

SERMON DIGESTS

Paul's Charge to Timothy

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

SERMON DIGESTS

By

REPRESENTATIVE EVANGELISTS

Edited By

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INTRODUCTION

We are indebted to M. Norvel Young, Raymond C. Kelcy and Weldon B. Bennett for collecting and editing this book of sermon digests. Many times a preacher works for many hours on a single sermon. It proves to be full of meaning and the results of preaching it gratifying. How unselfish that he should long to share his thoughts with others!

This choice material has been compiled that it might be used. We hope all will use it freely to save souls and to edify the body of Christ. The digests are necessarily brief and will need to be altered to suit the style and purpose of the one using them. Young preachers especially will find here delightful and instructive help. Older ministers will review and use themes which are eternal. Though the spring be full, sometimes the pump needs a little priming to give forth its best stream. Such help will be found in the pages of this volume.

George W. DeHoff

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

January 15, 1951

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

C. E. McGaughey

Intro: These words fell first from a man who had not been true to his brother. (Gen. 4:9). He had slain him, and had sought to evade responsibility by this question. Little did he recognize the full significance of these words. It had never dawned on him that men do have a tremendous responsibility toward their brothers. Living so many centuries later, we should know better and understand that our brothers depend upon us, especially so since we have seen the light that made it possible for us to be children of God. Let us study this question and see a lesson in it for us.

WHO IS MY BROTHER?

All men are brothers. They all are from same source (Acts 17:26, 28, 29, Hebrews 12:9). Coming from same source, being offspring of God Who is Father of our spirits, it is obvious that regardless of race, color, or position in life, all men are brothers. Again, the fact is evident from the fact that Jesus died for all. (Jno. 12:32, Heb. 2:9, I Jno. 2:2). In the third place, that all men are brothers is seen from the Great Commission, which embraces all nations (Mt. 28:18-20). In the fourth place, the great invitation extended by Christ to all men emphasizes the brotherhood of man (Mt. 11:28, Rev. 22:17).

WHERE IS MY BROTHER?

Cain's brother was dead, but yours may be victim of worse fate. He may be dead in sin (Eph. 2:1). Many grieve much over those who die physically, while those around them who are spiritually dead get little concern. Abel was dead because his brother had killed him. What about your brother? Is he dead because of your neglect, indifference, lack of concern, or wrong influence? Your brother may be in error, blinded by false teaching. Conscientious and religious, but unsaved because misled by the teaching of men (Matt. 15:9).

This is one of outstanding tragedies of our modern age, for only those who obey the Bible plan of salvation are promised eternal life. Not promised to those who obey the teaching of men (Matt. 7:21-23). Some of your brethren may be out of duty as Christians, having grown cold in his service. Those are in great danger. (Jno. 15:6, Matt. 25:30, Rev. 3:16).

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

Meaning of this question: Am I under any obligation to help him? Should I care for his condition? Can I be blamed for what happens to him? Will God hold me responsible for not being vitally interested in him? The very question implies that I am by brother's keeper. The Sermon on the Mount teaches that I am (Matt. 5:13, 16). We are salt and light, and have a responsibility to every creature. Paul felt this responsibility (Rom. 1:14). Instructions given to Christians answer the question in the affirmative. (Jude 22,23, Gal. 6:1-2, I Thess. 5:14,

James 5:19-20). Among God's last instructions to man he taught it, telling us to say "Come." (Rev. 22:17).

RESULTS OF NOT TRYING TO KEEP OUR BROTHER

Our brother may lose his soul, a soul that Christ was interested in to the extent that he was willing to die for it. (Heb. 2:9). By neglecting to keep our brother, we do a terrible wrong to him, a wrong far worse in results than that done to a sick man when we refuse to give him medical aid. Not only is this true, but we fail in our mission. Salt that loses its savor is useless, and a light under a bushel is of no value (Mat. 5:13-15). We fail in our mission to be like Jesus for he was interested in others. Too, we bring condemnation upon ourselves. We must warn or be guilty (Ezek. 3:18-19). "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," says God. "Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. (Gen. 43:5).

BLESSINGS RESULTING FROM KEEP- ING OUR BROTHERS

We become soul-winners. The Samaritan woman wanted her brothers to know the blessed story of Jesus, and because she told it, "from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of this woman." (John 4:39). Has anyone believed on him because of what you have said? When Andrew learned of Jesus, "He findeth First his own brother, Simon." (John 1:41). Oh, that we would do likewise! We not only become

soul-winners, but we save our own souls. "He that loseth his life shall find it." (Matt. 16:25). Only in thinking of others and their peril can we actually please God as Christians. Third, great joy will be the result. In heaven. (Luke 15:7-10). In the heart of the soul-winner. A woman who won one of her neighbors to Christ said, "I have been living in heaven since yesterday." Also joy in the heart of the one brought to Jesus. (Acts 8:39). We shall be counted as wise by the Lord and shall shine in the afterwhile. (Prov. 11:30, Dan. 12:3).

Conclusion: Let us recognize our responsibility to our brothers. Let us bring them to Jesus!!!

DOORS, GREAT AND EFFECTUAL

J. Lloyd Moyer

Intro: I Cor. 16:8-9. Paul uses door in a figurative sense to indicate that an opportunity was afforded him for preaching Gospel. Door is that through which entrance may be gained. John saw a door opened in heaven. (Rev. 4:1). This is the door through which we all wish to enter. (2 Pet. 1:4-11). However, before this abundant entrance is permitted, we must pass through other doors.

DOOR OF INSTRUCTION

Jews were born into covenant without knowledge, and later instructed. (Deut. 6:16-25). It was predicted that New Covenant would be different, and one chief difference is in the fact that those in it do not need to be taught to know God for they already know him. (Jer. 31:31 ff., Heb. 8:8 ff).

Jesus taught that no man can come to him without instruction. (John 6:44-45). He insisted that sanctification is through truth. John. 17:17). Hence, we can better appreciate the passages which emphasize preaching the word. (Mat. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15-16, 2 Tim. 4:1-5). Too, we can appreciate the passages which ascribe power to the word. (Rom. 1:16, I Pet. 1:25, I Cor. 1:21, 2:2, 9:16, Rom. 10:13-14, James 1:21). After entering the door of instruction, the next door opens:

DOOR OF SALVATION

Jesus came to save (Mt. 1:21, Jno. 10:9). His great invitation is extended to all. (Mt. 11:28-30). Only those who have been taught may accept him. (Jno. 6:44 ff). To accept is to obey. Heb. 5:9, 2 Thess. 1:7-9, I Pet. 1:22, Rom. 6:17-18). To obey one must believe (Jno. 8:24), Repent (Acts 17:30), Confess (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized (Mk. 16:15-16). This puts one into Christ (Rom. 6:3) and in Christ salvation is found (2 Tim. 2:20). The next door opens wide:

This is closed to those who do not enter first the doors of instruction and salvation (Jno. 9:31, Prov. 28:9, I Pet. 3:12). As sons we may call upon the Father (Gal. 3:26-27, Mt. 16:9, Acts 5:32, Gal. 4:6). Having entered the doors of instruction and salvation, and praying that all we do may be pleasing to Jehovah, the next door looms before us:

DOOR OF SERVICE

All the good things we do will not avail unless we have first entered the doors already mentioned.

(Mt. 7:21-23). On the other hand, even if we do enter the aforementioned doors, and yet refrain from entering the door of service, all will be for naught. (Mt. 25:31-46). Service rendered by Christians glorifies God and Christ. (I Peter 4:16, Col. 3:17). A Christian is a "vessel unto honor, sanctified meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. 2:21). If we make our calling and election sure by faithful service, (2 Pet. 1:4-11), the door of all doors stands ajar and no man can close it:

DOOR OF HEAVEN

Those who do his commandments have a right to enter in. (Rev. 22:14). They will not be turned away. (Jno. 6:37). In this faith we can rest assured. Our hearts need not be troubled. (Jno. 14:1-3).

Conclusion: These are great and effectual doors in securing eternal salvation. Will you not enter and enjoy all they afford? "Today is the day of salvation." Do not, like the foolish virgins, wait until the door is shut. You have possibly already entered the door of instruction. Will you not obey and thus enter the door of salvation? Then you can pray and serve acceptably. The door of heaven opens to all who accept Christ and remain steadfast unto the end.

(Note: A blackboard or a chart may be used effectively with this sermon. Draw five doors and arrows from one to other.)

WHY THE EARLY CHURCH WAS LIBERAL

Raymond C. Keley

Intro: There are many characteristics about the early church which impress us. One is their great liberality. It is commended in the highest of terms by the inspired writers. A glowing tribute is paid the Jerusalem Christians for their liberality (Acts 4:34). Paul spoke highly of the generosity of the Macedonians (Phil. 4:14-15, 2 Cor. 8:1-4). Why such freehearted, liberal, giving? Why should people be willing to sell in order to be able to give? It may be that a study of the reasons for their liberality will help us.

THEY CAVE THEMSELVES

The Macedonian Christians first did this (2 Cor. 8:5). In other words, they were genuinely converted. Realized that conversion means giving of oneself with all he has and is. They did not have the idea that they were "joining a church to be with husband or wife." It was a matter of conviction.

DOOR OF PRAYER

"Here, Lord, I give myself to Thee." When one is converted, the matter of giving material goods will be easy. One reason so many are stingy and covetous is that they have not been fully converted; they have not first given themselves.

THEY HAD A BACKGROUND CONDU-
CIVE TO LIBERALITY

The Jerusalem church was composed mainly of Jews. Many instances of liberality in their his-

tory such as the gifts for the temple, the gifts brought for the repair of the temple, are all examples of liberality. The tithes, offering, gifts and sacrifices of the Jews under Judaism are well-known facts. Their total contributions comprised a good percentage of their income. Under Christ it was an easy matter for them to be liberal. True, they were left free to decide for themselves the exact amount to give, but they did not use their liberty as a cloak. Our background has not been so conducive. Liberality has not been stressed as much as it should have been. Another fault of our background is that we are not taught liberality from childhood. But we must be liberal in spite of background.

THEY RECOGNIZED THE PRINCIPAL OF OF STEWARDSHIP

Realized that theirs was not theirs, but they were taking care of God's possessions, and would some day have to account for the way they handled them. Of course, with that attitude, they would be careful of the use they made of them. God's ownership of all things is affirmed repeatedly (Ex. 19:5, Deut. 10:14, Psalm 24:1, I Cor. 10:26). Likewise, our stewardship of God's possessions is affirmed often (I Peter 4:10, I Cor. 6:19, I Cor. 4:1-2, Titus 1:7). When we realize this principle, we shall be more careful in our use made of that which has been committed into our hands. Knowing that what we are using is the property of another causes us to exercise extreme caution.

THEY LIVED IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Some of them had been eyewitnesses of the death of Christ, the proof of God's love. Realized that God loved for He gave. They saw liberality at its greatest when they behold Calvary's harried tragedy. This made them want to give liberally. We are centuries removed from Calvary, but those events should be real to us. One of greatest hindrances to liberality today is a failure to appreciate the meaning of the cross. We need to realize that God so loved that he gave, and that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. This will beget a like love in our hearts, a love that will manifest itself in liberality. When "We love him because he first loved us," we can joyfully consecrate all that we have to His cause.

APOSTASY OR ENDURANCE?

John H. Banister

Text: Matthew 24:9-13.

Intro: Text shows that these events fulfilled in destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70. But in principle, many of these things apply to us. General features are described which can be seen in every age. We see the trials which test the fidelity of the Christian.

APOSTASY

The apostasy of many during the dark days to follow was predicted. Not only so, but Jesus gives the reasons for their desertion.

