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What Does the Bible Teach?

*“Do Not Remove The Ancient Landmark
Which Your Fathers Have Set”*

LANDMARK IS AN OBJECT, such as a concrete block or a pole, that indicates a fixed boundary line and also serves as a guide. When God through Moses had brought out the children of Israel from the captivity to settle them in the land of His promise; amongst many other laws to govern them, God had given them the law of not removing the landmark of a neighbor (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17), for the preventing of frauds and perjuries. Though the landmarks were set by the hand of man, yet he was a thief and a robber by the law of God that removed them. The wise man, therefore at Proverbs 22:28 exhorted by saying, “Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.”

There is a spiritual application to this divine rule of God. Moses at Deuteronomy 4:2 commanded those whom he had brought out of the captivity: “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” Again, Proverbs 30:6 teaches, “Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” We should always remember that the teachings of God’s word, the Bible, must always take place over what men have written in their books and said. We are reminded that God’s word will stand the test of time as it will be used to judge all men in the last day. (John 12:48).

Jesus Christ, who has been given by the Father, all authority, in

all spiritual matters, in heaven and on earth, had authorized, or delegated His authority to His chosen apostles. (Matthew 28:18-20). To them He had promised that whatsoever they would bind on earth that would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they would loose on earth would be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 18:18). That is to say, all things that the apostles of Christ would teach on earth would be recognized and accepted in heaven as God's will for men under the New Testament law of Christ; and whatever things of the Old Testament law of Moses they would not retain or re-teach, such as animal sacrifices, Sabbaths-keeping, tithes, etc., would be loosed and will no longer be binding on people under the law of Christ. "Binding" and "loosing" refer to the power of deciding what was lawful or unlawful under the New Testament Law of Christ. Christ had promised the apostles that after He would return back to heaven, He would send to them the Holy Spirit, Who would teach them all things and would bring to their remembrance all things He had taught them while He was with them on earth. And that He would guide them into all truth. (John 14:25-26; 16:12, 13; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:5-8). This promise of the Lord to His apostles was fulfilled, after Christ's ascension into heaven, on the day of Pentecost, as we read in Acts 2:1-4.

Guided by the Holy Spirit of God those apostles of Christ personally taught the gospel of Christ and His doctrine to the people in the first century, A.D., and wrote all those things in the 27 books of the New Testament of the Bible, as we have them today for us. Remember, Christ Himself never wrote anything, but He had promised the apostles that they would be endowed with the Holy Spirit and empowered by Him, Who would remind them all things Christ had taught them while He was with them on earth; and He would teach them all things that were to come. Referring to the books of the Bible 1 Timothy 3:16-17, therefore, says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Then in 2 Peter 1:20-21 we read, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The teachings of the apostles of Christ, as we have them available for us in the New Testament of Christ are spiritual landmarks laid for us today as the will of God, and to remove

any of them or to deviate from them in any way or manner would mean going against the will of God. Concerning this, one of the apostles' of Christ wrote: "We (that is, the apostles) are of God. He who knows God hear us (*the apostles*); he who is not of God does not hear us (*the apostles*). By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6). What does this mean? This means, whatever we need to know and do as followers of Christ, we must look into the New Testament to find out, have the apostles taught about it? What the apostles have taught, one must do to be saved and to go to heaven? (Acts 2:37-38). What is the church? (Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-32). How should we worship today? (Acts 20:7; John 4:24; Acts 2:42), etcetera. For every question we should consult the New Testament to be able to know if one is following God's will or not. On the other hand, there are many questionable things, which the apostles have not taught in the New Testament and have therefore never bound, but people have been taught by men through the centuries to follow them, such are not the landmarks laid for us by the apostles, but are teachings of mere men (Matt. 15:8, 9), such as, baptizing babies, keeping lent, celebrating Easter and other festivals and "Holy days" etc. About such Christ said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted." (Matt. 15:13).

UNITY AS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE

J. C. CHOATE

A GREAT DEAL OF TEACHING has been done on unity, and at the same time the subject of division has been condemned. Much of what has been said has been in regard to the denominational world, showing that the many churches and religious groups created by men keep people from being united in the one body of Christ, as God intended from the beginning.

Perhaps these Scriptures have been somewhat misapplied, inadvertently. Christ was praying in John 17 that His followers—*His church*—might be united. The admonitions in the epistles concerning unity are speaking of unity *among Christians*. The statements do not encompass those who are actually *outside the body of Christ*.

While it is true that all of the denominational groups are generally made up of believers in Christ, these believers are not *in* Christ

because they have never done what the Lord requires in order for them to be added to His church (Acts 2:38-47). Since the world is not familiar with what the Bible teaches about the church, it assumes that all of these man-made churches are of the Lord, though they are divided. This is not what the Scriptures teach.

Division is bad, of course, but these people are not in error because they are divided, but because they are *in bogus churches*, churches that were established by men who were trying to go to heaven on their own terms.

