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# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does The Bible Teach?***

**"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son"**

The Scripture cited above is Ezekiel 18:20, and it teaches that each individual person shall be held responsible for his or her own deeds. God's book, the Bible also teaches that it is appointed by God for all humans to die once and then face God in judgment. (Hebrews 9:27). "For God will bring every work into judgment," said the writer of Ecclesiastes 12:14, "including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil." When Paul preached almost 2000 years ago at Mars' Hill, in Athens, Greece, he warned the crowd by saying: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31). He wrote the Corinthians, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what one has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Sin is not something inherited, but it is something which is committed. When a baby is born into the world, he is as pure as

an angel in God's heaven. Little children or babies are not born sinners. They are innocent. Some go to Scriptures like Psalm 51:5 and quote David saying, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceive me." And by this they teach that the Bible says that little children are born with sin, inherited from their parents. Yet, the fact is that David in this verse of the Scripture was talking about his mother and her sin. Notice, he said, he was brought forth in iniquity and in sin his mother had conceived him. He was conceived by his mother, and he was brought forth by his mother. In other words, David was pointing out here that even his mother who had conceived him and had brought forth him was in iniquity and in sin, just as he was when he said this. When did David become a sinner? When he grew up; and became responsible before God for his own action; when he attained the age of accountability in the sight of God; when he was able to choose for himself right or wrong. Let me here state two examples: If I say that I was brought forth by a filthy bus or train. Who was filthy? Me or the bus/train? If a boy says, in drunkenness my father beat me. Who was drunk? The boy or the father? David, when he was conceived and when he was brought forth was not in sin, but his mother was. When or how does one become a sinner? The Bible says: "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death." (James 1:14, 15).

Just as one cannot believe in Christ for another person; or repent of sins for another person, or be baptized for the forgiveness of sins for another person, in the same way one cannot sin for another person. On the day of judgment every person will be judged individually, on the basis of his or her own obedience or disobedience to God's commands. The soul who sins will die.

## ***What Is The Gospel?***

**J.C. CHOATE**

The word "gospel" is defined as "good news" and "glad

tidings." The apostle Paul said, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Romans 10:15).

The good news of Christ is that He loved us so much that He died in our place, for our sins, that He was buried, and that He triumphed over death in His resurrection from the grave. It is because of these facts that we can be saved from our sins and have the hope of eternal life.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, If ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4).

The Bible teaches that we must believe the facts of the gospel but that there are also commands of the gospel which must be obeyed if one expects to be saved. Just before Jesus returned to His Father in heaven (Acts 1:9-11), He instructed the apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Of course they were to preach that Christ had died on the cross, had been buried, and had been resurrected from the grave on the third day as had been prophesied. But they were also told to preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

Paul was inspired to write to the church at Thessalonica, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Peter wrote, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

To help us better understand how we can obey the gospel, keep in mind that the gospel—the good news—itself is the death,

burial, and resurrection of our Lord. Then, as we obey the commands of the gospel, first believing in God and in Christ as the Son of God, turning away from a life of sin, confessing our faith in Jesus, finally we come to the point of being buried by baptism in water as He was buried in the grave, and being raised to walk in newness of life. Through picturing in our actions a form of what Jesus did for us, through obeying what He has asked us to do, the Lord saves us from our sins and adds us to His church (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:47).

Concerning this obedience, Paul said, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17,18). That is, just as Christ died for our sins, we die to sin; as Christ was buried in the grave, we are buried in the waters of baptism; as He was resurrected from the tomb, we are resurrected from the watery grave of baptism to live a new life. That is the significance of the gospel and of obeying the "form" of it.

God saves all those who obey the gospel from the heart, as is explained in detail in the second chapter of Acts, where the gospel was preached for the first time and people were able to obey it.

Have you obeyed the gospel? You must do this if you want to be forgiven of your sins, so that you may enter Christ and His church, which is His Family, composed of the saved people.

*Especially For Women*

## ***Growing, and Learning What it Means to be a Christian***

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

With Timothy asleep in her arms, Rachel went to visit Elizabeth. Over a cup of hot tea, Elizabeth said, "The meeting at your house Sunday was very different. It made me think about

many things. I want to ask our pastor about our church—when it began, and the doctrine of how we are saved. I remember only that he says we must have faith in God.”