(1) False doctrines. In the fourth verse of

this chapter Jesus had warned, "Take heed that no man lead you astray." In verse 11 he predicts false prophets. Then in verse 24 he foretells the rise of false Christs and false prophets, who would lead astray, if possible, "Even the very elect." Realizing the danger of false teaching and false teachers, much of the New Testament devoted to a discussion of such. (Acts 20:28-30, Romans 16:17-18, 2 Cor. 11:13, Gal. 1:7-9, Eph. 4:14, 2 Tim. 4:3-5, Heb. 13:9, I John 4:1-3). Yet, in spite of these warnings, there were many who deserted the faith because of the deceitfulness of false teachers. And the danger continues to this day. False doctrines more abundant now. In the present day denominations, the Christian is brought face to face with false doctrine. He must be rooted and ground or will be let astray.

(2) Human suffering. 24:9-10. "Hated, afflicted, killed." Our suffering does not come so much from persecution. But we must endure a certain amount of it. The problem of human suffering is an old one, and much of it we do not understand, but we do know that it is designed for our good. (2 Tim. 2:11-12, 2 Cor. 12:7-10, I Peter 1:6-7). A strong faith is needed to remain faithful in the midst of suffering and hardships.

(3) The prevalence of sin. "Iniquity shall abound." Verse 12. Paul foretold the prevalence of sin in 2 Tim. 3:1-4. Jesus said such cause love of many to grow cold. Strength needed to live in the midst of abounding iniquity. Today, we live in the midst of broken homes, divorce evils, drunkenness, juvenile delinquency, wantonness, irrever-

ence, blasphemy, deceit, etc. Christians, do not let the torrent of sin sweep you away from your moorings!

ENDURANCE

"But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Verse 13. (Goodspeed and Moffett, "Holds out"). Notice other passages which emphasize the importance of endurance. (Rom. 2:7-8, I Cor. 15:58, Col. 1:23, Eph. 4:14, Heb. 3:6-14, Rev. 2:10). To keep loving Christ supremely requires persistent effort. This passage emphasizes the necessity of endurance.

The duration of endurance also stressed. "To the end." The battle not won until it is over. What we have endured in past not sufficient for the future. Like ships, we must be able to weather every storm. "The feeble faith that will be swamped in the first gale of adversity is not fit to be launched on the uncertain seas of life." We are here taught: That we can remain faithful in spite of human sufferings; that we can lead holy lives in spite of iniquity abounding. (Phil. 2:14-15). These three trials can be to us either stumblingblocks or steppingstones. It depends upon how we react to them which they become.

The results of endurance: "Shall be saved." Secure, strong, happy and peaceful in this life. Heaven in the life to come. Is this not worth all the effort that is required to endure? (Rom. 8:-18, 2 Cor. 4:17).

BELIEVERS ADDED TO THE LORD

Roy H. Lanier

Text: Acts 5:14.

Our text says believers were added to the Lord; it does not say all who believe are added: nor does it say that people are added on the sole condition of faith; nor does the text say they are added to the Lord at the moment they believe.

To be "added to the Lord" means to be added to that group of the Lord's people, called the church. (Acts 2:41, 47 A.V.). It is to be added to that group of people whom the Lord has redeemed for his own possession. (Tit. 2:14).

Since we read of some believers who were not added to the Lord, we inquire to see why. By investigation we learn that there are at least three classes of believers. All believers have the right, power, to become children of God (John 1:12), but not all believers exercise their right, so never become children of God. The three classes of believers are (1). Those who have faith only; they believe but do nothing more. (2). Those who believe sincerely, who have an active faith, but whose faith acts in harmony with commandments of man. (3). Those who believe, have an active faith, and whose faith acts in harmony with gospel commandments.

THE FAITH ONLY CLASS

1. The Jews. (John 8:30-44. In verse 30 we are told that they believed on him. The degree of faith is not mentioned; they may have had great

faith. But they did not have an active faith. Being believers they had the right to become children of God, but they did not exercise their right. That they were not children of God "by faith only" we know from the fact that Jesus said the devil was their father. (V. 44).

2. Jewish rulers. (John 12:42). John says they believed on Jesus. Being believers they had a right to become children of God, but they did not exercise their right, for they love the glory of men more than that of God. Hence they were not added to the Lord.

3. Agrippa. (Acts 26:27-29). This man believed that Jesus was the fulfilment of the prophecies. (Acts 26:22-23, 27). So he believed in Jesus as the Son of God. But he was not added to the Lord. Being a believer he had the right to become a child of God, added to the Lord, but he did not exercise his right. He, like the other mentioned above, was an unsaved believer, a lost believer.

THOSE WHO OBEY HUMAN TRADITIONS

1. Ephesians. (Acts 19:1-7). Paul found twelve men who had believed in Jesus (V. 2), and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. When they said they had not, he asked them into what they had been baptized. When he found they had received John's baptism, he knew why they had not received the Spirit. These people had received John's baptism since Pentecost; they were like Apollos. (Acts 18:24-26).

As proof that they were not added to the Lord, we have their word that they had not received the

Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38; 6:32; Gal. 4:6). Next, Paul commanded them to be baptized into the name of Christ, or to be baptized into Christ. Since they were to be baptized into Christ, we know they were not in Christ, and if not in Christ they were not children of God. (Gal. 3:26, 27).

John's baptism differs from Gospel baptism in that, (1). It was not administered in the name of Christ; (2). It was not "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. "(Matt. 28:19) and, (3). John's baptism pointed towards the death of Christ, and indication of faith in Christ to die for sins, while gospel baptism looks back to the death of Christ. (Acts 19:4). Those who today and ever since Pentecost receive John's baptism virtually deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ who died for our sins, and say they are still looking for a Saviour to die for sins.

2. There are many today who believe in Jesus as sincerely as possible; they love the right and would do what is right if they were told. But, like the Ephesians, some preacher tells them to do something not contained in the gospel. Faith plus obedience to human traditions did not make the Ephesians children of God; they were not added to the Lord. So faith plus human traditions today will not add unto the Lord. Faith plus sprinkling; faith plus voting on people as candidates for baptism into the denomination of their choice will not add people to the Lord.

THOSE WHO OBEY GOSPEL COMMANDMENTS

1. Pentecostans. (Acts 2). Peter preached the gospel; people heard and believed it. Being believers

they had the right to become children of God, to be added to the Lord. Their faith was active, they were given gospel commandments, and they obeyed them. Faith plus obedience to gospel commandments was all that was necessary. Those who believed and obeyed gospel commandment were added to the Lord, they became children of God.

2. The Ephesians. (Acts 19:7). When Paul found that these people had not obeyed gospel commandments, he commanded them to be baptized into the name of Christ. Their faith was correct, but they had not obeyed the right commandments. So people today who believe in Christ do not have to change their faith; but if they have obeyed human traditions, they have to turn from their mistakes and obey the Lord.

3. Cornelius. (Acts 10). This man was a devoutly religious man, but as many today, his was not true religion. He had to hear the gospel that he might believe. (Acts 15:7b). He obeyed gospel commandments. (Acts 10:48).

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

John H. Banister

Text: Romans 10:13

Intro: Three things stated in text. (1). "Who-soever." Verse 12 states that "there is no difference between Jew and Greek." The Great Commission embraces all nations. (Mt. 28:19). The middle wall has been broken down and all can approach God through Christ (Eph. 2:13-16). "There is Neith-

er Jew nor Greek." (Gal. 3:28). Christ tasted "death for every man." (Heb. 2:9). The invitation is to all. (Rev. 22:17). Christianity is universal in its scope. (2). "Shall call on the name of the Lord." This is discussed in the body of the sermon. (3). "Shall be saved." This is positive and certain. Not "maybe" or "probably" but "shall." Saved, not from some earthly calamity, but from sin. Therefore, this subject should be of special interest to us all.

WHAT CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD INVOLVES

(1). The recognition of the sinner's need for God. He must realize that only God can save him through Christ. He calls on God because there is no other upon whom he can call. (2). The realization of his need for salvation and a desire to be saved. (3). Trust in Christ crucified. No trust in self. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life?" (John 6:68). (4). A recognition that salvation is by the grace of God through the merits of the blood of Christ.

HOW DO WE CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD?

1. Negatively: Not by prayer. (Prov. 28:9, I John 3:22, 5:14-15, Jno. 9:31). Not by mourners' bench method. New Testament silent on such as this. Not through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was never for the purpose of saving. It was a promise confined to only a few (Acts 2 and 10) for definite purposes. Miracles have ceased. (I Cor.

13). Not by faith only. (James 2:24, Gal. 5:6, Mark 16:16).

2. Positively: We have three passages that show the HOW in the New Testament. The first case we shall notice is that of Acts 2. Beginning with verse 14 we have the sermon of Peter. In his quotation of Joel's prophecy, he quotes this: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Verse 21). Thus Joel was predicting how people would be saved in this dispensation. But to find out in a detailed way how they were saved on that day, must study further. After believing, they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. They did this. Their salvation was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. Thus, in believing, repenting, and being baptized, they were calling on the name of the Lord.

The second case we shall notice is that of Saul. (Acts 9 and 22). Saw vision and heard voice which made a believer. After asking what to do, he was told to go into city where it would be told him what he MUST do. Was he pardoned on the Damascus road? If so, he did not know it. He asked, "What wilt thou have me do?" If so, he was saved without knowing Christ. "Who art thou, Lord?" If so, the Lord did not know it for he told him what to do. If so, he was saved without obtaining peace and joy. He was wretched and miserable for three days afterward. If so, he was saved without his sins being washed away. (Acts 22:16). Let us notice the completion of his conversion. When Ananias came to him, here is what he told him to do. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptiz-

ed and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Here is what calling on the name of the Lord involves. We call on him in obeying his will.

The third passage is Romans 10:12-27. This passage plainly shows what is necessary to calling on name of Lord. (1). A preacher is needed. Other passages bear this out. Mk. 16:16, I Cor. 1:21, 2 Tim. 4:2. (2). Hearing the Gospel is necessary. John 6:45, Acts 4:4, Acts 15:7, Rom. 10:17. (3). Believing is necessary. Other passages. Mk. 16:16, Jno. 3:16, Romans 3:25. (4). Obeying the Gospel is necessary. Romans 10:16, I Pet. 4:16-17, 2 Thess. 1:7-9. So, this passage teaches that all of these steps are included in calling on the name of the Lord.

Conclusion: If you are unsaved, call on the name of the Lord. But you must call him in his way. If so, he will hear. He will save you, give you peace and rest, and ultimately take you to heaven.

DO YE NOT YET UNDERSTAND?

by R. C. Cannon

Text: Mark 8:21

Introduction: The disciples witnessed the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk. 6:30-44) and the 4,000 (Mk. 8:1-9). Yet they failed to understand. Mk. 8:10-21.

We are shocked at the materialistic attitude of these disciples after all the teaching and miracles of Jesus. But what about our faith, our understanding? We have the advantage of 19 centuries since then to learn. Do we not yet understand?

DO WE SEEK TO EXALT SELF

Jesus taught that true greatness and joyful living come through humility and serving. Mk. 10:43-45; Jno. 13:1-20. Only the humble will possess the kingdom. Matt. 6:3.

There are certain positions one may well seek provided he is motivated by the desire to render still greater service. 1 Tim. 3:1. But he who seeks to exalt self, to dominate and dictate and gain the praise of men, such shall be abased. Matt. 23:11-12.

Remember, the Kingdom of God belongs only to the humble of heart!

ARE WE ANXIOUS?

Anxiety among Christians indicates a lack of understanding. FEAR causes anxiety, distress, and mental terror. But fear is a lack of faith in Divine Providence. We often fear that we will be deprived of life's necessities, but Jesus said, "Be not anxious" for these things. Matt. 6:25.