At the time Christ lived, and for several hundred years after His church was established, there were no denominational churches in existence. There was not even any type of Catholic church in existence. There were false teachers, but none of these had broken away to form separate churches.

Whatever unity or division existed in the first century was *within* the Lord's church. The church at Corinth is an example of such problems. Yet in spite of the division, Paul addressed his letter to *the church of God*, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to *be saints*, (1 Corinthians 1:2). But he pleaded with them by the name of the Lord that they all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.(1 Corinthians 1:10). He then proceeded to reason with them, asking them why they were dividing into different groups to follow Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even Christ. He asked if Christ was divided, if Paul had been crucified for them, or if they had been baptized in the name of Paul. Of course they knew that Christ was not divided, that Christ alone had been crucified for them, and that they had been baptized only in the name of Christ. The conclusion to Paul's logic was obvious: why were they following men, and why weren't they following Christ? Surely they got the point.

In John 17, Christ prayed, "*Neither pray I for these alone [the Apostles], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all be one; as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast love me.*" (John 17:20-23).

Now how could His words be any plainer? Christ was not praying

for the world, or even for the “believing” world at large, but He was praying for the Apostles and for all who would believe on Him through their preaching—for the church. He was praying that they would be one even as He and the Father were one. The Lord pleaded for this type of unity so that the world would believe that God had sent Him. Why is it that we find it difficult to impact the world? It is because of divisions that exist among us. Being divided, we waste our time and money opposing one another, and therefore the world pays no attention to us. If we were united, however, we could concentrate on teaching and converting the world. What a difference that would make!

But why would there be divisions among the Lord’s people? Because the church is made up of human beings. We have our weaknesses, personality clashes, and even those who can be deceived by the world and by the teaching of the present-day religious world. As long as humans make up the church with their varying depths of understanding, commitment to truth, and willingness to compromise, there will be some divisions scattered throughout the church.

Some seem to reason that if the church is led into division, it must not truly be the Lord’s church. They have evidently forgotten the division that Paul and others found in congregations in the first century.

Certainly, the Lord hates division, condemned it, and prayed that we might all be one. As Christians we want unity, we must not quit the church as though it, itself, is wrong if division raises its dirty head among its members. We must remember that *the church is one* and that it will remain *united in Christ*. Those who pull away and create division are the ones who are wrong and will have to pay a heavy price for their actions.

Paul said, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Romans 16:17,18). Notice that in this case the thing that causes divisions among brethren is false doctrine or teaching. Notice also that those who cause division are not of the Lord. Therefore, the ones who do remain faithful to the Lord *remain the Lord’s unified church*.

Then Paul says further; *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are*

called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6). Again, isn't that plain? If one wanted to teach unity, how could he improve on that clear statement?

Does the Lord's church exist today? It certainly does, just it has always existed from the day it was established (Acts 2), and it will continue to exist until Christ returns to deliver it up to God. Is it united? Those who *remain faithful* to the Lord are united. The world, however, focuses on those who break away, the apostates, the unfaithful. These are not examples of true Christians, however, because they have ceased to be the Lord's faithful. Unless they repent and return to God they will be lost for all eternity.

I plead with you to become a member of the one church of the Bible and to put forth every effort to keep the church unified. Remember that Christ is not divided and neither will we be if we follow Him.

The Bible, The Word of God

ROGER JOHNSON

THERE NEVER HAS BEEN a more precious or more powerful volume of literature than the Bible. Not only has this divine record manifested its power in the changing of individuals, but whole civilizations have been swayed by its influence. It has served as a comforter to the bereaved, been a strength to the strong, a guide to the blind, a shining light to those in darkness. It is a volume that is loved by the poet, quoted by the statesman, and followed by the Christian. Let us notice some of the qualities that make for the greatness of the Bible.

1. It is divine in its source. "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). The Bible is unique in this quality for no other piece of literature can make this claim.

2. It is adequate in its content. The Bible as it is, meets man's needs, as he is. God has seen to it that "all things that pertain to life and godliness" are contained in this divine volume (II Peter 1:3).

Consequently, man-made creeds are totally useless for religious instruction.

3. It is powerful in its content. This book is not a dead letter which comes from a dead God. Paul declares it to be God's "dynamite" in the saving of souls (Romans 1:16). It is the only piece of literature that can truly bring about the metamorphosis of the soul, lifting man out of sin into the glorious state of righteousness.

4. It is simple in its expression. This is one of its most amazing qualities, for one would think that such a book which came from the mind of an omniscient God would be clothed in language hard to be understood and followed. We have difficulty understanding the instructions of our income tax forms which are written on a grade school level. Amazingly, however, God's instructions to man concerning his salvation is written so that all can understand if they will take the time to read and study (Ephesians 3:4).