“It will be good to ask him,” Rachel agreed. “Actually, we know nothing of how the many churches began. Andrew and I have been so surprised to read of only one in the Scriptures. We’ve known of all of these different ones all of our lives, so it never occurred to us that Jesus began only one kingdom or church.”

“You’re right,” Elizabeth answered. “If the Bible talks about only one church, then there should be only one. That makes sense to me, even as little as I know about the Bible. But surely our pastor knows something we don’t know, something that will explain how all the churches started.”

“Maybe so,” Rachel agreed. “And if he does we want to learn it too because, above everything, **we want to know the truth.**”

“Rachel, when Andrew explained that Jesus wanted the church to remember Him in the Supper, as he read the Scriptures and explained how we are to think of the sacrifice of Jesus’ body, and that our sins are washed away in His blood, it made all of that meaningful to me, as it had not been before. Once or twice I’ve been to a meeting in my church when they had the supper, but I didn’t understand much about it.”

“Evidently the Supper was very important to early Christians,” Rachel said. “Here in Acts 20:7 it says that the reason the disciples met together was to break bread.”

“When Andrew read that Scripture that warns about looking into our own hearts to be sure we are able to eat the Supper, and then he asked us to sit quietly and pray those few minutes, I knew I couldn’t take the bread and the juice. My heart kept saying, ‘But you have never done what God asked, in order to be a part of His family.’”

Rachel reached out and covered Elizabeth’s hand with her own. “But, Elizabeth,” she consoled, “you need only to study more so that you can understand what God would have you to do. You know Andrew and I will be happy to study along with you.”

“I wish James had Andrew’s interest in family and spiritual things. I’m not sure he even believes in God. He never joined

any church. He thinks that most religious people are hypocrites."

"Well, naturally, anybody can be hypocritical," Rachel admitted, "but that doesn't mean that the Bible itself is wrong, or that the life it teaches us to live is wrong. Already, no longer than Andrew and I have been studying, I can tell that our lives are definitely better. Before, the center of our thinking was our work and the money and the things we wanted to buy. Timothy's birth changed so many things. We decided that, at least for now, I should stay at home and be a mother for him."

"How can you make it financially?" Elizabeth interrupted.

"It won't be easy," admitted Rachel, "but we believe we can manage if I am very careful in the use of things at home—not being at all wasteful. And Andrew will try in every way to be the best worker at his office so he will get regular promotions. We're learning that being a Christian causes us to genuinely do our very best in whatever we are doing. Jesus promised in Matthew 6:33, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* We are convinced that one way this promise is kept is that as we live the right way, being honest and dependable, and doing our very best, the natural result is that the good things we need will slowly accumulate. And then there is God's promise that He will add His own care and blessings so that the needs will be met."

"But, Rachel, yesterday when we were worshipping, you and Andrew gave money in the collection. Since you aren't working, can you really spare that money for the church?"

"We studied about giving, and we saw in the Old Testament that the Jews gave a tithe of all that they earned—at least 10% besides their free will offerings. At one time the prophet Malachi challenged them with the question and accusation, *'Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, "In what way have we robbed you?" In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into My storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this, 'says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it'* (Malachi 3:8-10).

"Andrew and I talked about their hypocrisy in claiming to be God's people, and yet robbing Him, and we decided that there is

no point in anything we're doing, spiritually, if we don't try to be right in *all* the points. So when Andrew gets his check, we are setting aside 10% for God. After that money is taken out, we have had to make a budget—this much for the house, this for transportation, this for taxes, this for food and clothes, this for unexpected extras. And we hope to save a little. It isn't easy but we believe God will help us as we put Him first."

"That takes a lot of faith," Elizabeth remarked. "But what will you do with that money that will belong to God?"

"In time, surely there will be others in the church. The men, together, will decide how to use it. There may be poor people who need help—and there will even be opportunities to teach the gospel that will cost money. Whatever the need, we know it will be used to help people see God's love."

*To be Continued . . .*

## ***Put On And Put Off***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

When a person believes in Jesus and accept him as his saviour through the obedience of the commands of the gospel, the Bible tells us that he becomes the new creature. Paul Says: "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:17-18). Now when you are a Christian you, must know how to walk and live in this world. We must know that we are different from the world. The Bible says:" See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. (Eph. 5:15).