Elizabeth Cheney has composed the little poem called "Overhead In An Orchard":

Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."
Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
"Friend, I think it must be
That they have no Heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me".

The only solution to our fears is security, and the only dependable security is faith in God. The

imprisoned Paul was neither fearful nor ashamed because of his faith. 2 Tim. 1:12; Acts 16:25; Rom. 8:28. Peace, instead of anxiety, is promised to those who take all things to God in prayer. Phil. 4:4-7. Jesus assuaged the fear of his disciples by this security. Jno 14:1-6.

Escape from anxiety does not mean escape from problems. Paul's faith was rather a power to overcome. Phil. 4:13. Victory over, not escape from, trials and tribulations was his experience. I Cor. 15:57; Rom. 7:24-25. See I Jno. 5:4.

DO WE HATE OUR ENEMIES?

This, too, will indicate a failure to understand the Christian faith. Jesus taught love for enemies. Matt. 5:43-44. It is a distinguishing characteristic of a true Christian to love those who hate him. Matt. 5:46-47. Jesus exemplified this teaching on the cross Lk. 23:34.

ARE WE SELFISH?

Most people seem to agree with Athenaeus that: "A giver is foolish; a receiver is fortunate". Jesus, however, taught that "it is more blessed to give than to receive". Acts 20:35.

God's natural world confirms the teaching of Jesus. The fruit tree receives but gives. It gives food, shade, beauty and oxygen. It thus blesses itself and mankind through giving. The poem "The Two Seas" — Galilee is fresh for it gives what it receives; the Dead Sea is salty for it retains. 2 Cor. 9:6-15.

The life of Jesus bears testimony to this truth.

The giving of His life and message exalted Him and brought life and immortality to light.

"Generosity does not depend on what we hope to have." Give what you have now to God. Let us come to understand that giving ourselves will bring the greatest happiness both here and hereafter. Rom. 12:1; Matt. 16:24-25; Mk. 10:29.

Conclusion

Jesus is "the way the truth and life". He alone has the abundant life. Jno. 10:10. May we give ourselves to learning more about Him.

FOUND TO BE LIARS

By L. Arnold Watson

Text: Rev. 2:2.

INTRODUCTION

The state of the liar is vividly set forth in God's word. Solomon said that the poor man is better than a liar. Prov. 19:22, and again "a liar giveth heed to a mischievous tongue". Prov. 17:4. The apostle John writes that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44) and that the liar is doomed to hell. (Rev. 21:8).

Let us study some who are classified in the Bible as liars.

I. THOSE WHO REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE GUILT OF SIN

I Jno. 1:8-10. Here we are told that those who deny they have sinned are guilty of (1) misrepres-

enting the truth, and (2) making God a liar. Paul also asserts that all have sinned. Rom. 3:23.

Children of God also sin. I Jno. 2:1-2. Such should confess their sins. 1:9. When one realizes that he has sinned he feels a greater need of a Savior and Advocate and the need of encouragement and strength to be received at the assembly of the saints. This will induce him to greater faithfulness.

n. THOSE CLAIMING TO KNOW HIM BUT KEEP NOT HIS COMMANDS

1 Jno. 2:3-6. See also I Jno. 1:6, Matt. 7:21, 24-26; Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14.

HI. HE THAT DENIETH JESUS IS THE CHRIST

I Jno. 2:22. The word "christos" as used here means "anointed", "denoting his kingly authority". Thayer and Young.

If he is king, then Jesus must have (1) authority and a throne and (2) a kingdom with subjects Peter declared on Pentecost that Christ ascended to occupy his throne and to reign as king. Acts 2:29-37. Jesus claimed that he had all authority after he arose (Matt. 28:18). Paul asserted the same. Eph. 1:22-23. Those who deny the existence of Christ's kingdom thus deny Jesus as king and are classified under I Jno. 2:22.

IV. HE WHO CLAIMS TO LOVE GOD YET HATES HIS BROTHER

I Jno. 4:20. If one has the love of God in his heart he will be longsuffering, will not vaunt him-

self, will take no account of evil, and will rejoice not in unrighteousness but the truth. I Cor. 13:4-6. Godly love will be manifested in one's attitude toward his brethren and fellow-men. It will be found helping, giving, sacrificing. The false heart will claim this love without these traits.

V. HE THAT BELIEVES NOT ON THE SON OF GOD

I Jno. 5:10. God has borne witness concerning Jesus. To disbelieve, then, one must reject this testimony. This includes a rejection of Christ's miracles. Jno. 10:37-38; 20:30-31, and the reception of testimony of witnesses both friends (Acts 2:32) and enemies (Matt. 27:23-24; 27:54).

Disbelief today can be evidenced by either an open denunciation of Jesus and His claims or by rejecting or refusing to abide by His commands.

Conclusion: Let none of us be found to be liars by rejecting the Christ, disobeying God's commands, hating our brother, or denying our sins.

FOUR WAYS OF SETTING ASIDE GOD'S LAW

Cline R. Paden

Intro: The Bible contains God's law. As long as man lives in harmony with that law, he pleases God. When he violates that law, he sins. Sin is the transgression of law. (I Jno. 3:4). The Bible is plain as to the penalty assessed for sin. (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). We wish to study how God's law was set aside in olden times. The Old Testa-

ment, which was "written for our learning," contains many examples. We shall divide the sins into four classes.

DELIBERATE SINS

Lev. 6:12 concerning the fire upon the altar. "It shall not be put out." With this prohibition before them, for the priests to put out the fire would be a deliberate sin. It would be to sin with full knowledge of the law and its penalty. The same principle is seen in the New Testament. This is the law: Baptism is a condition of salvation (Mk. 16:16, I Pet. 3:21). "Not by faith only." (James 2:24). The doctrine of faith only which sets aside baptism as a condition of pardon, is a deliberate setting aside of God's word.

SIN OF NEGLECT

Lev. 6:13 "It shall never go out." To neglect the fire and let it die would be a sin. Carelessness which would permit the fire to go out would be sinful as surely as deliberately putting the fire out. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17). So many today know their duty but keep neglecting and putting it off. If the sins and the transgressions of the Old Testament were punished, "How shall we escape if we neglect?" (Heb. 2:3).

SINS OF SUBSTITUTION

Committed by those who thought something else was just as good. To substitute their own ways for God's was a terrible sin. Notice a case in Lev. 10. These two priests offered fire which God had

not commanded, and which, therefore, was "strange fire." Death was the penalty. God's law relative to music in worship is found in the New Testament (Eph. 5:19). To use some kind of music not here commanded would be to offer that which God commanded not, and, therefore, "strange music." This case serves to condemn all other substitutions which men have introduced. That which Jehovah commanded not is sinful, even though it may not be expressly prohibited. The absence of a command makes it wrong.

SINS OF DELUDED HEARTS

In this, the offender thought he was doing right. God's law was set aside in ignorance. A case to illustrate in I Kings 13, the young prophet. Tell the story. He thought he was doing God's bidding, but was told "Thou hast disobeyed the command." (V. 21). Let us modernize this case. Suppose God had told the young prophet to believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. The world ridicules but he believes; his friends chide but he repents; he is offered power and position if he will deny the Lord but he confesses; He makes preparation to be baptized. But he meets an old prophet who tells him it is not essential. He believes what he is told and fails to obey. God does not punish instantly as he did then, not in the same way. But if he punished every transgression then, now can we hope to escape? Many are traveling the ways that seem right. (Proverbs 14:12). God has reserved a day of punishment.

Conclusion: These things were written for our learning. Our blessings and opportunities are much

greater than were theirs. If they could not sin with impunity, neither can we. We should take heed lest we fall "after the same example of unbelief." (Hebrew 4:11).

GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE

by Lloyd E. Ellis

"Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee." (Acts 3:6).

There lies in this one sentence an epitome of this entire lesson on giving. "What I have"—I give. If one would only do that, he would fill all his obligations to the full. God demands no more, and that is all that any man should expect of another.

The setting and occasion for the above statement of Peter, is found in the picture of the lame man sitting at the gate, begging. He expected money, the apostles did not have this, but they were ready and willing to give what they did have—and that which they could give was worth far more than money to this unfortunate man. Peter and John had something to give—they gave it.

I. What Others Gave In the Past.

A. Some examples of those who gave whatever they had. First, They gave personal aid to those in distress, or who were afflicted. Peter and John caused the lame man to be healed. Another example is that of the work of the "good Samaritan." Lk. 10:25-37). Here was one in need—in distress, and this Samaritan could give assistance—assistance

which others had refused to give. He gave what was needed and what he had to give.

Second, they gave their possession. In those early days some of the disciples voluntarily sold their possessions and placed the money at the disposal of the apostles. (Acts 4:34-37).

Third, many gave their lives. Almost from the very first, persecutions followed the disciples of the Lord, and many were called upon to give their lives for the cause of Christ. The pages of the record are filled with the stories of the faithfulness of the martyrs.

Fourth, it must be remembered that Christ gave all. He gave up his glory with the Father to come to the earth to suffer and die for men. He came to do the will of the Father (Heb. 10:7), and he accomplished the work which he came to do. (Jno. 17:4). While he was here on the earth he gave up any idea of glory and honor in the world. Others have sold themselves to the devil for earthly power and glory, but this, Jesus refused to do. Mt. 4:8-10; Lk. 4:5-8). He had no property here in this world. (Mt. 8:20). Indeed, it would have ill become the Lord of heaven and earth to have claimed a small portion of earthly things. As a man he sought not personal possessions, but as the Lord he sought to bring all to him by giving all himself. In the end he did give himself—he died that all might live.

II. Each Should Give What He Has

A. No matter how small, how poor, or how insignificant one may be and feel, he still has much to give. Most of the mighty works of the earth are

accomplished by the concentrated efforts of many small tasks. Witness the pyramids of Egypt—built by the combined labors of thousands upon thousands of toilers. Consider the ants—a grain of sand—one individual after another toiling on, until at last a huge mound is built up.

Each one has time, and a fine lesson is included in these words; "Time is the stuff that life is made of, do not waste it." Thomas Haemerlein of Kemper, who lived in the 15th century, dying about 1471 A.D., said, "Never be idle or vacant. Be always reading or writing or praying or meditating or employed in some useful labor for the common good." (Quoted by H. B. Workman in *Christian Thought to the Reformation*, p. 221). Men could learn a lesson from that statement. How full our lives might be, if we never wasted any time!

Each one has some talent, or talents which should be used in serving and praising God, and helping men. One may sing and another may speak, and someone else may do something else which is worthwhile.

The personality of the individual may be developed and used to the advantage of that individual and of others. One can learn to smile, even in the midst of sorrow, and a smile will give more encouragement and help than many other things. Learn to smile. One may give words of encouragement to another—and a word of comfort and encouragement spoken at the right time, will help another in many ways and bring right dividends to the speaker. Yes, each one can give words of encouragement to others. Each one could be present at the

assembly, and if one could do no more than be present, then even his presence alone is an encouragement to others. Give your time and your presence, these you have and can give. Each one should praise God, and glorify him. God does not expect of one more than he can do, but he surely does expect each one to do his duty, and to give what he may have. The parable of the "talents" teaches that one should use what has been entrusted to him, in the service of the Lord. (Mt. 25:14-30; Lu. 19:12-27).

HI. Values of Giving

In this present age, when so many demands are being made upon the individuals; when he is being faced with petitions, and almost with demands to give to all sorts of things, there is a danger that the blessings of free-will and voluntary giving may be lost.