5. It is gracious in what it offers you now. Jesus declared, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Myriads of books have been written to impart knowledge unto man, but the Bible is the only volume which can give man **life!**

6. It is glorious in what it promises you later. Eternal life is the hope which the Bible offers to an obedient people (Mark 10:30). This life is to be found only in Jesus (John 6:68).

Since these qualities are characteristic of the sacred volume called the Bible, it behooves us to make it our meditation every day (Psalm 119:97). In so-doing, there is no doubt but that our lives will be truly enriched and our minds lifted from the mundane affairs of this life to the exalted thoughts of the life to come.

HE CAME TO SAVE SINNERS

CHARLES E. COBB

THE JEWS WANTED—and expected an earthly king. For one to come preaching, establishing a Kingdom not of this world (John 18:36) was intolerable. They had their minds made up. Jesus did not fit the mold they had in mind. They rejected Him!

When Jesus came, the Jews were under the authority of the Romans. This was not an arrangement which they liked at all. They wanted an earthly king to come and lead them out of this intolerable condition. They wanted one like David to fight their battles, to win

their wars, to free them from their oppressors.

Jesus came, but they rejected Him.

He did not come to be an earthly king. He came to establish His Kingdom, His church (Matthew: 16:18-19). He was to possess all authority (Matthew 28:18) and be the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23) and head over all things—to the church (Colossians 1:18). The church was to be made up of sinners who had heard and obeyed the will of God and had been added to the church (Acts 2:41-47). The church had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the ascension of the Lord Jesus (Acts 1 and 2).

Jesus said, during His personal ministry, that He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). He came to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). The apostle to the Gentiles said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...” (I Timothy 1:15).

The church, God’s Kingdom, is made up of sinners saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10). The Lord Jesus did not come to establish an earthly kingdom. He came to save sinners. Those sinners who were and are saved are the church, the Kingdom of God.

Goodness And Severity

T. PIERCE BROWN

IN EVERY GENERATION, there are those who seem to think they know more about God than is revealed in the Bible. We hear that a loving God could not possibly condemn all the good people who have failed to obey Him. For those who are willing to listen, Paul should help to clarify that. “Behold, then, the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee God’s goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Romans 11:22). Throughout the Bible, the same picture is presented over and over. Skeptics seem to think that God should make special provisions for them.

In the story of the plagues when Israel was about to come out from Egyptian bondage, those who sprinkled the blood of a lamb on the doorposts were promised that the firstborn in their family would not die. How good a person may have been, or how much his parents had done for suffering humanity, or how high he was in the social structure did not matter. The grace of God was extended to all that would accept it on His terms. One could laugh at the idea

that there was any value in the blood, but that did not change God's decree, nor limit His grace. It seems so evident that one feels almost silly to have to bring it up, but we doubt that one person in a million would assume that putting the blood on the door was a work of merit which earned them the freedom from the death of the firstborn. Nor was anyone of which we hear so blind that they would say, "I accept the fact that the lamb has been slain for me, but since I know that I cannot work myself out of bondage, and that if I am saved from death, it will be by God's grace, so there is no need of my putting the blood on the door posts." It is amazing almost beyond belief that there are so-called scholars who use that kind of language about our salvation. That some who claim to be gospel preachers, or connected with the Lord's church, is even more amazing.

It is possible to damage the Cause of Christ, even if we do not teach false doctrine, by failing to emphasize properly what God emphasizes, or by emphasizing unduly what God teaches on some subject. For example, one may preach on the wrath or severity of God in such a fashion as to make it seem that God's primary desire is to punish sinners. We may do that without teaching any false doctrine. On the other hand, one may speak so much, or in such a way, about the love and grace of God that those who hear get the idea that since love covers a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8), it does not really matter what a person does or fails to do.

It is probable that in many instances those of us who felt that we needed to combat the false doctrine of salvation by faith only have preached about the importance of baptism until some have felt that getting baptized was about all that mattered. We have known of persons who had relatives in the hospital at the point of death. They had lived a reprobate, ungodly life, and as far as we could tell, had not repented. But, those relatives impressed upon us that we should try to get the person baptized, so they could feel sure about his salvation. Of course, since we have no way of knowing for sure if the person is penitent, if he wants to be baptized and indicates that he trusts in the Savior and wants to obey Him, we would baptize him. I do not even know if the persons who respond during a gospel meeting are really penitent, but most of the time, assume that if they have listened to my preaching, they know they should be, so I baptize them without much question in most cases.

My point is that our preaching should be balanced. We should emphasize the importance of everything as close to the way God did as we can.

When Jesus taught that loving God and our neighbor were the two most important commands, and our preaching makes it sound as if teaching against false doctrine and giving of our means are the most important, we are moving in a dangerous direction.

It is my judgment that many of us should start emphasizing more the goodness and love of God Who gave His Son to die for us. Others of us should emphasize more the importance of obeying the Gospel and being sound in doctrine. All of us should emphasize both the goodness and severity of God in the same way the Bible does.