When you become a follower of Christ, He says: "That you are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before

men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. A Christian is like Salt and light and he or she must know how to behave. We are in the world but not of the world. (Jn. 15:19). A Christian does not love the world. John writes "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever (1 John 2:15-17).

Today what we see in the world, the world is going through some very difficult time, The religion is taken very lightly. Spirituality is no more considered valuable. Sin is tolerated and taken very easy. Morals have no value. The bad things or the ugly things such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality is taken very lightly. Some places, living without marriage is considered a style. Drinking alcohol or wine is not considered as bad habit. Children don't think it is honorable to respect the parents. There is so much disrespect for senior citizen. The Bible condemn all these things. Apostle Paul long back foretold through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that in latter days such things will take place. 2 Timothy beginning from first verse read as Paul says" But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away. (1-5). We are living in the last days, and don't we see these things right around us taking place.

There is a good advise for the children of God. Being a child of God you must set your mind on things above, not on the things on earth. When you obeyed Christ and you were baptised in the watery grave you died to your fold sinful life. (Col. 3:2-3; Romans 6). Therefore the Bible says: "you must put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which once you walked when you lived in them.

He further says that as children of God you must PUT OFF all these things such as, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, out of your mouth, do not lie to, one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have PUT ON the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of HIM who created him. Since you are the children of God you must as elect of God, holy and beloved, PUT ON tender mercies, kindness, humbleness, of mind, meekness, long suffering; bearing with one another, forgiving one another . . . But above all these things PUT ON love, which is the bond of perfection. (Col. 3:5-14) Once again writing to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul writes to them: "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Dear friend where are you today? Have you put off your old sinful life? You can do, it today. If you want to be a new creation in Jesus, then come to him, believe in him, repent of your old sinful life, and be baptised for the forgiveness of your sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). You can begin a new life in Jesus, and I am sure you will not regret and instead you will be glad that you did. How wonderful it would be to become dead to sinful life and alive to live a new life in Christ Jesus. Wouldn't you accept him today.

## ***What Will They Say At Your Funeral?***

**B.J. CLARKE**

If the Lord lingers in returning for his second coming, then all of us will someday die and be put to rest. The vast majority of us will have a traditional funeral with our body prepared for viewing. Friends of the family will come, look upon us, and discuss our lives.

Have you ever stopped to consider what your family and

friends will say about you at this time? Will they smile as they look back upon your obedience to the gospel? Will they speak of your faith, virtue, diligence, knowledge, temperance patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-11)? Will they remember with fondness how you went about doing good (Acts 10:38)? Will they recall the many times that you used your opportunities to do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)? Will they reminisce of how love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith meekness, and temperance blended together to manifest fruit of the Spirit in your life (Gal. 5:22, 23)? Will your wife remember that you loved her as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25)? Will your husband rejoice to recall your love for him? Will your children remember your godly example and spiritual training provided on their behalf (Deut. 6:6ff; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4)? Will your parent have reason to rejoice and be glad at your love and obedience toward them and your heavenly Father (Prov. 23:24,25)?

Someday the silver cord will be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern. Then the human spirit will return to God who gave it and the judge of all the earth will do right (Eccl. 12:6,7; Gen. 18:25). You are presently determining by the way that you live the things that people will say about you when you die. Though Abel is dead he continues to speak by virtue of his righteous life (HEB. 11:4). A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and is better than precious ointment (Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1). Your good name will live on long after you are gone from this life.

I have a friend who is a gospel preacher who related to me some years ago a discussion he had with an alcoholic friend of his. In essence the preacher said, *"Now, Bill, I know that you will want me to preach your funeral someday because you have told me so. Now I want you to write down on this sheet of paper what kind of things you want me to say about you."* The alcoholic fidgeted and fumbled and realized that he hadn't given the preacher much good to say about him because of his manner of life.

When you pass from this life will the man who preaches your funeral have to search long and hard for good and

comforting things to say? Will the friends who came to support your family struggle to remember positive things to say about you? Or will there be an abundance of good things to say because of the abundance of good Christian living you have done? Consider it dear friend—WHAT WILL THEY SAY AT YOUR FUNERAL?