The spiritual enrichment to the individual who gives is one of the things which should be carefully noted. An organization was being formed for the purpose of raising money for some welfare institutions. Various speeches had been made which indicated how little is given in comparison to what is spent on many luxuries, etc. An unobtrusive little man arose and made a statement that shocked the assembly. "It seems to me," he said, "that the important thing is not raising money, but getting people to give; not what the money does for the institutions that get it, but what it does for the people who give it. . . . What I hope is that you can save the privilege of free-will giving." (Arthur Bratlett in *This Week Magazine*, Oct. 1945). What does it do to the one who gives? Giving makes a better

man; it softens the heart; and causes one to think of another who is in need; it helps to make brothers of men; it assists in making one Christ-like.

There certainly is a value, also, to the one who receives. There are none who can go alone through life, and there are many who need much assistance if they are to live godly and righteously here in this world. Many need help if they are to pass a reasonably happy life on earth—yes, life itself often depends upon the assistance given by others.

God and Christ also need the help of what each one can give—not that they have such individual need, but since God has placed in the hands of men the task of helping others, then the individual must give to other men if the purposes of God are to be carried out.

When Christ had given himself, then God gave to him—even a name which is above every name. (Phil. 2:9). God exalted him, even above others. (Heb. 1:9). To the obedient—to the ones who give themselves and whatever they have, in this life, God will also give much. He will welcome the ones who have given. (Mt. 25:34), and give to them eternal life. (Rom. 6:23).

Friends, as you read these lines, do you realize just how much each of you have to give? And when you are conscious of the fact that you do have so much to give, will you ask yourself, "Am I giving what I have?"

The Lord has asked you to give only what you have, for if you do not have the Lord will not expect something from you. (II Cor. 8:12). Though

you may not have everything—yet you have something, and whatever that something may be, the Lord expects you to give of that. The Apostle has taught that one is to give as he has been blessed, or prospered; to give as he purposes in his heart; freely and willingly—and bountifully. (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-8). And let us not forget that each one is to do this.

Above all things, the matter of prime importance is to give yourself. The Lord wants you. Those of Macedonia gave of their means after they had given themselves to the Lord. (H" Cor. 8:5). Let us first give ourselves to the Lord, and then give other things that we have.

This principle is illustrated by the story of the little boy who had no money to give. An appeal had been made to the audience to help by donations a work badly needed in some foreign field. When the basket was being passed, this little fellow thought and thought of what he might give. As the basket came closer and closer he could think of nothing that he had. At last, as he was approached, he placed his foot in the basket and said that since he had no money to give, he would give himself.

HOW WE SHOULD LIVE

James D. Willeford

Text: 2 Peter 3:9-11.

Intro: After reminding his readers of the second coming of Christ and its certainty, and of the destruction of all material things, Peter asks the question, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Or, in view

of these things which are to occur, how should we live? Let us find the answer to this question: We should live:

IN THE FLESH BUT NOT AFTER THE FLESH

Romans 8:1-4. Cannot follow the lusts of the flesh and please God. Today professors in schools are telling students to do what they want to do, to satisfy self. Contrary to Bible which says, "Mortify deed of body." This is a strong argument for our young people attending our Christian colleges. The spirit must be followed, not the flesh. See Romans 8:13. Cannot please self and God.

FOR SELF BUT NOT SELFISHLY

Cannot live the Christian life for others. Phil. 2:4. We ARE our brother's keeper. Christ tells us to go and break the bread of life, not keep it to ourselves. Christianity should make us benevolent and generous. We see the contrast of attitudes in Abraham and Lot. Lot chose the fertile plains and pitched his tent toward Sodom. Why? Selfishness. But Abraham's magnanimity is seen in his offer to his nephew. So, while we can be Christians for ourselves only, still we must not live in a selfish manner. Our lives must be for others.

FOR OTHERS BUT NOT INSTEAD OF OTHERS

Gal. 6:2. Also, see Matt. 20:25 ff. Some have thought a contradiction between Gal. 6:2 and 6:5. But no contradiction. Burdens in verse 2 means "distress" while burdens in verse 5 has reference to "responsibilities." In the judgment we'll be judged

according to what we did and not according to what someone else did. Some feel that if one member of the family is present for worship, that satisfies the requirements for the entire family. Christ will not ask you how your preacher lived, how many he say-ed, or how many he visited, but he will judge you by what you did.

AS THOUGH WE ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF
GOD EVERY MINUTE BECAUSE WE ARE

Psalm 139. The very night itself is daylight in the mind of God. His eye sees my actions, his ear hears my words, his mind is comprehending my thoughts. Ecc. 12:13-14. Hebrews 4:12-13. How would you like for your nearest and dearest friend to see your life flashed upon a screen before you? Some day God will see the innermost recesses of your heart.

AS THOUGH THE EYES OF THE WORLD WERE
UPON US BECAUSE THEY ARE

"Living epistle, known and read of all men." Al-most impossible to escape eyes of men even. They know more about you than you think. Be sure your sin will find you out, and it more often than not, finds you out in the here and now. Someone is constantly watching you. Live in recognition of that fact.

AS THOUGH THIS WERE THE LAST DAY
OF LIFE ... IT MAY BE

Psalm 103:15-16. Job 14:1-2. Isaiah 40:6. I Peter 1:24. James 1:10. The Old Testament and the New Testament both constantly shout to us of

the frailty of man, and the brevity of his life. Also, our daily observation teaches us that this is true. We see death and decay on all things around us. We should live in constant recognition of the fact that the pale horse is constantly coming into our midst, and we may be next. Seeing that this is true, what manner of persons ought we to be?

INSPIRED ENCOURAGEMENT TO GIVE

C. E. McGaughey

Intro: It should be the desire of every Christian to know all that God wants him to know. He should not have any reluctance in learning any part of God's will, whether it be concerning the Lord's Supper, baptism, giving, or any other subject. Not only be willing to learn, but willing to practice to the very maximum of his strength. (Jas. 1:22). Must be a doer as well as a hearer. The encouragement given by Paul to the Corinthians to give is the basis of this lesson. What he said to the Christians of the first century should be of vital interest to us today. In Paul's first letter, he laid down the general principles concerning church finance. (I Cor. 16:1-2). Individually, "each one." Regularly, "Upon the first day of the week." Proportionately, "As he may prosper." In his second letter he encouraged them to carry out those principles.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE MACEDONIANS IS CITED

(2 Cor. 8:1-5). In the midst of affliction and out of deep poverty they had given. They had giv-

en liberally "beyond their power" and "of their own accord." The reason for their liberality, "But first they gave their own selves to the Lord."

URGED TO LET THEIR GIVING BE ON PAR WITH THEIR OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(Verse 7). They had abounded in faith, utterance, knowledge, and in all earnestness. Now they are exhorted to "Abound in this grace also," which is the grace of giving. Christians should strive to be well-balanced in their development, and not to leave their giving undeveloped.

PAUL REMINDS THEM THEIR GIVING IN- DICATES THE SINCERITY OF THEIR LOVE

(W. 8-24). If giving was a test of love then, it still is. How true it is that we are willing to sacrifice for those in whom we are vitally interested. This is one of the characteristics of love. Mothers and fathers will sacrifice for their children to provide their physical needs and the right kind of educational advantages. If we love the lost, the widows, and the orphans, we shall be willing to sacrifice for them and thus fulfill the Lord's work.

HE HOLDS UP THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS TO STIR THEIR HEARTS TO GENEROUS ACTION

(Verse 9). "Though he was rich." Equal with the Father (Phil. 2:6). Had glory with the Father. (John 17:5). He also had the love, service, and fellowship of the heavenly hosts. (Mt. 4:11, Lk. 23:43, Mt. 26:53). He was co-creator and co-owner of every

atom of material wealth in the entire universe. (John 1:3, Col. 1:16-17).

"He became poor." Was born of a home so poor that the mother had to offer the poorest of all offerings for her cleansing. (Lk. 2:23). When grown he had no place to call home. (Lk. 9:58). He became a servant. (Phil. 2:7). Died for others. (I Pet. 2:24). Buried in tomb of another. His mother was given to the care of another. (Jno. 19:37). He became perfectly qualified to be our Savior through his suffering, death, and resurrection. (Heb. 5:9). If he would so sacrifice for us, out of sincere gratitude, and in imitation of him, we should be willing to sacrifice that the Gospel of Christ might be carried to the millions who have never heard it.

HE URGING THEM TO CARRY OUT THEIR PROMISE AND PURPOSES

He refers to their giving as "aforepromised bounty." (9:5 American Standard Version). Not only had they seen the need but had promised to do something. They are urged to complete their purpose. (9:6). If it was right for them to promise and purpose ahead, it is still right and worthy of the imitation of all Christians.

REMINDS THEM THAT WE SHALL REAP AS WE SOW

(9:4). Men do not impoverish themselves by giving freely, but rather they bless themselves.

WARNS AGAINST GIVING GRUDGINGLY AND
REVEALS THAT GOD LOVES CHEERFUL GIVER

(9:7). To give large amounts with a heart that is reluctant to part with it is of no value. Not only must give freely, but willingly and cheerfully.

HE PROMISES THAT GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE
ABLE THOSE WHO USE WE'LL FOR HIM
WHAT THEY HAVE

(9:8-11). "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you." "That ye having all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." "And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food shall supply and multiply your seed. . . ."

HIS FINAL WORDS A SUMMARY OF WHAT
HE HAS SAID

In closing the subject, Paul said, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift." (9:15). Points to God's great gift in the giving of his Son. Notice, "unspeakable gift."

Conclusions: These were powerful motives for the Corinthians to give. Carefully, considered, they will move us today.

"LET'S PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST!"

M. Norvel Young

Text: Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Intro: Two ways of classifying what we do: 1.

Is it right or wrong in itself? 2. If it is right in itself what relative importance should it have in my life? Jesus not only teaches us to eschew such sins as lying, murder, adultery, pride, etc., but also to put first things first in reference to those things right in themselves. "My ways are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts," says the Lord.

I. God's Requirement

"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . ." The comparison is not with things wrong in themselves, but with food, clothing, shelter in contrast with God's kingdom. Context shows this. "Be not therefore anxious saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal anxious saying, For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God is not content for us to live on same level with pagans or Gentiles. It becomes a sin to put physical needs above spiritual needs. It is getting the cart before the horse. God knows that this is one of the fundamental temptations for the disciple of Christ.

II. The "First Things" Defined

1. God's kingdom and his righteousness include God's purpose for us and this whole world. The first thing Jesus taught us to pray for is God's kingdom. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is to be our petition. Out of seven requests in the prayer the Lord taught the disciples only one referred to material needs. Our purpose in life is to glorify God and do His will,, not enjoy ourselves, entertain ourselves..

Christianity is not a segment of our lives. It is not a way of looking at certain things, but a certain way of looking at all things. When pagans put communism first it is time for Christians to put first things first. Sept. 11, 1950 Time quotes Soviet Society: "The struggle against the Gospel and Christian legend must be conducted ruthlessly and with all the means at the disposal of Communism." They are publishing 20,000,000 tracts to convert young people.

III. APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE TO OUR LIVES

III. Applying the Principle to Our Lives

1. Test yourself on what you put first when there is a conflict.

Do not neglect the worship at any time with an excuse you would not offer at your office or shop? (Such as headache, friends dropped in, tired) Example of Hugh Wilkin of Houston, Texas who sponsored softball team with understanding they would not have to play on Wednesday evening. Later in run-off team was scheduled to play on Wednesday. Their protests were scoffed at. Team refused to play, forfeited chances of winning tournament, so that they could attend prayer meeting.

2. Example of young woman in Lubbock who broke her engagement because eligible young man was not a Christian and would not study Bible with view of obeying gospel before their wedding. Example of convert in Memphis, Tenn. at Union Avenue who refused to speak at dinner for his company because he had prior engagement to attend prayer meeting.