THE TOTALITY OF REALITY

WALTER SWAIN

THERE ARE THOSE WHO have a physical malady called tunnel vision. Over a period of time, their area of vision becomes smaller and smaller, until they eventually go blind. This malady is not limited to the physical realm, however.

In I Corinthians 2:12-16, the apostle Paul speaks of those who have spiritual tunnel vision. Their sight is not limited physically, but spiritually. They are those who consider only the physical realm, and fail to look at the totality of reality.

Total reality consists of two realms—the physical and the spiritual. The physical realm is perceived through the physical senses. The spiritual realm is understood through the mind at this present time, and will become a reality to us in the afterlife. Some actions involve both the spiritual and the physical; while some things are mutually exclusive of the other realm.

For example, God is _s Spirit (John 4:24). He has never been physical. Whereas, Jesus is spiritual, but became a physical being (John 1:14). It is said that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (I Corinthians 15:50). Physical things will not continue or exist in the afterlife.

Thus, the distinction is made between the physical and the spiritual; yet the spiritual is able to influence and make connection with the physical realm in various ways (Appearance of angels, Christ as man, miracles, etc.).

One who is spiritual, Paul says, looks at both realms (I Corinthians 2:15). The spiritual person realizes that both realms do exist and is willing by faith to seek to comprehend the totality of reality. The natural man does not accept spiritual things (verse 14),

because they seem foolishness to him. He has tunnel vision. Spiritual people realize that God has given us two primary ways to make connection with the spiritual realm. Words are important here (verse 13). Words which are spiritual can portray to us the realities of the spiritual realm. The Holy Spirit inspired Word tells us about spiritual things. We can only know God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell today through the written Word. The Bible gives us descriptions and word pictures of these realities. The essence of faith is that we believe these things not having seen them (II Corinthians 5:7).

Worship is another God-given means of understanding the spiritual. Worship allows us through physical acts to express spiritual feelings and emotions. This is why we worship “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). In worship, we have our closest connection with God and the spiritual realm.

Through the words of the Bible, God reveals to us the things of the Spirit. In worship, we recognize and respond to those spiritual realities and connect with God spiritually through the physical acts.

May we ever recognize the totality of reality and not be guilty of tunnel vision in things spiritual.

Homosexuality And The Bible

LESLIE G. THOMAS

SOMETHING IS SAID IN THE news media practically every day regarding homosexuality. Books are being written about people who engage in that practice and churches are discussing the issue; but it appears that relatively few people turn to the Scriptures for guidance in such questions. If one can believe that which one reads and hears from various sources, it appears that the cause of homosexuality is gaining in sympathy practically every day. All of this because few people stop to ask, What does the God of heaven say about people who are guilty of homosexuality?

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES

There are three words in the original New Testament which are used to set forth the will of the Lord regarding homosexuality, namely:

(1) MALAKOS (effeminate) (I Corinthians 6:9), which literally means, when applied to people, soft or effeminate. Arndt-Gingrich, A GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE, defines the term as

follows: "...esp. of CATAMITES, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually." (Page 489).

(2) ARSENOKOITES (abusers of themselves with men) (I Corinthians 6:9; I Timothy 1:10), the meaning of which is, according to Arndt-Gingrich, "a male homosexual, pederast, sodomite." (Page 109).

A.T. Robertson, the celebrated New Testament Greek scholar, in commenting on I Corinthians 6:9, says, "Paul has two lists in verses 9 and 10,...(fornicators, idolaters,, adulterers, effeminate, or MALAKOI, abusers of themselves with men, or ARSENOKIOTAI, or sodomites, as in I Timothy 1:10, a late word for this horrible vice, thieves, covetous), the other... (drunkards, revilers, extortioners). All these will fall short of the kingdom of God. This was plain talk to a city like Corinth. It is needed today. It is a solemn roll call of the damned even if some of their names are on the church roll in Corinth whether officers or ordinary members." (WORD PICTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, Volume IV, page 119).

The apostle Paul, however, after calling attention to the terrible traits of character listed above, says, "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 5:11). This clearly implies that the Corinthian brethren had been cleansed from those sins listed above, before their names were inscribed on the church rolls in their city. There is a vast difference between a man who is guilty of such sins, because he has not availed himself of the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one who while formerly guilty of the same sins, has thrown himself upon the mercy of God and has been washed in the life-giving blood of the Savior of men.

(3) OREXIS (longing, desire, lustful anticipation) (Romans 1:27). Thus, according to Arndt-Gingrich, "the men...were inflamed with (their) desire for each other." (Page 583).

The apostle Paul makes it plain that the women were also guilty of the sin of homosexuality with each other. The immediate context reads as follows: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due" (Romans 1:26-27).

The term which is usually employed to describe a woman who engages in the sin now under consideration is LESBIAN which THE

RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE defines as “a female homosexual.”