## ***A Hasty Spirit***

**DENNIS GULLEDGE**

How often do we suffer regret for something we said or did because we acted too hastily? We are guilty of it many times.

A hasty spirit is a dangerous thing. Solomon said, "He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (Prov 14:29b). The expression "hasty of spirit" corresponds in Hebrew to, "short of spirit." It means, "One that is easily irritated; and, being in a passion, he is agitated so as to be literally short of breath" (Adam Clarke). It is the opposite of Paul's exhortation that we be "long suffering" and forbearing" (Eph. 4:2).

### **Sometimes we are hasty with our words**

A lesson in life is that the hurt caused by unguarded speech is difficult to correct. Solomon knew the extreme degradation of hasty speech, when he wrote, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs 29:20). Sometimes we speak more from top of our head than we do from the bottom of our heart. Or, it may be that we let slip that which is really in our heart, which ought not to be (Matt. 12:34-37). As long as we are less than careful to guard our heart and let our speech be "always with grace," we will have endless apologies to make though life, or, we will get by with fewer friends. In this connection James says, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. . ." (Jas. 1:19). It would seem that we have been given two ears and one tongue in order that we might be twice as quick to listen as to talk.

### **Sometimes we are hasty in our judgments**

For this reason Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not

judged" (Matt. 7:1). The Lord forbids all unkind criticism resulting from a spirit of fault finding and censorious judgments. We must not judge rashly, nor hastily form conclusions against someone which have no basis in fact. Sometimes we are quick to decide evil against another before we even know the person, or whether there is any reason for such judgment. How much better the words of Paul who said that love "endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:7). J.W. McGarvey said that this means love, "... takes the kindest views of men's actions and circumstances. It sees things in their brightest not their darkest, colors; and, as it consistently can, puts the best construction on conduct. . . ."

It is never wise to be hasty in our temperament, words, deeds or decisions. We will suffer long due to our lack of consideration. Wise counsel is and always has been, "haste makes waste."

## ***Be An Olive Tree***

**NEAL POLLARD**

One's appreciation of the Bible is greatly enhanced by learning the geography or history of the time in which the events recorded took place. For a Bible reader who lives 2,000 years after the days of Christ is a need for extensive education about the region and culture about which he reads. There are even great differences between the lives and times of characters from the Old Testament and those in the New. An example of a "commodity" which had special value to one living in the ancient eastern culture is the olive tree. Even today, the olive tree is important to Near Easterners.

There are occasions (cf. Zechariah 4:2-6; 1 Samuel 10) where the olive tree or its oil is used in connected spiritual things. Usually, however, it is symbolic of the wealth and prosperity it brought those who tended and gleaned the trees. Studying about this tree will leave one with the impression that, if more humans were like them, Christ would have better servants and the world better citizens.

## **Its Oil Is Priceless**

According to one source, the olive tree was "famous for its fruit, oil and wood" and its "oil especially was a staple, being used in diet and shortening" (Lev 2:4-6), in lamps for light (EX 27:20) and in ritual for anointing (Ex 29:7)" (Theological Wordbook of the O.T., 240). It was also used "medicinally and as a perfume (Ps 104:15; Ezk 16:9)" (ibid). Except maybe salt, olive oil was the most indispensable commodity for the common Easterner. It was a staple, and without it, one was highly inconvenienced.

A person should, because of their godly influence, wield an influence like this oil. Jesus calls His disciples to be of value (cf. Matthew 5:14-16) to a world filled with people selling away their souls for the pennies of pleasure and the fool's gold of fortune. The influence of a Christian will make better workers of his coworkers, a better spouse of his or her mate, and better Christians of other saints (cf. 1 Timothy 4:12). Sadly, some children of God are letting their fear of ungodliness, their anxiety over things, and their timidity about the gospel withdraw them from being a priceless part of Christ's kingdom. Truly, some are waving the black banner of defeat. Christians must assert the righteous ways so needed (and missing) from this sinful world (1 John 3:7; John 15:8). Needed are more individual children of God that are five talent Christians (cf Matthew 25:15) who will teach a class, study the Bible with the lost, visit and encourage the sick, the shut-in, and the visiting, and so forth. Such Christians are mightily used by God and sorely missed by man when they leave this earth.