Example of family that refused to spend money on vacation because they could not afford it after giving their first 10 per cent to the Lord. Do we give what is left over, or do we give first to the Lord and spend what is left.

3. Blessings will attend us. If we put first things first we will bear much fruit for the Lord. John 15:8. We will have added to us the necessities of life. We will lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Peace, joy, love, hope will spring up within us every day. Our false pride, pagan sense of values will be swept away. Soul worth more than all the world.

Conclusion. No time to dilly-dally. We cannot serve God and mammon. Let us reexamine our standard of values for ourselves and our children, and put first things first. God must be first or He will not be at all in our lives. Christ is either worth everything or nothing at all.

LOVE ABOUNDING

Roy H. Lanier

Text: Phil. 1:9-11.

INTRODUCTION:

Paul had less criticism to offer the church at Philippi than any other church, yet he urged them to grow in love. He prayed that their love might abound yet more and more. The word "abound" suggests the idea of getting full and running over; it is always possible for one to grow in love.

Paul wanted them to grow in knowledge; he

wanted their love to be an intelligent love. Without knowledge there can be no love. No such thing as love at first sight. Knowledge either repels or draws. The more you know of some people, the less you are inclined to love them; the more you know of others the more you love them.

Paul wanted them to have a discerning love—"in all discernment." We must be able to discern between things worthy of our love and things unworthy of our love. Love not the world. (I Jno. 2:15). Love heavenly things. (Col. 3:1-2).

This love enables us to "approve the things that are excellent." One's character is judged by the things he approves and allows in his speech and presence. The objects of our love are not mentioned in the verse, but from other scriptures we learn what a Christian should love.

WE MUST LOVE GOD

The first and supreme object of the Christian's love is God (Matt. 22:37). We find it easy to love them who love us. Since God gave us a being in the world, has sustained and preserved us in good health of mind and body, has given his Son to redeem us from sin, has guarded us from the evil one (II Thess. 3:3), and will give us a home in heaven, we ought to find it easy to love him. We love him because he loved us. (I Jno. 4:19).

The test of love is obedience. (I Jno. 5:3). And his commandments are not grievous. The word "grievous" does not mean difficult, for many of God's commandments are difficult. But it is not a galling experience to keep the most difficult com-

mandments if we love God. We will get our greatest thrill, out highest enjoyment, from doing the will of God if we love him supremely.

WE MUST LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Jesus demands that we love him more than we love parents, husband, wife, children or property. (Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26) Again the test of our love for him is our obedience to his commandments. (Jno. 14:15) Keeping part of his commandments is no proof of love. Keeping all his commandments a part of the time is no proof of love. Faithful, constant obedience in our business, social, and recreational life, as well as our worship, is the proof of our love.

WE MUST LOVE THE CHURCH

Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25); and we should love it enough to give our lives in humble service to it. If we love the church we will attend its services. People who love their fraternal orders, or civic clubs, attend the meetings and take part in the activities. Love for the church will not allow little hindrances to keep one from attending.

If we love the church we will accept responsibilities in the work and worship. Love will cause one to teach a class, conduct a prayer service, serve on whatever committees the elders appoint us. Love for the church will cause one to give money for the growth and expansion of the work of the church.

If we love the church we will not act in such a way as to bring shame and reproach upon its good name in the community. Young people often think

they have a right to dance; they say there is no sin in it to them. They are wrong; but suppose they are right, and no personal harm would come to them. Dancing will bring reproach upon the church where they worship. If they love the church, they will forego their personal pleasure rather than hurt the church. Some brethren think they have a right to drink beer and whisky. Suppose they have that personal right. The pious people of the community think such is wrong, and people who drink will lose their influence and bring reproach upon the church. If we love the church we will be willing to sacrifice our pleasures to protect the good name of the church.

WE MUST LOVE THE TRUTH

People are lost who receive not the love of the truth. (II Thess. 2:10). If we love the truth we will search for it. (Jno. 5:39; Acts 17:11). If we love the truth we will accept it regardless of the source. If we love the truth we will defend it. Jude tells us to contend for the faith (Jude 3). Paul says the mouths of false teachers ought to be stopped (Tit. 1:9-11. We stop their mouths by reproof, rebuking, exposing their false doctrines and unscriptural practices. (II Tim. 4:2-4; Eph. 5:11). Jesus used this method (Jno. 7:7; Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-16). Paul used this method (Acts 19:8). Stephen defended the truth and exposed error. (Acts 6:9).

WE MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER

"Let brotherly love continue." "Love one another from the heart fervently." We must love brethren in spite of their faults. If God refused to

love us until we become worthy of his love, the last one of us would go to torment. We must love brethren in spite of what they do to us, or say about us (Matt. 5:43-47). Association with brethren which results in better knowledge of them will usually cause us to love them. Praying often for a brother will help us love him; it is impossible to hate one if we call his name in our prayers every day and ask the Lord to bless him.

WE MUST LOVE THE LOST

It was the love of God for the lost that sent Jesus to save us; it was the love of Jesus that made him willing to die for us. The only way we can show our appreciation for their great love for us when we were lost is to love the lost about us enough to do what we can to save them. If I love the lost I will preach the gospel to them; give my money to send preachers of the gospel to them; go with preachers into communities within reach to preach the gospel. Too many people are not willing to inconvenience themselves enough on Sunday to go with the Preacher to a community to preach the gospel a few miles from home. Paul's love for the lost was so great that he was willing to be "anathema from Christ" if he could save his Jewish brethren (Rom. 9:1-3). Such love for the lost led him to endure all things for their sake (II Tim. 2:10; II Cor. 11:22-28). And love for the lost knows no national boundaries. If we love the lost we will be willing to send, or take, the gospel to every nation under heaven.

MARKS OF A FAITHFUL CHURCH

Otis Gatewood

Intro: Many letters in the New Testament written to churches. In them we find commendation when merited and criticism when deserved. What kind of letter would the Lord write to this church? In this lesson, we want to notice some of the things that are required of a faithful church. Some of these are usually regarded as little things, but they are important in the eyes of the Lord.

A PEACEFUL CHURCH

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psal 133:1). "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The unity of the Jerusalem church was one reason for its outstanding success. Are you the type that contributes to peace, or are you the type that constantly criticizes, picks flaws, and tears down? "Blessed are the peacemakers." This characteristic has a great deal to do with the impression created upon the community.

A FRIENDLY AND HAPPY CHURCH

So many times we who are Christians depict sadness. This does not convince others that Christ can change lives and bring joy and sunshine. "Rejoice in the Lord." Radiate joy and happiness. Some do not return to our services because we did not speak. We should make a special effort to be kind to the poor. When Jesus sent word to John to tell him that he was the Messiah, he told them

to tell John, " The poor have the gospel preached to them." In other words, Christ was saying, "I am giving attention to those who have been neglected by others."

A REVERENT CHURCH

We have stressed the fact that the house is not holy, but shouldn't we behave differently from the way we would in a grocery store? Reverence is one point in which we need much improvement. A suggestion: When you come into the building, get a song book or a testament, and start reading. This will prepare your mind for worship. It will teach others respect for the Lord.

A CHURCH WITH PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD LITTLE THINGS

"Who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zech. 4:10). Jesus' life composed of what many would call little things, such as teaching one man or woman, blessing children, using sparrow to teach a lesson, emphasizing the commonplace things of life. He taught us that if we so much as give a cup of water in his name, we shall be remembered for it. Little acts of our everyday living have so much to do with giving an impression of the church to others. We might talk harshly to a telephone operator who had failed to get the right number for us, and this little act might drive her away from Christ. But a kind word has marvellous transforming power. Watch the thousands of little things which combine to make up life!

A CHURCH THAT IS FAITHFUL IN ATTENDANCE

Catholics insist on attendance. Denominations do not. Denominationalism is crumbling; Catholics increasing. This shows the power of faithful church attendance. If you love the church, you will be faithful to attend its services. This is something noticed by others. You can convince them that church means something to you by your fidelity to it.

A CHURCH THAT IS FAITHFUL IN TEACHING

This is something in which Christ is so interested. Is this church faithful to his charge? Are we as a church doing anything to preach the gospel outside of these four walls? This is a great test of our faithfulness. A true church of Christ must be missionary. This is also true of individual members. Each Christian must be a soul winner for Jesus. How many have you ever won for Christ? "You must save another soul if you would save your own; The doors of heaven are closed to him who comes alone."

A CHURCH THAT IS FAITHFUL
IN STUDYING THE BIBLE

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6). It seems that there is a great lack of Bible knowledge among us today. If we had some creed other than the Bible, we might find some consolation in failing to know the Bible. But it is our only creed. We should know it. We, of all people, should be acquainted with it. How can we teach

others if we do not? "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Conclusion: Let us examine ourselves to see whether we be in the faith. Christ will not judge us by how successful or how popular we were, but by our faithfulness. Is this a faithful church? Are you a faithful Christian? If you want to make this the kind of church with which Christ is pleased, then you must begin with yourself.

PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT THINGS ABOUT THE MINISTRY

Weldon B. Bennett

INTRODUCTION

In Phil. 4:10-13 Paul reveals some of the personal things about himself. We may call them the "ups and downs" of his ministry. Just as in other vocations of life that of an evangelist is punctuated with both pleasant and unpleasant experiences and emotions.

Though Paul was an apostle he was yet human, a man of feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes. His life interests us because we experience many things similar to what he did. Certainly our persecutions and physical hardships are not as great as his, but we do have the same pleasures and displeasures in preaching.

1. UNPLEASANT FEATURES OF BEING A GOSPEL PREACHER

1. Facing a world steeped in sin. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was pro-

voked within him as he beheld the city full of idols." Acts 17:16. What a tremendous task the Gentile apostle had to tackle! What insurmountable obstacles apparently lay ahead! One devoid of the Spirit of Christ would have concluded there was no chance for good.

Today, as we observe what a grip sin has on most people our hearts ache. In almost every public place we see women puffing cigarettes whose fingers are stained with poisonous nicotine. In many of these places teen-aged girls are found drinking intoxicants. It is not unusual to observe young women whose husbands are in the armed forces keeping company with other men. When, too, we have such legislators as a congressman of our own state of California who supported a bill for helping to keep secret from the husbands serving overseas the birth of illegitimate children. We are tempted to say, "What is the use?" But Paul had to face a world steeped in sin. We must double our efforts.

2. Comparatively few will hear the gospel. We work hard inviting people to our services, yet few, comparatively, will come. Some who do attend are disinterested. Many others have prejudices. We preach with all our power and in love, yet they are offended. Again, we remember that Paul faced the same conditions. Acts 13:44 ff., 23:1-2.

3. Indifference of some members. When we read the messages to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2, 3) we discover only two faithful congregations. Imagine the unpleasant task of the messengers and the grief of those who worked to plant

the gospel in these places now learning of the lukewarmness of some and apostasy of others.

Sometimes we face the same today. We see brethren who apparently are not interested in the church's growth, who care so little for the services that they attend seldom, so disinterested in converting souls that they will not even attend preaching services devoted to converting the alien, so greedy they will not sacrifice to have neat, inviting meeting houses—how heart-rending all this is to the one whose soul's great desire is to advance the Cause of Christ.

4. Destructive critics, objectors, compromisers. Some criticize the preacher to his back. Occasionally he finds objectors to any worthwhile program. These are not many, perhaps, but they can make one's work unpleasant. And another class which hinders the Cause of Christ is compromisers. In his list of "perils" Paul mentions "false brethren". I Cor. 11:26.

5. Worldliness in the church. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with tears. . . ." 2 Cor. 2:4. Thus speaks Paul concerning sin in the Corinthian church. It is an unpleasant job to reprove brethren of their worldly ways, but the truth must be preached. 2 Tim. 4:1-2.