HASTINGS DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE (one volume edition) points out that the sin of homosexuality is condemned in Romans 1:26-27, as any reader of the Bible can plainly see; and the writer then goes on to say that the sin is frequently referred to in the Old Testament, particularly in connection with male prostitutes at shrines, and always stands under condemnation. (See page 394).

The Divine attitude toward these horrible sins is further described in Jude 7: “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire” (Read Genesis 19:1-28).

It is clear from the Genesis context that “strange flesh” literally **other flesh**, including the sin of homosexuality; for that is exactly what the Sodomites sought from the angels (the men of Sodom thought that they were men) who were with Lot and his family. (Cf. Leviticus 18:22-23).

With all of the scriptural facts before us, it is strange indeed how any responsible person, who has any fear of God in his heart and who has any desire to obey Him, can look with any kind of moral favor upon people who are guilty of the sin of homosexuality. All people, to be sure, have rights under civil law; but that in no wise lessens the terrible guilt of this vile sin, or in any way enhances his standing before the moral and Spiritual Governor and Judge of the universe.

The Three Facts Of Sin

(Psalm 103:3-4)

FRANK L. COX

SIN IS TRANSGRESSION-CROSSING God's boundary. It is iniquity-a zigzag course, a departure from the straight line. It is missing the mark-the high aim of life-God's target. It is a fall. Let us give our attention to the following.

I. THE POWER OF IT

1. It allures. It charms, fascinates. No man is free from temptation. (Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 7:21). The more we yield to it, the harder it is to resist. The reverse is true. (James 4:7b-8).

2. It deceives. (Hebrews 3:13; I Timothy 2:14). It shows the pleasure, but conceals the pain and the shame. It promises more and gives less than anything known to man.

3. It enslaves. It stifles noble impulses. It leads men into captivity. (Galatians 4:3; Romans 6:16). It paralyzes the will, corrupts the affection, blinds the intellect. The longer men yield to it, the firmer becomes its grip.

II. THE STAIN OF IT

Nothing works without friction. Everything that is wounded keeps its scar. Disease leaves its indelible finger prints on the body. The fire, the storm, the stream all leave their marks on the landscape. Sin, as it courses through life, also leaves a mark.

1. On the reputation. A good name lost by sinful living is difficult to regain.

2. On the body. The sensualist feels the effect of intemperate living in his body. A number of diseases are caused by dissipation. (Exodus 20:5).

3. On the soul. Sin stains the conscience, then sears it. (I Timothy 4:2). It is hard to think pure thoughts, having done evil.

III. THE GUILT OF IT

This is the debt incurred by sin. This is the sinner's account in heaven. This is what the Lord holds against us when the sin is done. That all men stand guilty before God may be seen from the following:

1. Heaven's testimony. (Romans 3:23; I John 1:10).

2. Man's own conscience. All men feel their unworthiness. To divorce sin from sorrow is an impossibility.

3. Man's cowardice. Sin makes cowards of us all. (Genesis 3:8).

4. The death of the Son of God. (I Corinthians 15:3b).

The three facts of sin present a gloomy situation. (Romans 7:24). But, God in His marvelous mercy, has given us a Savior. (Matthew 1:21). From the three-fold fact of sin, He offers a threefold salvation: (a) From its power: He redeems "thy life from destruction." (b) From its stain: He "healeth all thy diseases." (c) From its guilt: He forgives all thy iniquities.

Obedience is the condition. (Romans 6:17-18). Obedience from the heart to that form of teaching frees a man from sin-its power, its stain, its guilt. Jesus is the great physician, but the patient cannot be healed unless he applies the remedy.

RELIGIOUS SINNERS

CHARLES BOX

THE TITLE “RELIGIOUS SINNERS” sounds like a contradiction of terms. Religious means, “characterized by adherence to religion; pious; godly.” Sinner means, “one who breaks a religious law or moral principle; especially through a willful act.” But, can men be religious and yet sinners? Please observe Jesus’ statement concerning some who would worship Him. “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). People may be religious sinners by:

WORSHIPPING THE WRONG GOD

The problem of worshipping the wrong God is an old and a difficult problem. God commanded the Jews, “I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image-any likeness of anything that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus 20:2-4). In the New Testament, Paul wrote, “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and through Whom we live” (I Corinthians 8:5-6). One is a religious sinner who worships the wrong God.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD IN THE WRONG WAY

Many worship the God of Heaven but their worship is not acceptable. Cain is an example. He worshipped the true God but in the wrong way (Genesis 4:1-16). Many today worship without partaking of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7), or by adding all kinds of mechanical instruments to the singing (Ephesians 5:19). Some also worship with women preachers in spite of what the Bible says (I Timothy 2:1-12). One is a religious sinner who worships the true God but in the wrong way.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD BUT NEVER HAVING OBEYED THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Cornelius needed to obey the Gospel (Acts 11:14) as did the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) and Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). All of these were good people; they worshipped the true God but they

had never obeyed the Gospel. In many assemblies of the Lord's church, there are good men and women who are regular in attendance who so urgently need to obey the Gospel of Christ. They should remember that one is a religious sinner who worships the true God but never obeys the Gospel of Christ.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD BUT NOT LIVING UP TO THE GOSPEL

Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts 5:1-10). Simon was guilty of the pride of life (Acts 8:18-22). Some of the Corinthians were carnal and immoral (I Corinthians 3:13; I Corinthians 5:1). Christians must learn to be different from the world (Galatians 2:20). One is a religious sinner who worships the true God but doesn't live the Christian life daily.