## **Its Roots Are Undemanding**

The Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible says, "Olive trees can stand long periods of drought and can grow in very shallow soil" (Alexander, 220). According to Hastings, the olive tree "loves rich soil, but flourishes without irrigation" (A Dictionary Of The Bible, Vol. 3, 616). That is, they need water but require no extra attention. Irrigation is a time consuming process and one that requires an amount of monitoring. The olive tree is quite self-sustaining, though dependent on God to naturally supply its needs.

Should not all Christians grow to that point? The Hebrews'

writer laments the immature of faith who are infants in the kingdom even after a long period of time (cf. 5:12-13). Some Christians seem to always need constant prodding, urging, admonishing, and encouraging just to keep them semi-involved. How frustrating and counterproductive this is for stronger Christians. Does not maturity in Christ mean drawing spiritual strength from personal daily Bible study, faithful prayer, and increasingly purer living? It is sad to see Christians who have been such for twenty years still struggling over whether or not to attend the assemblies, much less being active in encouraging and evangelizing. Elders pray for more "olive tree" Christians, "low-maintenance" followers of Christ!

### **Its Flowers Are Easily Cast**

The oft-mistaken Eliphaz was right when he alluded to the quick dropping flowers of the olive tree (Job 15:33). Olives are plentiful every other year, and they rest in the alternating years. In the years in which they bear less fruit, their flowers bloom thickly and from early (Keil Delitzsch, Vol. 4, 272). While Eliphaz uses this simile in accusing Job of wickedness and revealed unfruitfulness, there is sometimes great value in quickly letting go of certain things.

The Christian is to shed all worldly activity which violates the will of God. Paul writes, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13:12). The Christian is told to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man . . ." (Ephesians 4:22). There are a host of actions found in Colossians 3:8-9 Christians are told to "put off" so as to "put on the new man" (Colossians 3:10). The book of Hebrews teaches one to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us . . ." (12:1).

Then, the Christian is to quickly cast his cares upon God. Most of the Christians' problems occur when he tries to go it alone without God. If one would learn to turn to God in devotion and praise in joyful times, there would be ample strength to face the famines of life. David challenges, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22). Simply Peter says the faithful child of God is found continually "casting all your cares

upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Additionally, the Christian is to cast down his pride and self-service. Speaking of the spiritual warfare in which God's people are enlisted, Paul outlines the strategy. By inspiration, he writes, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Paul prescribes the throwing down or destruction of the strong holds and imaginations. The first may refer either to the fortresses or the prisons of ungodliness. The second refers to human reasoning and logic. Apparently, the battle Paul speaks of is waged in the heart, for the prisoners needing execution are the thoughts of the individual's heart. Truly, Paul struggled with daily decisions between right and wrong (1 Corinthians 9:27). And he warns against trusting carnal calculations (cf. Colossians 2:18-23; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5,13). Pride chokes needed apologies, prevents repairing an apostate condition, and nourishes strife and division. Therefore, like leaves from an olive tree, pride must so swiftly be cast down from the character of the Christian.

### **Its Leaves Are Filled With Beauty**

This is revealed to the Bible student in Hosea 14:6. Those familiar with the topography of Palestine concur. Here is one writer's description.

The leaves are . . . of the Characteristic dull olive-green at their upper surface, and a frosted silver colour below. This arrangement of colours makes an olive tree at a little distance appear as if covered by a filmy veil of silver gauze, which gives a soft dreamy sheen to the landscape (Hasings, 616). Some (cf. Matthew Henry, A.R. Fausset, C.F. Keil) understand the "beauty" of Hosea 14:6 to be the stability of its ever-green leaves. Regardless of the season, the leaves are green. Thus, the idea is of the beauty of faithfulness. The whole story of Ruth's life demonstrates this principle (cf. Ruth 1:16).

In his carnality, man judges beauty based upon outward appearances. But, this is not true beauty. Gold told Samuel, "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh

on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). What does God find beautiful? According to Psalm 29:2, he finds holiness so! According to Romans 10:15, he calls the feet of preachers beautiful (an illusion to the beauty of the work in which they engage). According to Isaiah 4:2, God apparently alludes to Christ as the beautiful branch.

