:13). Such is a tried and tested way to overcome temptation.

Should We Please God Or Men?

John M. Grubb

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10).

Should we please God or men? That question has been asked and answered by many in the history of man. Joshua challenged in the long ago: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Peter and John said to the Jewish council, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19). The Bible is full of passages that reflect this teaching. (Acts 5:29; I Thessalonians 2:4, 15, 16; II Timothy 4:2-4; Ezekiel 2:6-8; 3:4-11, 17-21).

How do these passages apply in the lives of elders, deacons, preachers, and members?

The work of an elder is a difficult job. It is a job filled with responsibility. (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28-32; I Peter 5:1-3; II Thessalonians 3:6-15: I Timothy 5:17-20). There are times in the work of an elder that decisions must be made that will please God but displease some members. Even though it is difficult sometimes, the elders have no choice but to do that which pleases God. Some circumstances where decisions of this nature would occur are in the areas of church discipline, hiring and firing preachers, spending the money, dealing with false teaching, etc. When an elder pleases God, he will please the spiritual members in the congregation. (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13).

The deacon's job is also filled with responsibility. He is to be a "proven" man, faithful in all things (I Timothy 3:10, 11). A deacon who is more interested in pleasing men rather than God, will not do the work he has to do.

A preacher who is interested in pleasing men rather than God, will do irreparable harm to the cause of Christ. The Bible is full of passages that instruct the preacher to please God and not men. One of the main problems in the Lord's church today is the "ear scratching" being done by preachers. Some brethren complain when their toes are stepped on. If a gospel preacher steps on your toes he has missed the mark, because he was aiming for your heart. Charles Hodge wrote, "A preacher works for Christ, not the Congregation; he preaches to, not for brethren. He works for God with brethern...He 'scratches where brethren don't itch.' I Corinthians 4:2 is comforting—preachers are not asked to be successful—only faithfull.

All Christians must decide to please God or men in every area of the Christian life (Matthew 6:24). As Christians grow they will find the strength to make the right choice (I Peter 2:2 Philippians 1:9). We realize Christians who choose to please men have been around since the first century (I Corinthians 3:1-3 Hebrews 5:12-14).

Should we please God or men? Let each of us answer with

Joshua: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14, 15).

Authoritative, But Not Authoritative

Bob Duncan

According to Webster's New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary, the word authoritative means "having due authority; official." This is the first definition. But it also means, according to the second definition, "asserting authority; fond of giving orders; dictatorial." By divine injection, elders in the Lord's church are of necessity authoritative, i.e., they have due authority; but they are not to be authoritative, i.e., they are not to be fond of giving orders.

In recent years some have tried to strip from the eldership the authority which God has given it to oversee the affairs of the congregation. They have taken the position that an eldership has no authority except the authority of a good example. They have said that elders rule by example only. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage," in I Peter 5:3 has been misconstrued to mean that an eldership has no authority to make any decision affecting the congregation, and to expect the congregation to abide by that decision.

It is true that elders must set proper examples (I Peter 5:3), but this does not prove they have no authority to govern the congregation under Christ. The fact they are not to be "lords over God's heritage" does not mean they can have no authority over the congregation. Jesus taught the apostles that they were not to exercise lordship (Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25). Does that mean the apostles had no authority? Certainly not! Neither are elders without authority just because they are forbidden to exercise "lordship."

But it will have to be admitted that those who have taken this

false position with reference to the eldership probably did so in many cases in an over reaction against an authoritative ("fond of giving orders") elder or eldership. God never intended it, but unfortunately some become elders who are not the kind of men they should be, but who are dictatorial, domineering, and arrogant. Having been lifted up with pride, they have fallen into the condemnation of the devil (I Timothy 3:6). One so imperious and overbearing cannot reasonably expect a congregation of God's people to respect him as a leader. Such a disposition on the part of elders actually invites rebellion.

In I Peter 5:1-4 elders are cast in the role of shepherds, and they are compared to Christ, who is our chief Shepherd. Men who serve as overseers of God's flock would do well to study carefully the example set by Christ.

Shepherds of the flock of God should imitate the compassion of the chief Shepherd. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15) shows how the shepherd looks over the flock and, seeing that one is missing, arises immediately to go out and search until he has found it. He cannot rest knowing one sheep which is lost might be rescued through his efforts. And he knows when one is missing. The shepherd of John 10:13 "calleth his own sheep by name." Perhaps it is in this very area more than in any other where the elder fails or succeeds—knowing and caring about every sheep in the flock. Those who are cold and callous towards those who stray from the flock can never be the kind of elders God wants.