After my announcing the church's withdrawal from an incorrigible at a congregation with which I once labored, one of the Christians said to me, "I certainly would hate to do what you did". Yet the

brother knew some had to take the lead in such discipline.

But there is the brighter side which we have reserved for the last.

II. WHY PREACHING IS A PLEASURE

1. Satisfaction of knowing it is the most important work in the world. Jesus called busy fishermen to be his disciples, saying he would make of them "fishers of men". Mk. 1:16f. Again, Jesus pointed out to a disciple that preaching must have precedence over burying one's father. Lk. 9:57-60. The apostles declared that preaching the word of the Lord was more important than "serving tables" to the hungry. Acts 6:2. Yea, Paul considered his ministry above his own life. Acts 20:24.

2. The realization of Christ's presence to help. "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. "For himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee." Heb. 13:5. "Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you". I Pet. 5:7. These and many other scriptures assure the gospel minister that he is not alone in his work.

3. The joy of seeing people accept Christ. Though many seem disinterested, still we find honest, earnest searchers for truth. And what joy there is to lead these to Christ! "They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren". Acts 15:3. We often hear this: "Today is the happiest day of my life, to see

my son (or husband, or friend) become a Christian".

4. The joy of seeing Christians develop. Anxiety surrounds the birth of every child. What joy comes to the parents when the babe begins to develop normally! And so with our babes in Christ.

Many years ago I held a mission meeting in West Texas. On the second night a man and woman with their two daughters obeyed the gospel. They lived quite a distance from the place of worship and, at first, attended irregularly. I was concerned about them, wondering if they would be faithful. Ten years later I held a meeting at their home, and to my joy I found they were regularly attendants.

"Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth". 3 Jno. 4.

5. Loving fellowship of the faithful. The Christian has more in common with fellow saints than with those kin in the flesh who are not God's children. Once, upon being introduced to an elder, the latter said, "Brother Bennett, I have not seen you before, but I feel that I have always known you for we are brothers in Christ". There is no association or fellowship to equal that of Christians. How touching is Paul's prayer to the Thessalonians, "For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy, for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith? Now may

our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you". I Thess. 3:9-11.

6. The hope of reward. Add to the foregoing the hope of heaven, and the pleasant features far outweigh the unpleasant. How consoling and inspiring is Paul's valediction, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7-8.

With all its ups and downs I would not exchange the pulpit for a throne.

THE POWER OF SINGING

Willard Collins

Text: Colossians 3:16-17

Intro: God's revelation teaches man how to be saved and how to live and worship that he may be eternally saved in Heaven. It contains full instructions relative to worship. One way in which a Christian is to render praise and devotion to God is by singing. Our text emphasizes this important act of worship. More study and emphasis should be given to it. Our text emphasizes the fact that one prerequisite is being filled with the word. "Let the word dwell in you richly." A Christian should be especially familiar with those passages that teach him how to sing. (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26, Rom. 15:9, I Cor. 14:15, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, Heb. 2:12,

James 5:13). There is wonderful power in the right kind of singing.

ONE WAY OF TEACHING

Can teach sinners of the death of Christ and its meaning by singing such as "There was one who was willing to die in my stead." This teaches the vicarious death of Christ. Another important fact of the Christian religion is that the blood is the cleansing power. We meet this blood by being baptized into His death. (Jno. 19:34, I Jno. 1:7, Rom. 6:4). We can sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." This teaches the value of the blood and the connection between blood and obedience. We can teach lessons about heaven by singing "There's a beautiful place called heaven." This has a tendency to cause those who hear to appreciate heaven more. Many other facts we can teach sinners by scriptural songs.

A MEANS OF INSPIRING WEAK MEMBERS

We teach and admonish one another in song. Songs such as "stand up for Jesus" have a tremendous power. They encourage the weak and faint-hearted to renew their strength. Many songs are designed for this purpose.

A MEANS OF ADMONISHING AND ENCOURAGING OUR FELLOWMAN

Invitation songs encourage sinners to accept Christ. Example, "O Why Not Tonight?" Bereaved

families are comforted by the songs of their friends.
"Does Jesus care when my heart is pained?"

A MEANS OF PRAISING GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS

God has been good to us. Someone has said, "The Christian sings because he has something to sing about." This realization causes him to sing from the heart as he is admonished to do. There are many songs of praise and thanksgiving.

Conclusion: Think of the potential power for good there is in Christians everywhere lifting their voices in song! Power to stir lost people. Power to revive weak Christians. This is the kind of music that can be made in the name of Christ, for he commanded it. No other can. And there is not the power in the mechanical instruments of man that is in the God-ordained music which is made with the voice and accompanied with the melody of the heart. Are you able to sing from the heart, "Jesus is all the world to me"? If you are not a Christian, you are not.

PROPERDISCRIMINATION

James D. Willeford

Text Hebrews 5:14

"Senses exercised to discern both good and evil.."

Intro: There is an old proverb which says, "Happy is he who can properly discriminate." Christians, of all people, must be able to make proper discrimination. This requires wisdom. Jesus taught his disciples to be wise. (Mt. 10:16). In another

place (Lk. 16:8) Jesus said children of world wiser than children of light. Why should this be true? Why should we let this be true? We should excel all others in the use of wisdom. And in order to be children of God in whom he is well pleased, we must make proper discrimination.

MUST BE ABLE TO DISCERN GOOD FROM EVIL

Text emphasizes this. This is a trait of a Christian who has exercised himself, advanced, and grown. Of course, should be able to recognize all sin specified by name in Bible. Then, too, there are practices such as dancing not prohibited by name. Should be able to see the evil. Illustrate Barber with obscene picture on wall of shop. Later he became a Christian. Someone observed the picture gone. He knew it was out of harmony with Christianity. A Christian must be able to recognize anything out of harmony with the tenor of the religion of our Lord. Also, he must be able to see that certain things are right under some circumstances and wrong under other circumstances.

MUST MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERMISSIBLE AND THE ADVISABLE

Paul discusses this in that great chapter on Christian influence, I Cor. 8. Should not always exercise our right. Must not when it causes another "to offend." This has been misused and abused by fanatics. Does not mean that we are to abstain from everything that is objected to by someone. But if our conduct causes another to offend or to sin, then should abstain.

DISCERN TRUTH FROM ERROR

This requires study. Some can listen to truth and not recognize it as truth, and to error and not recognize it as such. Should be able to recognize error even when it hides behind the piety and humility of its proponent. Should detect it in spite of the zeal of those who preach it. Should discern error even when he who proclaims it is making a great sacrifice to spread it. Should detect it even though it is proclaimed with "the tongues of men and of angels." These things, piety, humility, zeal, eloquence, etc., have a tendency to prevent the detection of error. Christians must see through them.

MUST MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN
CHARACTER AND REPUTATION

Reputation is what people think. Character is what God knows you to be. Must regard character above reputation. Some guard well their reputation but neglect character. Should give attention to character and reputation will take care of itself.

RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MERE
CHURCH MEMBER AND A CHRISTIAN

Must be a church member to be a Christian. But you might be a church member and not be a real Christian. Difference might be seen in many ways as the treatment of the assembly, etc. Difference is seen in what some usually regard as little things such as control of temper, treatment of poor, etc.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUE PHILOSOPHY AND FALSE PHILOSOPHY

In the parable of the Good Samaritan we see three philosophies of life exhibited. The philosophy of the robbers, might makes right, or the iron rule. That of the priest and Levite, "I didn't get him into this, so why should I help," or the silver rule. The Golden Rule of the Samaritan. This must be the rule followed if we please God.

REFINING SOULS

By Hoyt H. Houchen

Introduction

The text for this sermon is Malachi 3:1-3.

The prophet here draws an analogy between the process of refining gold and that by which the soul of man is refined.

I. Most Precious Metal

As gold is considered the most precious of metals, so the soul of man is the most important part of his being. "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life (soul) or what shall a man give in exchange for his life (soul)?" Mt. 16:26. "Our outward man is decaying. Our inward man is renewed day by day". 2 Cor. 4:16.

II. Need of Refinement

As long as gold is "in the rough" it is of no value. It must be refined so that all foreign matter is removed and the metal is left pure.

HI. Finding the Ore

The first step in securing gold is prospecting to find the substance which contains the precious metal.

The prospector in God's kingdom is the one who preaches "the word". Rom. 10:14; Acts 8:4; I Tim. 2:7.

Sinners who will be receptive to the truth when it is presented to them constitute the substance from which refined gold will come. Acts 18:10; Rev. 18:4.

Christians, it is our duty as prospectors of God's kingdom to search until we find every soul that will submit to the Lord's refinement.

IV. THE CRUSHING PROCESS

The mined rock which contains gold must be crushed in the mill.

The heart of the sinner is hardened. Ex. 7:14; Isa. 63:17; Mk. 6:52. It is crushed when the sinner hears and believes. Acts 2:47. Yes, it is the gospel that crushes the heart of sin. Rom. 1:16. "Is not my word . . . like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23:29.

V. CRUSHED ORE IS GROUND

Crushed ore is run through grinders where it is reduced to powder.

When the heart of the sinner is softened by the gospel he repents. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation". 2 Cor. 7:10. When the Pentecostans were "cut to the heart" they were told to "repent". Acts 2:37-38.

VI. AN ACID TEST

To determine whether or not the ore is rich

enough to justify further operations an acid test is made. If it will not meet the test the prospector looks to other fields.

We might speak of confessing faith in Christ as the "acid test" for the sinner. Rom. 10:10; Mt. 10:32. Some rulers once believed on Christ but would not confess him "lest they be put out of the synagogue". Jno. 12:42. Their faith did not meet the test.

VII. A WASHING

To remove dirt and filth the ground ore must be washed.

There is a "washing" for the believing penitent necessary that his sins might be taken away. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins". Acts 22:16. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and having our body washed with pure water". Heb. 10:22. ". . . he saved us, through the washing of regeneration." Tit. 3:5.

VIII. THE FIERY TRIAL

Finally the ore passes into a series of furnaces some of which are heated to 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. If the metal endures the fire it is moulded into bars and placed for safe keeping.

Christians must pass through a series of fiery trials. I Pet. 1:7; 4:12. (See Job 23:10; Isa. 43:2).

The faithful Christian awaits his home in heaven, his vault for safe keeping. Rev. 2:7.

Conclusion

All who would be refined must come through the gospel. There is no other way to reach heaven.

The greatest blessing that you can give to the world is your life which is more precious than gold. Your reward in heaven is likewise more precious than all of the gold in this world.

RELIGIOUS SINNERS

Trine Starnes

Text: Matt. 15:9, James 1:26, I Tim. 1:15.

Intro: "Christianity is religion, but not all religion is Christianity." Man, is, by nature, a religious being. Therefore, it is very highly possible for people to be honest but honestly mistaken, sincere, but sincerely in error, religious but religiously wrong. Hence, the topic for this lesson, "Religious Sinners." The Pharisees of Christ's day were very religious, and yet they were denounced by Christ in severe terms. (Matt. 5:20, 16:12). Let us notice different ways in which one can be a religious sinner.

BY WORSHIPPING THE WRONG GOD

Idolatry forbidden in the decalogue (Ex. 20:2-4). People of Old Testament continually going into idolatry and forgetting Jehovah. (Joshua 24:15). Impossible to please God and worship another god. (Matt. 6:24). The people of Athens were said to be very religious (Acts 17:22). The worshippers of Baal were religious (I Kings 18:21-40). The people of Ephesus were religious. (Acts 19:24-35). So, a person might be devout in his religion, but if he worships other gods, then he is a religious sinner.