Concerning the Christians's life, it should be one of spiritual beauty. When a Christian is fruitful (John 15:5), he is beautiful to God. When a Christian bears the marks of Christ (Galatians 6:17), he is beautiful to God. When a Christian turns many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3), he is beautiful to God. One who walks in the light of Christ draws others from darkness (1 Peter 2:9), is recognised by God (1 John 1:7), and guards his own steps (Psalm 119:105). Like the olive trees' leaves, the Christian can, through continual faithfulness, show forth the beauty of Jesus. God's people must be faithful in stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:2), in ministry (1 Timothy 1:12), in trials (Revelation 2:10), yes, in all things (1 Timothy 3:11). When Christians are faithful to Christ, how beautiful that community becomes! The people surrounding Christians begin to witness a better way of life, a better hope, and a better answer.

So many other interesting things characterize the olive tree. "It grows slowly, but lives to an immense age" (Smith's Bible Dictionary, 464), and, as such, illustrates the benefit of steady, active growth in Christ. "It thrives best in warm and sunny situations" (ibid), and the Christian grows best in the light of Christ (John 1:4; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Romans 11:17 and 11:24 teach that there were two common types of olive trees, one being wild and the other the finer, garden variety. Just so, there are faithful and unfaithful Christians, fruitful and unfruitful ones, and some who are assets and some who are liabilities to the cause of the Lord. Be the faithful, fruitful kind of Christian. Be the kind of olive tree found in Jotham's allegory, one who glorifies God with his abundance (Judges 9:9). In practical worth, be valuable! In personal growth, be viable! In purging sins, be vigilant! In perpetual devotion, be veritable! Be like a tree (cf. Psalm 1:3)!

# *Why Not The Sabbath*

MEL FUTRELL

Some well meaning yet misinformed people have gotten it in their heads that the approved day of worship of God is the seventh day of our week, rather than the first day. This of course, we deny and in this article we appeal to the Scripture for the TRUE facts in answering this sabbath question. Brother Guy N. Woods has written,

"The Word 'sabbath' from the Hebrew 'sabbath,' and the Greek 'sabbaton,' is the transliteration of these words in the Old and New Testaments respectively, and means the seventh day." (The Gospel Advocate, May 11, 1967, p. 298)

This (the sabbath day) is what we are considering in this article. Please give careful attention to the Bible facts below.

## **Fact One**

Our GOD did indeed REST from his labor of creation on the seventh day as recorded in Genesis 2:2-3. But he did not command a sabbath day's rest of man until several thousand years later. (Exodus 20:2, 8-11; Nehemiah 9:13-14)

## **Fact Two**

The 'sabbath' per se is never mentioned before Exodus 16:23.

## **Fact Three**

The sabbath was given at Sinai, not Eden. The covenant that included the ten commandments was not given until after Israel came out of Egypt (Exodus 20:1-2; 34:28). Also, the Bible specifically states that GOD made known his holy sabbath at Mt. Sinai. (Nehemiah 9:13-14). Thus, the ten commandments, one of which was the sabbath observance, were not being observed prior to that time. We do affirm without reservation that GOD did have a law, the patriarchal system, prior to the law given at Sinai. (Hebrews 1:1; Romans 4:15).

## **Fact Four**

The sabbath was not a universal law for all men, but was

given exclusively to the Hebrew nation gathered at Mount Sinai. Moses wrote, "And the Lord said unto Moses, write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." (Exodus 34:27) "The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deuteronomy 5:3). Sabbatarians say GOD made this law with man all the way back at creation, and thus it is binding upon all men for all time. Yet, GOD does not say that in these verses or in any other.

#### **Fact Five**

No where do the Scriptures affirm that the sabbath was a day of worship. Rather it was given to the Hebrew people as a day of rest and remembrance. (Exodus 31:13-17; Deuteronomy 5:15).

#### **Fact Six**

Under the law of Moses one was to be put to death for violating the sabbath (Exodus 31:14-15). Will our Sabbatarian friends begin implementing this Mosaic stipulation?

#### **Fact Seven**

Never do the Scriptures speak of the law having two separate and distinct parts, one ceremonial and the other moral, one the law of Moses and the other the law of GOD, as modern sabbatarians claim. GOD never used these terms (ceremonial and moral) or made this distinction. Please see Nehemiah 8:1,8,18 where the law of Moses and the law of GOD are used interchangeably.