In John 10 the shepherd is pictured as speaking to the sheep, who hear his voice and follow him. Verse 5 says, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The shepherd does not drive his sleep; he walks with them, leading them. Oh, there is another way all right; but elders are not pictured as sheep dogs, but as shepherds. (Some seem to think they are sheep dogs). As a rule the elder who tries to drive the flock does so because he simply has not the ability to lead them. It is unfortunate when a man is selected to the eldership whose insensitive, unfeeling, hardened disposition makes it virtually impossible for him to lead

the average member of the congregation to the water cooler, even if his life depended upon it.

Dedicated Christians should be much in prayer for elderships, and all elders should pray diligently for the wisdom to exercise their God given authority in the best interest of the flock, for whose benefit they have been chosen.

"Why Do I Have To Attend Every Service?"

Doug Milligan

Every Gospel preacher has suffered through this question at some time or another. The implications of such an inquiry are disheartening at the least and devastating at the most. Yes, if it is an honest question, it deserves an honest answer.

Beloved, why does one "have" to attend every service? The Bible says "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). This simple phrase constitutes an inspired command to attend the assemblies of the saints. Failure to obey a command of God is to risk one's eternal life. It is to sin. Let it then first be suggested that a reason to attend worship might be to avoid disobeying God. In other words, we worship because God has injoined it upon us.

This, however, does not fully answer the question of why one should attend, for it fails to answer why God commanded the practice. John informs us in I John 5:3 that "his commandments are not grievous." Paul contends that the sacrifice that God demands of us is our "reasonable service" (Romans 21:1). God's commands are not unreasonable, they are not grievous. On the contrary, God's commands are a blessing to us. His commands

are given to us through his infinite mercy and grace. The Hebrew writer likened the relationship between God and man to the bonds between father and child in Hebrews 12. Thus, just as an earthly father has reasons for his commands to his children, God also has reasons for his commands to his children. What, then, was God's reason for the command to assemble?

Perhaps it was to stimulate the study of his word. Certainly, none among us would deny the importance of Bible study. It is vital to the child of God to partake of the sincere milk of the Word in order to continue to grow spiritually (I Peter 2:2). It can be argued, however, that we can and should study the Bible at home. The Bereans were commended for their daily search of the inspired pages. The Psalmist uttered: "In (God's) Law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). For the child of God, Bible study is a daily practice. It is not and should never be relegated to a few short hours on Sunday. Certainly, when we come together we should strive to learn more of God's will for us; yet this is not the primary reason given in the scriptures for the regular attendance of worship services.

When we come together, we are to "worship and serve the Creator, who is blessed forever." This worship is to be carried out "decently and in order." God is to be worshipped in "Spirit and in truth." We are to give praise to our God and our Father in heaven. In this we hit upon a point that begins to unfold God's plans and his desires as respects the reasons for church attendance.

It is obvious that our Father both desires and deserves our praise and our homage to him. The wise man said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12: 13). To praise and serve God is the reason for our existence. Furthermore, it is at least a part of the reason for attending each worship service.

The question now arises, why just "a part" of the reason, why not the entire reason? The answer lies in a careful reconsideration of Hebrews 10:24, 25 as well as related passages. Verse 24 says

we are to "provoke one another unto love and good works". The context of the passage, in light of what verse 25 says, implies that this takes place in the assembly. Verse 25 admonishes us, rather than being absent from the assembly, to be present that we might "exhort one another". Thus another part of the reason for the command to worship, is that we might exhort one another, and strengthen each other in the faith. This fact can further be seen in Colossians 3:16 where the writer commands, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord". In this passage we are exhorted to allow the very songs that we sing to serve to edify and uplift one another.

The culmination of the matter comes in an understanding of what the worship assembly is all about. This is probably best described in I John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin". Worship is a three-fold communion. It is the fellowship that we have one with another and with God. It is designed for our mutual edification as well as the worship and praise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the Father and Creator of all things.

Why does one "have" to go to church. The answer is, he doesn't "have" to go to church. But one cannot imagine the love, and the joy and the fellowship that he is forsaking when he fails to attend. Neither can he imagine the hurt that he causes his brethren, who need his consolation and admonition and loving care. Nor can one imagine the heart-rendering pain that is inflicted upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us, even while we were yet at enmity with him. Why must one attend? Because each individual's presence is needed for the strengthening of the body, for the praise and glory of Christ, and for his own spiritual growth and benefit. This, beloved brethren, is why attendance to the assemblies of the saints is commanded.

Know The Truth

Glendon Cantrell

SAVING RELIGION

...As we continue our study regarding that religion which is "Pure and Undefiled before God", let us consider that all important fact which many refuse to accept, NOT ALL RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE SAVED.