God admonished His people to grow in Christ so heaven can be their home. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ...Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-11). Are you worshipping the true God, in the Bible way, having obeyed the Gospel and are you daily living the Christian life? It is time to be serious about our souls!

Complete In Him

FRED DILLON

"AND YE ARE COMPLETE IN Him which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

When does a human being live a "complete life?"

If it depends on length of life, then Methusaleh surely would qualify! The Scriptures reveal that he lived 969 years on the earth, but the only other information we can glean from the record is his parentage, his son, and that he died.

Jesus, our Savior and Lord, lived on this planet in the flesh only

some 33 years, according to the New Testament record, and yet John tells us, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

The "complete life," then, isn't dependent on how long we walk on this earth, but on our relationship with Him Who was involved in the creation of all things (John 1:3).

When we consider the activities of this life, whether they be economical, social, political, or religious in nature, they all pale in comparison and significance when contrasted with our submission to God's will (Romans 12:1-2).

I have been afforded opportunities, some call it privileges, in my lifetime as a soldier, newspaper reporter, editor, and Gospel preacher to talk with a President, several Senators, Congressmen, and Governors, none of whom were Christians in the light of Bible teaching. They may be long remembered and revered by the citizenry for their earthly achievements, but were their lives complete? The Lord will be the sole and final authority on that.

Jesus, in His sojourn here in this realm "increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). The Lord desires His people to grow also, to "grow up into Him in all things which is the head" (Ephesians 4:15). Otherwise, our lives will not be "complete" in God's sight.

After we enter the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism as taught repeatedly in the New Testament, our Savior and mediator with God has given us His last will and testament to make ourselves complete in Him to fulfill His will. It involves adding the Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-11).

It involves putting on "the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17),

It encompasses bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

Surely it demands continual growth by walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

It involves living "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10b and I Corinthians 15:58).

It elevates the life of a servant to behavior for one who would please Him for Whom and with Whom we labor here.

This is why humility and submission become so important in

being “complete in Him”. We must, as Jesus exclaimed, “Be converted, and become as little children” to enter the kingdom of heaven. We must, as James urged, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:7-8). “Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).

You desire completeness, a complete life, a fulfilled life?

Hear the Gospel of Christ (John 6:45).

Believe the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16).

Obey the Gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 1:7-9 and Hebrews 5:8-9).

“Walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

Your life, then, can be and will be complete!

Why is one complete in Christ? The answer is that in Christ are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3).

In Him, we have salvation (II Timothy 2:10).

In Him, we have redemption and forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14).

In Him, we have eternal life (I John 5:11).

In Him, we are not condemned (Romans 8:1-2).

In Him, we have eternal rest from our labors (Revelation 14:13).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

Our purpose here in this life is to fulfill the will of the Master in our lives. Nothing else will accomplish what God has purposed for us.

Jesus - The Hope Of The World

ELWOOD HOLT

THE LAND OF PLESTINE is the land where our Savior once lived. All his life was spent in this small country. His disciples lived there. Our Lord never traveled extensively, though he was always on the move. He was out of the land perhaps only once, and, that when but a mere babe. His parents fled into Egypt with him that he might be spared the wrath of a wicked king.

It has been the desire of many gospel preachers to tour this land where so many wonderful things took place; some are fortunate

enough to be able to go and walk where Jesus walked. They can see Jerusalem, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, the Mount of Olives, and many other places that leave them feeling in their hearts that they have truly stood upon holy ground. And yet the land of the Jews today is a land of disbelief in the Christ who once walked there.

They firmly believe that the man who came nearly two thousand years ago was an imposter and a fraud. They are looking for the advent of the true Messiah. It is strange and sad that an entire nation would deny One who failed to fit the mold they had prepared for him. He had his own teachings and, because what he taught did not comport with what they wanted the Messiah to teach, they renounced him, crucified him, and even cried, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." Should he come again as he did the first time, what assurance do we have that people would not do with him as they did the first time?