#### **Fact Eight**

In Romans 7:4 the apostle Paul said, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become DEAD TO THE LAW by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto GOD." My question is this, dead to what law? The answer is found in verse seven, the law that said, "Thou shalt not covet." Brethren, this is the tenth of the ten commandments found in Exodus 20:17. I believe the logic of this point is clear.

#### **Fact Nine**

The last mention of the sabbath is in Colossians 2:14-17,

where the Bible specifically states that the law of Moses was nailed to the cross. Thus, the sabbath has come to an end. In fact, in these verses Paul says that one is not to be judged for not observing the sabbath (vs.16).

### **Fact Ten**

The Christians of the first century did not keep the sabbath as a day of worship. What they did do was preach to lost souls on the sabbath and every other day (Acts 5:42) as a missionary effort. The clear pattern from the pages of the New Testament is of Christians assembling on the first day of the week to worship GOD. (Acts 20:7-11; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Those who teach that we should keep the sabbath today are no doubt sincere people, but they are following a covenant that has been replaced (Hebrews 8:7; 10:9). They are thus promoting false doctrine and must be opposed. Let me assure you the sabbath day is not binding upon anyone today. I won't be keeping it. What about you?

## ***Bridle***

**MIKE BENSON**

Recently I had the opportunity to go horseback riding with one of the members of the congregation with which I serve. Never having ridden a horse before, needless to say, I was a bit apprehensive about the experience. "Could I, in fact, CONTROL such a large animal?" As it turns out, my anxiety subsided when I learned one very important truth. Control the horses' mouth and you control the horse.

In James 3 the Bible says, "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (mature) man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body" (James 3:2-3).

What's the point? Simply this. The man who controls his life, has first learned to restrain/control his tongue. Have you learned to bridle your tongue?

# ***The Power Of Darkness***

**GLENN COLLEY**

Did you ever wonder about the Devil? What is he? Where did he originate? How powerful is he?

Hard, cold facts about Satan are really quite few. The Bible does offer a list of different descriptive names for this being, almost as long as your arm: "Accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10), "Adversary" (I Peter 5:8), "Father of lies" (John 8:44), "Angel of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:11), "Enemy" (Matthew 13:39), "Evil Spirit" (I Samuel 16:14), "Lying Spirit" (I Kings 22:22), "Murderer" (John 8:44), "Old Serpent" (Revelation 12:9); "Power of Darkness" (Colossians 1:13), "Prince of this world" (John 12:31), "Tempter" (Matthew 4:3), to name a few.

Here are some things we do know about the Tempter:

1. There can be no question that the devil existed before creation. Just as the Bible simply assumes the existence of God in Genesis 1:1, it also assumes the existence of Satan in Genesis 3:1.

2. God and Satan had conversations. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? (Job 1:7-8) This is difficult to picture. The One who is altogether good is conversing with the One who is altogether bad, but it happened.

3. God has some, if not complete, control over Satan. Do you remember the two times God set boundaries for the "Old Serpent" in the book of Job?

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. so satan went forth from the presence of the Lord." (Job 1:12).

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life." (Job 2:6) God's control is also suggested, I believe, in Matthew 4:1, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the

wilderness . . . TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL." Was the devil accidentally at this place, and at this specific time to tempt Jesus? Certainly one can assume that God had a hand in this.

The question is, "Does God still have control over Satan today?" and if so, "Why doesn't He just bring the devil's work to a screeching halt?" The answer is I Corinthians 10:13:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

The word "suffer" means "to permit." Thus "who will NOT PERMIT you to be tempted above that ye are able." There is God controlling Satan. Just as God has harnessed Satan in the trials of Job, God restricts him in the tempting of us. The second part of this verse says you can always escape sin. You can bear the temptation. How? By studying the will of your Lord and "growing in the grace and knowledge" of Him (2 Peter 3:18).

God permits us to be tempted of the devil for the simple reason that He wants voluntary servants. He wants you to serve Him because you want to, and not because there was nothing else to do.