One can readily see that throughout history, man has always been a religious being. From the Garden of eden till now, man has manifested an inward need to worship a superior being. However, the fact that men are religious does not mean they are accepted by God. Christ points out in Matt. 15:9, "In VAIN they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men". The word vain in this verse from God's holy writ means that it is folly, to no purpose, empty, or no real value, worthless, or fruitless for men to worship God if they are going to worship according to the doctrines of men rather than according to the doctrine of God. Christ further emphasizes in Matt. 7:21, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven".

The Bible is full of examples which show many religious lives are not accepted by God. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES: (1) Cain in Gen. 4:1-5. (2) Nadab and Abihu in Lev. 10:1-2.

- (3) Heathen nations as they offered worship to their idol gods.
- (4) Israel, God's own chosen people, as they journeyed in the wilderness, 1 Cor. 10:1-10. NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES:
- (1) Matt. 7:21-23 (2) Scribes and Pharisees in Matt. 15:1-9
- (3) Athenians in Acts 17:22-31. (4) Israel in Rom. 10:1-3. (4) Seven churches of Asia in Rev. 2:3. Notice that all the people referred to were religiously minded individuals but they were still lost. This is because being religious is not enough, those who are truely religious must follow the will of God in order to be accepted of the Father. Many religious people are unknown to God, as far as His recognizing them as His children, because they have not

obeyed the Gospel and follow the doctrines of men rather than the doctrine of God.

The Word of God has much to say in regard to false teachers and those who attempt to worship Him in any fashion the human heart so desires. In every case, when men deviate from His will, God condemns them for their actions. Like these in our study, today, we may be religious but religiously lost by not doing God's will. A "pure and undefiled religion" will cause us to do the will of God.

Subtle Shame

Dean Fugett

When the early Christian stood face-to-face with death for the name of his Lord, it wasn't long until no doubt was left as to his allegiance. If he confessed his Lord, he was thrown to the lions. If he denied his faith, he lived—with only his conscience as his tormentor and the words of Christ as his ever present conscience. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). They all knew instantly, with the temptation, whether they were ashamed or proud of their Lord.

Today it is somewhat different. We are often confronted with decisions that will determine whether we stand with Christ or are ashamed of him. In every confrontation lurks the possibility of the subtle shame, the opportunity to be ashamed of Christ and the Christian calling without openly showing shame of Christ. There is a growing tendency to extenuate our circumstances and justify our failure to be positive and definite with our responsibility of allegiance. With the attitude of the world today concerning religion, it is becoming increasingly easy to find an area of gray in every temptation where we can station ourselves without appearing to deny Christ.

What we are apparently becoming more ignorant of each day is that God is not like man and though we may deceive ourselves, "God is not mocked....." The God with whom we have to do is not affected by our extenuation. All things stand open and naked before him. The subtle shame becomes open denial and soul condemning. Beware of the subtle shame! More and more are falling prey to it.

Walking Circumspectly

Gene A. Ellmore

"All roads lead to Rome," it was said of old, when she was considered the capital of the world. This led some foolish people to believe that all roads lead to heaven. They imagine they can travel any road they please, hold to any doctrine no matter how extravagant, or set up a gospel of their own, and yet reach heaven at last. They feel they owe no allegiance to any church, including the one purchased by the blood of the lamb, but can walk "at large" religiously.

The foolish man roams the realm of ungodliness. He walks in no prescribed direction, with no particular purpose or objective in view. He takes random strides where fancy caprice and Passion lead. He marches off presumptuously with no guide, no conscience,

and no seeming fear of danger.

Is this walking in wisdom or folly? Do all roads lead to the

home of the soul? (Jn. 14:6).

In a letter written to the Ephesians during the first Roman inprisonment, Paul exhorts the brethren to Unity in Christ. One of the ways specified to effect this unity was to "walk circumspectly." This positive exhortation suggests warning of danger. The phrase imports caution and exactness of the Christian life, resembling a man walking the top ledge of a 90-story building, where one misstep or false step can be fatal. It paints the picture of a man who, in his walk of life, keeps within certain boundary lines—does not pass out of or beyond certain limits, ever watchful and attentive that he may escape the snares and temptations that surround him. He is observed walking carefully, cautiously, diligently, judiciously; impelled by principle rather than feeling. He walks prudently, for providence, beauty, happiness, peace, prosperity, and security's sake. His walk is according to wisdom, that his good be not evil spoken of.

To walk circumspectly is to walk humbly before God, realizing that the way is narrow, and only a few will find it. It is to walk according to a specified rule with no allowance or indulgence to sin, knowing that an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent judge will call us into account. To walk in wisdom is to walk responsibly to obedience as children of the light that leads from earth to haeven.

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