In his first coming, he came as the result of PROPHECY. He fulfilled the words of the prophets in the most minute details. Prophets told where he would be born and when. They spake of his life, and where he should live. They talked of his miracles, his teachings, his death and resurrection; his going away "into a far country (that is, heaven) to receive a kingdom, and how he would come again. All of these prophecies, with the exception of the ones relating to his second coming, have been fulfilled. **AND IT WILL BE FULFILLED IN TIME.** God is not slack concerning his promises, and he has promised us that His Son will come one day on clouds of Glory, to receive his own, to reward the diligent, and to punish the disobedient.

How can anyone read, even casually, these prophecies and their fulfillments, and continue to disbelieve in the man called Christ, the SON of GOD! Prophecy and its fulfillment give us undeniable proof of the integrity of the Bible. If the man we call "Lord" is not truly God's Son, then not only is our New Testament null and void, the OLD is, too.

When the Jews of Christ's days denied Him, he lovingly referred them to their great prophets - to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others. He said, "They spake of me." And they did. Moses said, "A Prophet shall the Lord God raise up from among thy brethren like unto me ..." (Deuteronomy 18:18). In Acts 3:22, Peter, under the new dispensation, quoted these very words and applied them to the man he knew as Christ. And Peter came to know him well

during his association with him. Peter, in the same passage, said that men should “hearken to him in whatsoever he shall say unto you.” This is our work in this life: to persuade men and women, boys and girls, to come to this Savior.

He is revealed in the New Testament. He came in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. The hope of the world, unbelieving Palestine included, is this Lord and Master. He said, “Unless you believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, and where I am ye cannot come.” But faith is a process of action. It demands obedience, and if obedience is not forthcoming then the faith is not genuine. It is our plea that the will of God be obeyed from the heart, without ADDITIONS or SUBTRACTIONS. Let us help you if we can in coming to a better understanding of God’s will in your life. Remember John 8:32, in which Jesus said, “AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.”

Why Is It There?

BERNICE VINSANT

NESTLED SNUGLY BETWEEN Judges and I Samuel in the Old Testament is one of the most beautiful love stories ever told.

In only four short verses we learn about famine, hunger, travel to a strange country, death, grief, loneliness, and love like no other, between two women.

The Book of Ruth was written about two sisters who have nothing in common except to have the same mother-in-law. The love story unfolds.

In Chapter 1:4 of the Book of Ruth we are told that she was a moabite woman.

We know that Moab was in the plains by the Jordan, near Jericho. We are told in Numbers 26:3 that Moses and Elizar divided Israel after it was numbered.

As we read the Book of Ruth, we wonder why it had its place in the Old Testament. It seems like any ordinary story of a young girl and the love she has for her mother-in-law.

Naomi was an ordinary woman, with a husband, Elemelish, a man of Bethlehem - Judah. He had two sons, Mahron and Chilion. They left their homeland because of a famine that had lasted for

three years. They had come to Moab because they heard there was food.

Naomi's husband died. We're not told how. Then the two sons looked for wives. They found them in Moab, a place where false gods were worshiped.

Then after ten years of marriage and no children, the sons died.

It was then that Naomi said the hand of God had gone out from her. Chapter 1:3. She wanted the two girls to return to their own people. She understood their life style was different and the gods they worshiped were different. Chapter 1:15; I Chronicles 16:26.

It was almost as if Ruth knew there was a reason stronger than the love she had for Naomi that would keep them together. She chose to worship Naomi's God.

We wondered why Naomi tried to send the girls back to their own people instead of teaching them of her God. But in Joshua 24:14-15, we are told that the people were asked to serve God, but if it seemed evil to them, they should choose their gods.

In II Timothy 16:17-18 we are told what true friendship, helpfulness, and brotherly love will do.

Naomi loved the girls, as her own, but she loved her God and her land more.

Orpah went back to her people, but Ruth refused to leave Naomi. So she went with her to her homeland and her kindred. She did not know how she would be received, but it didn't make any difference.

Naomi asked that her name be changed from Naomi to Mara, meaning "Bitter". Her grief and afflictions were so great.

Ruth's love never weakened for Naomi and her kinsmen. She went to the fields to work to feed them, not knowing how she would be accepted in a strange land.

Naomi knew Ruth was a good person and had made a real sacrifice to follow her and her God.

But Naomi had made plans for Ruth and Boaz. She gave Ruth all the instructions. In Chapter 3 we read of the courtship.

Surely God's hand was in all the following events.

In Chapter 4:13, we find Ruth and Boaz were married. She conceived, by the hand of God. A son was born. He was named Obed, the father of Jesse who is the father of David.

We know that later Christ was born through the lineage of Boaz.

We can now understand why the Book of Ruth has such a prominent place in the Old Testament.

Striving Against Sin

JOHNNY RAMSEY

PERHAPS THE BEST FOUR-step decline in spirituality is set forth in Jeremiah 7:24: "But they hearkened not, nor 'inclined their ear, but walking in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward."

When men quit fighting against sin they have surrendered to the Captain of Hell. Far too many have waved the white flag before they even buckled on the sword. Why do we give up so easily?