BY WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD IN
THE WRONG WAY

This may be done by omitting, adding to, or substituting. (I Peter 4:11; Rev. 22:19). In the case of Cain and Abel, both worshipped the same God, yet one was a sinner. (Gen. 4:1-16; Heb. 11:4). Nadab and Abihu substituted strange fire for the Lord's fire. (Lev. 10). Jesus insisted that such worship is sinful even though it be directed to God. (Matt. 15:9). There are many today who are guilty of this sin. Doctrines and commandments of men are abundant. We should examine each act of our worship to see if it is in harmony with the doctrine of Christ.

BY BEING A WORSHIPER, YET HAVING
NEVER OBEYED THE TRUE GOSPEL

Cornelius, a devout man who feared God, stood in need of salvation. (Acts 10:1-4; 11:14). The man from Ethiopia who was converted under the preaching of Philip was already a religious man (Acts 8:26-39). Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, had a conscience void of offense (Acts 26:5). Lydia, the first convert in Europe, had been a worshiper (Acts 16:14-15). The audience on Pentecost was composed of Jews who were "devout men." (Acts 2). Many today are morally good, attend services, engage in the acts of worship, etc. However, their worship is vain because they are not children of God. They are religious sinners.

BY BEING A TRUE WORSHIPER, A CHILD OF
GOD, YET NOT LIVING A FAITHFUL
CHRISTIAN LIFE

Many instances of this in the New Testament. Ananias and Sapphira were members of the church, but were sinners. (Acts 5:1-10). Simon the sorcerer had been converted and had continued for a time, but fell into sin. (Acts 8:18-22). The Corinthians were walking carnally. (I Cor. 3:1-3, 5:1). Some of the Galatians had fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4). Many today who have ceased walking with Christ.

Conclusion: Admonitions to those not Christians. Possible for you to cease being sinners. Admonitions to children of God. I Cor. 10:12, 2 Peter 1:5-10, Jas. 5:16-20, I Jno. 2:1, Galatians 6:1-5).

SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

Raymond C. Kelcy

Intro: Phil. 1:12-13, 4:22. Nero (54-68) was the last of the family of Julius Caesar. The Caesar referred to in Acts 25:28 and Phil. 4:22. He murdered his mother, brother, teacher, and other eminent Roman citizens. Plunged into follies and excesses; later committed suicide. When fire broke out in Rome, he made Christians the scapegoat, averting suspicion from himself. In the persecution following, Christians suffered every variety of death. Certainly the atmosphere provided by his castle was not very conducive to Christianity. And, yet, there were saints in Caesar's household. In

our text, Paul sends greetings from them to the Philippian Church. These saints speak volumes. They tell us that it is possible to be loyal in the midst of unfavorable surroundings. They, "being dead, yet speak." However, there have been those in every age who defied their surroundings and remained loyal to God.

BIBLE CHARACTERS WHO WERE SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD

(1) Joseph was a saint in Caesar's household. (Gen. 39). In a strange land he remained true to his God. (2) Daniel and his three companions in Babylon present an example of courage and heroism that never ceases to thrill our hearts (Daniel 3-6). Furnaces of fire and dens of lions held no terror for them. (3) The young maiden in the Syrian court is an example of loyalty in a strange land (2 Kings 5). (4) The early Christians were all, in a sense, saints in Caesar's household. They suffered persecutions of every kind for the name of Jesus. It is usually the preference of mankind to yield to public opinion, to go with the crowd. Thank God for these great Bible characters who remained true and steadfast.

SAINTS IN CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD TODAY

We do not have to go to the Bible record to find such saints. There are many such today. (1) Missionaries who leave friends and go to a new country where a different language is spoken and where living conditions are different. (2) In fact, any person who moves to a new field where the Cause

is weak and keeps faith is to be admired. So many Christians live in a spiritual desert where the cause is weak, where there is no leadership, services in a rented hall, etc. How would you react under such circumstances? (3) There are Christians in certain homes who have all kinds of opposition from other members of the family. Children have been known to obey the Gospel under the threat of parents. Sometimes a Christian husband or wife remains faithful to Christ in spite of the fact that an ungodly companion hinders. (4) There are those in certain business houses who are true to God in the midst of an ungodly atmosphere. Sin is all around them, and there is a constant surge of social pressure. (5) Many of our young people in certain schools are surrounded by an anti-Christian attitude. (6) Our young men in army camps who remained faithful were saints in Caesar's household. Thank God for all of these!

Conclusion: We have a tendency today to want everything as convenient as possible. We are living in a streamlined age. Some want an easy and a streamlined Christianity. But, it cannot be. Christianity was ushered in by suffering, and has been perpetuated by toil and tears. To study about these illustrious "Saints in Caesar's household" should put many of us to shame. They will rise up in judgment and condemn many for their laziness, lethargy, and indifference.

SALVATION BY GRACE

Revel Lemmons

No believer in Christ doubts that salvation is by grace, and that without grace salvation is impossible. The world would not stand long enough for a man to earn his eternal reward if he were to live and labor until the end of it.

Since salvation by grace is a Bible theme, we must turn to the Bible for a study of it. In Jno. 1:17 we are told how grace came into the world. "Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." That grace was incorporated in to the "Word" for in Acts 20:32 Paul says, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified."

Furthermore, this grace is administered to hearers of the word: Eph. 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

That's the reason Paul says in Rom. 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation. . . ." Grace is administered by means of the gospel. And Jesus one time said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Man, in favor with God in Eden, lost that favor by his sin. Sin and consequent disfavor became the lot of all men. The wages of sin is death. Only the grace of God can defer the payment of the penalty. Man has done nothing to deserve his salva-

tion. All our good works put together would not be sufficient to merit a twinkle from a single star in our crown.

Grace is given to sustain temporal life. Not one of us merits the air he breathes. But none of believes that his salvation from death is by the grace of God alone. Each of us knows that if he does not breath the air which is so abundant around him he will die.

If we can see this principle in nature, we can also see it in the spiritual realm. Salvation from spiritual death is by grace. Grace is as abundant as the air. But let no man think that salvation is by grace in the spiritual realm, any more than it is in the physical realm.

Our God is one God. We do not have one kind of God over nature, and another sort of God in religion. Our God is not a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality. He does not save souls by grace alone and then force bodies to breath air and earn food and refuse to save them by grace alone.

In the days of Noah, God warned of the danger and provided the means of escape. There God's grace ended. Noah was left to lay hold upon the grace so mercifully provided him. If he had refused to do so he would have drowned.

Likewise Israel in the wilderness, bitten by serpents, was warned of the danger and provided with the means of escape. There the grace of God stopped. If Israel had insisted upon a "grace only" salvation and had refused to lay hold on the grace so bountifully promised by building a serpent of brass, they would have died in their misery.

That God which delivered Noah and Israel is our God too. We are in danger of going to torment because of our sins. God warns us of the danger, and provides us with the means of escape. There the grace of God stops, for God has not changed His ways. Even as the scriptures say, "In Him there is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

The means of escape for us is not an ark, nor a brazen serpent, but the blood of Christ. We reach the blood of Christ by believing the gospel, repenting of our sins, and being baptized into His death. We have no more earned our salvation than did Noah when he built an ark, or Israel when they built a serpent. Each can say, "we are saved by grace."

In Titus 2:11 Paul says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. . . ." Now, if salvation were by grace only then all men would be saved, or else God is a respecter of persons, or the grace insufficient to save all to whom it appeared.

The truth is, "We have access by faith into his grace." Rom. 5:2—the same kind of faith by which Noah and Israel had access—the faith which moves to obedience. The very fact that some to whom the grace has appeared will be eternally lost is proof enough that salvation is in some way dependant upon man, and upon what he does.

Faith is the channel through which we receive passage way into the realm of mercy. Without it, it is impossible to please God. Faith is the foundation upon which acceptability is built. When that faith reaches the place where it turns away a man

from his wicked way and purges out the old leaven of his unrighteousness, it has proved itself to be living and active—the man has repented.

When a faithful penitent faces the fact that God is God and that he stands condemned he is willing humbly to obey from the heart the commands of his Maker without quibble or the passing of judgment upon the essentiality of them. He is baptized for the remission of his sins because the Lord commanded it and God approved such an act. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works, was faith made perfect."

Grace became the legacy of us all when Jesus died; by the gospel it is made known to us; and by our faith, repentance, and baptism we avail ourselves to the grace of God in Christ Jesus and are saved by it from all the guilt of a past sinfulness. Living soberly, godly and righteously, beneath His blessed benedictions we live in the hope of Glory and die in the triumph of a living faith.

THE SCRIPTURES

John H. Banister

Text: 2 Tim. 3:14-17.

Intro: Timothy admonished to continue in the Scriptures. He had known them from a child. (Deut. 6:6-7). In this great text we see the written word exalted. Four great truths stand out.

THE POWER OF THE SCRIPTURES

"Able." Greatest wisdom found in the Bible. Wisest men are those who know and follow it. Knowl-

edge of scriptures great possession. (Ps. 19:10-11). The scriptures are able to make one wise.

Not only wise, but "wise unto salvation." The word is seed, Lk. 8:11. It has within it the power to save. (Acts 11:14, James 1:21).

This salvation is "through faith in Christ Jesus." The word produces faith. (Rom. 10:17, Acts 15:7, Acts 17:11-12).

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

"Given by inspiration." The expression, "Thus saith the Lord," found over and over. Both Old and New Testaments claim inspiration. (2 Pet. 1:20-21). This great truth denied by many in our day. Infidels and Modernists unite in denying the inspiration of the Scriptures. Let us notice briefly four great proofs of inspiration.

(1) Prophecies made and historically fulfilled. Literally hundreds. Christ's life was recorded before his birth.

(2) The unity of the Bible, even though it was written by about 35 men over a period of 1,500 years. Remarkable agreement, unity, and harmony. This impossible without inspiration.

(3) The perpetuity of the Scriptures. (Mt. 24:35, I Pet. 1:23-25, Psalm 119:89). Indestructible.

(4) The transforming power and influence of the Scriptures. This true morally, spiritually, socially and politically. Impossible for a corrupt tree to bear good fruit. The fruits of the Bible establish it as being worthy of our faith and confidence.

THE PROFITABLENESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

(1) For doctrine. (2 Tim. 4:3-4, Titus 1:13, 2:1). All true doctrine found in Scriptures, not in tradition, creeds, etc. (Jude 3).

(2) For reproof. The Scriptures rebuke unbelief, immorality, indifference, procrastination, and all sin. Cannot preach Scriptures without administering rebuke to people.

(3) For correction. Set us right on all questions. See Apollos in Acts 18 and the Ephesians in Acts 19. People in error today must be corrected by Scriptures. One is not correct until he conforms to the Scriptures.

(4) Instruction in righteousness. They give all instruction we need, teach conduct for every phase of life; home life, social life, business life, etc.

THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

"That the man of God may be complete." They are able to make us complete. No good work that is not furnished by them. Therefore, I Peter 4:11 and I Cor. 4:6. Catholic pope and traditions in violation of this passage. They affirm that something needed besides the Scriptures. Denominational creeds, likewise. Nothing needed but the Bible. It will judge us at the last day. (John 12:48). Let us study, believe, and obey it!

SOME THINGS THAT GOD CAN DO

C. E. McGaughey

Intro: Because we cannot see God, we are prone to understate his power. Christians are to walk by faith, not by sight, and should believe all the Bible says about the power of God. (2 Cor. 5:7). That our conception of God may be enlarged, let us note some of the things God can do.

GOD SEES

(I Pet. 3:12, Heb. 4:13, Psa. 139:7-12). He sees our sins. (The sin of Achan and that of Ananias and Sapphira). Also, he sees our virtues. (Mt. 25:34-40, Mt. 12:42).