Take courage, brethren. To us the devil is simply someone to be rejected for One who is worlds better.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

## *The Sin Of Compromise*

JOHNNY RAMSEY

In a famous poem a spider coaxed a fly into its parlor and the end result was one dead fly! Webster defines compromise thusly:

"Consent reached by mutual concession . . . to surrender"

Henry Clay was known as "the great compromiser" in American History. Although he was famous as a Washington legislator no one wanted him for president. Clay never made it to

the presidential mansion because too many citizens were suspect of his convictions under fire. At the famous battle of Waterloo a brilliant statement of courage reminds us of the need for conviction:

"We may die but we do not surrender."

And, we today, in the church of the Lord Jesus, should never compromise or surrender precious landmarks of righteousness. We have too many folk making overtures and concessions toward sectarian groups in regard to point long ago established in the Bible. Hearing some brethren speak of "positive thoughts only" and forbearance makes me wonder how Christ was ever crucified by folk so angry with Him they hanged the Son of God between thieves!

When Sanballet tried to get Nehemiah into a compromising dialogue on the plains of Ono that great servant of Jehovah made it clear that he was too busy doing God's bidding to waste time in lesser matters. Had the Samaritans been interested in discussing heaven's will for mankind that would have been a different situation altogether. So should we be ready, publicly or privately, to study the Scriptures with anyone. But that is not the atmosphere we are speaking of now. Brethren, we might as well admit that we are reaping what we sowed into the last generation. Many congregation pushed serious Bible study out and invited entertainment in for the young people. As a result, we now have 30 year olds who know very little Bible and few of the basic principles that made us strong in days past and gone. The concept of the value of the silence of the Scriptures must be taught all over again if we would salvage very many of the youth of yesterdays. The idea that the church of the New Testament is unique and distinctive and not a denomination is not firmly entrenched in "the church of tomorrow." We have compromised with humanism, television and the hedonism of secular Hollywood-oriented philosophy as we idolize rock musicians, sports heroes and anti-government bums. Then we wonder:

"Where have all the children gone?"

If we had more conviction and boldness in the pulpit and courage in the eldership and plain teaching in our Bible classes we might turn things around for God's cause in the next decade.

But we will have to quit surrendering to the pressures of unconverted members who worry about what society will think of us for being so narrow-minded! Truth has always been absolute and therefore narrow. Ask Noah, Joshua, Daniel, Stephen, Paul and best of all ask the Savior—if standing for the right way was ever popular. We should strive for respect from godly people and approval of our heavenly Father (Galatians 1:10).

Convenience has always been the mother of apostasy. Christians must come out of Babylon (Revelation 18) and be separate (II Corinthians 6:17) if that salt of the earth Jesus mentioned in Matthew 5 ever has its preserving impact upon a world gone mad with iniquity. When everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8) the Devil has a field day. We, today, stand in the valley of decision. Let us be sure we choose not the easy road but the correct one.

"All the way my Savior leads me,  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy  
Who thought life has been my guide?"

Emerson had a classic reminder for us:

"Tis man's perdition to be safe  
When for the Truth he ought to die."

Compromise, that great enemy of righteousness, should be banished from our presence never to rear its ugly head again!

## *Is There A "New" Grace ?*

JOHN GIPSON

We are saved by grace. I've heard it all of my life, and I have preached it over and over. There's nothing man can do to earn his salvation. It comes as a gift from God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God." That's the gospel truth!

But much of what I am hearing today indicates that there is nothing for man to do, and nothing he can do, to affect his

salvation. My Bible doesn't teach that! Think about it. If that kind of grace saves, then God has the sole responsibility for man's salvation. I can blame God if I'm lost. Furthermore, if He saves you, and doesn't save me, then he has become a respecter of persons (Something which he is not). "And Peter opened his mouth and said:" Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34-35).

The scriptures tell us that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Through His grace God warned Noah about the flood which was to destroy the world; and told Noah to build an ark. Grace showed him a way of escape. Noah believed God and was obedient to God's instructions. "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him" (Genesis 6:22). As a result of obedient faith, God's grace saved Noah. Thus grace provided the blessing; it was accepted by faith; and obtained by the obedience of faith. "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

A wonderful example of God's grace is found when "Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ" (Acts 8:5). "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Grace was extended through the gospel; faith accepted the message; and the people became obedient to the faith.

Paul speaks often of the grace of God, but he never eliminates obedience. He preached "according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26)

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