One major reason that sin gains momentum is the startling fact that there is pleasure in sin. For a carnally minded individual it is far more appealing to associate with evil companions than with the saints in light. The bitter dregs of shame compel a sinner more than the pure waters of life. The devil will always see to it that leaving error is most inconvenient. As Byron stated in *Don Juan*: "Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure."

There are scores of folk who get their only pleasure in doing evil and this fully satisfies their worldly view of life. The tragedy is that they will continue without aim or purpose unless Christians begin anew to strive against sin!

Another contributing factor to the sinful predicament by which millions are captivated is the cunning progressiveness of sin. David, Demas and Diotrephes did not begin in the clutches of Satanic influences; but before they realized it, adultery, spiritual infidelity and arrogance had enraptured them! What a contrasting view springs from the lives of Joseph, Joshua and Jesus. These three fled from sin, purged it from the camp and gained the victory over it. Our Lord finally sounded the death knell over the prostrate form of sin in His triumphant death.

Too many well-intentioned people cultivate sinful attitudes and allow pettiness to overwhelm them. We do make provision for the flesh!

If Ephesians 5:11 and I Thessalonians 5:22 were obeyed there could be no major problem in our lives. These verses tell us to have no fellowship with evil, abstain from it and rebuke it. Indeed, "let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The sin of compromise has led to complete departure from the Lord for convenience is the mother of apostasy. Unless we resist the Devil he will not flee from us.

Is it not a challenging, heartwarming promise that God provides

a way of escape for us when temptation strikes? In I Corinthians 10, Paul, by inspiration, tells us of the decline and fall of some of Jehovah's people. But neither they nor we need to go astray. The rich provisions of grace and glory envelop our lives when the Prince of heaven enters our being. We can gain a victory over sin for "He that is in us is greater than he that is in them."

"Into My Heart, Into My Heart,
Come Into My Heart, Lord Jesus:
Come In Today; Come In To Stay,
Come Into My Heart, Lord Jesus."

The pleasures of sin are too high priced for wise men to pay. The joys of Christianity are too glorious to miss. The poorest man is the one bereft of Christ. Therefore, let us war valiantly for Truth that sin-cursed humanity can know the peace that Jesus brings.

M.B. Welch, in the famous poem about an old violin, said:

"And many a man with life out of tune and battered and scarred
with sin

Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd much like the old
violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,

A game and he travels on

He is going once, he is going twice

He is going - and almost gone!

But the Master comes and the foolish crowd

Can never quite understand

The worth of a soul and the change that's wrought,

In the touch of the Master's hand."

May we so live that countless souls may live to see the hand of the Lord in their lives. If we do, the glories of eternal sunlight shall be our portion in the land of fadeless day. This is, indeed, our task and privilege!

WHAT WISE FOLLOWERS FIND

(Proverbs 21:21)

NEAL POLLARD

A MOTORIST ENCOUNTERED a road sign, which read, "Select your ruts carefully, for you will have to drive in them the next twenty miles" All of us decide to follow a certain track in life. We cut a certain path with the choices we make. Whether good or bad, those decisions affect what kind of life we will live. As the apostle Paul admonished,

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Galatians 6:7-8).

Paul’s words are so logical! Why do so many follow the wrong path and the wrong guides? Why is spiritual stability so difficult for some? How can individuals repeat the same mistakes over and over?

Those who follow cult leaders often live the most miserable lives and die the most horrible deaths at the behest of those corrupt leaders. Good, religious people, who follow the teaching and traditions of men, violate God’s word and keep themselves estranged from salvation. So many follow the Pied Piper of the world, the Evil Enticer, and the deluding Devil. Pleasure is their pilot. But, not all have bowed their knees to the Baals of atheism, denominationalism, materialism, and hedonism.

Many choose a path which is paved by righteousness and mercy. The world has many individuals who fully embrace the Bible when it is presented to them and comply with the plan of salvation. These are among the wise followers mentioned by the writer of Proverbs 21:21.

“He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.”

Wise Followers Find Life. Those who find Christ and His church find everlasting life (cf. Romans 6:4; 16:16). These are fed by the bread of life (John 6:35), who satiates their spiritual hunger. Those who faithfully follow the giver of life will, in eternity, eat from the tree of life (Revelation 2:7), wear a crown of eternal life (Revelation 2:10), and have access to the water of life (Revelation 22:1)!

Wise Followers Find Righteousness. Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst after it will be filled (Matthew 5:6). Such is a fruit of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9). Christ is the great King of righteousness (Hebrews 6:20 - 7:1-2), and “if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (I John 2:29).

Wise Followers Find Honour. The promise of Christ is, if any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour (John 12:26).

Honor comes in service, humility, and obedience. So comes wisdom.

The foolish follow a wide and comfortable road, a non-sacrificial and a self-indulgent, self-satisfying path. The wise follow a narrow road, a demanding and self-denying street. The blessings go to the wise!