GOD HEARS

(I Pet. 3:12, I John 5:14-15, Mt. 7:11, James 5:16). How careful of our speech this should cause us to be!

GOD UNDERSTANDS

(Psa. 139:1-6). My heart is open before him, (Rom. 8:26-27, Acts 1:24). My trials are known to him. (Psa. 1:6; 37:39-40).

HE CAN PROVIDE A WAY OF ESCAPE IN
TEMPTATION

(I Cor. 10:13). The way of escape is there, whether we see it or not, and regardless of how great the odds or the darkness of the path. God must not be blamed for he faithfully performs his work. We are the ones at fault. (James 1:13-14, 2 Peter 2:9).

HE CAN GIVE US WISDOM

(James 1:5-6). Wisdom to do good. (Mt. 10:16). Wisdom to live aright. (Prov. 3:6).

There is a Power whose care

Teaches thy way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—

Lone wandering, but not lost.

He who, from zone to zone,

Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone

Will lead my steps aright.

. . . "To A Waterfoul", By William Cullen Bryant.

He can give us wisdom to win souls. (Eph. 5:15-16). David seemed to feel his need for wisdom and believed God could help him obtain it. (Psa. 119:18). So must I pray and study as I seek wisdom.

HE CAN PROVIDE MY PHYSICAL NEEDS

To have this promise I must seek God first. (Mt. 6:33). It is not for those who only halfheartedly seek God. A realization of this will help to eliminate worry. (Mt. 6:25-34). A belief of this will promote a greater generosity on our part. There is a danger that we shall withhold from God in order to care for our needs. This is one form of unbelief. Too often the work of the church is handicapped because we withhold from God and keep for self. But we impoverish ourselves by robbing God.

HE IS ABLE TO MAKE US ABLE

(2 Cor. 9:6-11). When we do our best God will enable us to do more. The church could do more

if all members realized that God is able to make us able, and will if we only give him an opportunity.

HE IS ABLE TO GIVE ME STRENGTH AND HELP

When we approach God through Christ in prayer we receive strength and help. (Heb. 4:14-16), Phil. 4:13). "What a friend we have in Jesus!!"

HE IS ABLE TO OVERRULE ALL THINGS FOR MY GOOD

(Romans 8:28). My business is to love God. Can I say, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee?" (Jno. 20:17). If so, God will cause all things to work for the best. It is not mine to explain, but it is mine to believe it.

"HE IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE CAN ASK OR THINK"

(Eph. 3:20-21). It is not possible for me to grasp all that God is able to do. To be a child of such a God should be a source of the greatest possible joy. It should encourage me to undertake any program of activity that God has outlined for me with the full assurance that the work can be done.

Conclusion: How great is God! Are you his child? Let us resolve to love and serve him to the best of our ability. He is able to do his part well.

THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST

John H. Banister

Text: I Peter 3:18.

Intro: To contemplate the sufferings of Christ has a profound effect upon the human mind. To study his great love begets a love in our hearts. "We

love Him because He first loved us." Too, the thought of a suffering Savior is a source of sweet comfort. It mitigates our own wounds to study his wounds. With out text before us, we notice three great truths in connection with the suffering of Christ.

THE FACT OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

"Christ hath suffered for us." Here is most important fact in Bible. His suffering is given greater prominence than his life. In fact, his death mentioned more than any-other single event. The New Testament mentions his death and suffering more than 175 times. Many indirect references to it. Special emphasis is given to the fact that he suffered but once. (Heb. 7:26-28). This is done to stress the adequacy of one offering in contrast to the insufficiency of the "many" offerings under the law. (Heb. 10:9-14).

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

"The just for the unjust." It was vicarious. Not merely the death of a martyr, as some suggest. Not for the purpose of setting an example as those aver who teach the "moral influence theory of atonement." But he died for OUR sins. He was buried for OUR iniquities. (Isa. 53:5). Vicarious suffering runs throughout the Bible. Many sacrifices under the law of this nature. Redemption of first-born suggested vicariousness. (Ex. 13). Notice the many expressions in Isaiah 53 which emphasize this great truth: "Borne our grief . . . carried our sorrows . . . wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities . . . our chastisement was

upon him . . . with his stripes we are healed . . . Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . for the transgression of my people was he smitten . . . he shall bear their iniquities . . . he bare the sin of many." New Testament filled with this doctrine: "For our sins." (I Cor. 15:3). "Died for all." (2 Cor. 5:14). "Made him to be sin for us." (2 Cor. 5:21). "For our offenses." (Rom. 4:25). "Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). "Bare our sins." (I Pet. 2:24). "Gave himself for our sins." (Gal. 1:4).

Modernist says principle of vicarious suffering not just. But we see it everywhere. In nature, plants die that others might live. In the sea, fish die that others might live. In manufacture of products, must destroy something to make something else. It is seen in mother's love for child. The fact of vicarious suffering is an established principle.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING

"That he might bring us to God." There was a need for reconciliation of man to God. (2 Cor. 5:18-21, Eph. 2:16). Sin was the barrier which stood between. (Isa. 59:1-2). A great question faces us: Why was suffering necessary in the reconciliation of man to God? We see the necessity of suffering, first, in the nature of God. Certain elements in His character which necessitated suffering. His holiness which said, "The sinner must be put away from my presence." His justice which said, "The sinner must die." His mercy which said, "The sinner must live." His love which said, "The sinner must die (in Christ) and live, too." The death of Christ made possible the satisfaction of

all these elements in the character of our God. We see the necessity of suffering; second in the nature of sin. The guilt of sin offensive to the justice of God. The defilement of sin offensive to His holiness. Therefore, sin must be put away from sinner before it is possible for him to stand in presence of God. How is this to be done? Only by someone paying the penalty of sin. Christ alone could do this by His death. His death eliminated the impassable gulf. His death satisfied the justice of God and made it possible for his mercy and love to be extended to humanity.

Because Christ died for us, we who were once dead, now live. (Rom. 6:11). We have peace with God. (Rom. 5:1). We have the assurance that we are received. (2 Cor. 6:17-18). We are pardoned from guilt, cleansed from defilement, and delivered from the power of sin. Because of His death, we hope for eternal life. We look forward to the time when we can "forever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:17). In heaven we shall know that it was the death of Christ that made it all possible.

THOSE THINGS DO

Floyd Thompson

"Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Phil. 4:9.

This is as definite a promise as could be made. ". . . the God of peace shall be with you", if you will do what Paul has done. By way of introduc-

tion, let us first notice that Paul said, "Those things which ye have both learned and received. . . ." Some folk have "learned" some things which they have not "learned." For example, the boy in school "learns that $2 \times 2 = 4$, and $2 \times 6 = 12$, but he has not "received" that truth. When he has grown to be more mature and he goes into a store to buy two articles at the price of five cent each, he does not have to say, "Let me see, $2 \times 5 = 10$, therefore I owe the clerk 10c." No, the answer is there! It is a part of him. He has "received" that truth. So it is with some members of the church. Almost every church member can quote, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him. . . .", but many have only "learned" this scripture, and have not "received" it.

Paul said further, "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard. . . .". Paul was a teacher. He, like Jesus, knew that men would die for what they believed and that the way to lead them to believe is to teach them.

But further, Paul said, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me. . . ." Paul was a living example of what he taught. One who is not willing to live what he teaches should not teach.

THOSE THINGS DO

Paul said, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." The next thing that we should determine is what did

Paul "do" that he wishes this Philippian church to "do"? The only sure way to know is to find out what Paul did while he was in Phillippi. We turn to Acts 16:12, to get him located.

Reading Acts 16:14-15, we find the first thing he did was:

I. PREACH THE GOSPEL TO A RELIGIOUS WOMAN AND HER HOUSE.

1. Paul preached. 2. Lydia heard. 3. Lord opened her heart that she attended. 4. Lydia obeyed. 5. Lydia wanted to help in the work.

The next thing that Paul did can be noted by reading the next paragraph, verses 16-24.

II. HE DID THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT EVEN IN THE FACE OF ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Let us state that again—Paul did that which was right even though they put him in jail for doing it. Notice some things in particular about this paragraph:

1. "We went to prayer. . . ." Paul believed in prayer meeting.

2. Fortune telling was and is of the devil.

3. Even a demon-possessed maid knew that there was not a dozen nor two ways to be saved. "These men are servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."

THOSE THINGS DO

The next paragraph reveals another great principle.

IE. PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO A

MAN AND HIS FAMILY WHO WERE NOT RELIGIOUS. Possibly all men are religious to some extent, but this term, I think, well describes the jailer.

Some things in particular about this paragraph:

1. Paul and Silas not ashamed to be heard singing and praying. 2. Paul saved the Jailer's physical life. 3. The jailer asked one of the greatest of all questions. 4. He was told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." but he had not heard. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Romans 10:14.

5. "And they spoke unto him the work of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

6. "Washed their stripes". This is evidence of repentance.

7. "Was baptized, he and all his. . . ."

8. "Straightway." Importance of obedience shown.

It will be noticed that the same gospel, for there is no other, (Gal. 1:7) was preached to a religious woman and a man who was not religious. The effect was the same. This gospel is God's power to save. Romans 1:16.

To the Philippians this promise was made, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." We, too, have this promise that was given to the church at Philippi. Brethren, let us desire to have the best company that can be had. Let us have God with us, by doing these things.

"TO THIS END WAS I BORN"

C. E. McGaughey

Text: John 18:37.

Intro: These words were spoken by Christ concerning his birth. The Bible tells us the circumstances of his birth, but not the time. It furnishes no authority for the special observance of Dec. 25., or any other day, for Christmas. In this text Christ speaks of one of the purposes of his birth. Let us observe the answer given here and also study some other reasons why Jesus came.

HE CAME TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURES

(Mt. 5:17-18). A. To fulfill the requirements of the law. No other person ever kept it perfectly. He fulfilled every requirement. (Heb. 4:15). He thus condemned sin in the flesh by showing that the law could be kept, but was not kept due to the weakness of the flesh which was not controlled. (Romans 8:3).

B. To fulfill the predictions of the prophets. (Lk. 24:44, Jno. 5:39-40). The place of his birth (Micah 5:2, Mt. 2:6). Miraculous birth (Isa. 7:14, Mt. 1:18-23). His life and sufferings (Isaiah 53). His resurrection (Psalm 16:8-10, Acts 2:27). His ascension (Psalm 68:18, Eph. 4:8).

C. To fulfill the types of the Old Testament. They were but a shadow of things to come (Heb. 10:1). This is true of the tabernacle and temple worship. (Heb. 9:11-12).

HE CAME TO REVEAL GOD'S WILL

(Deut. 18:18-19). Jesus recognized that it was his to make known the Father's will. (Jno. 12:49-50). It is through Christ that God speaks in the last days. (Heb. 1:1). He had spoken through Moses, the prophets, and angels. In making known God's will, Christ gave us the New Testament. (Heb. 7:22, 8:6, 10:9). In it he reveals how to become a Christian (The Great Commission), and how to live a Christian life. (The Epistles).

HE CAME TO SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST

(Lk. 19:10). The world was lost (Isa. 53:6, Rom. 3:23). The law with its sacrifices could not remove guilt from the human soul. To save the lost, Christ, as God's lamb, had to shed his blood. (Jno. 1:29, Mt. 20:28, Mt. 26:28, Rom. 3:25-26). Christ sought the lost personally. He went into their homes. (Luke 18 . . . Zaccheus). He took advantage of opportunities as they came (Jno. 4, Woman at well). He sought the lost diligently, forgot himself, his hunger, and his thirst, in seeking to save others. (Jno. 4:31-32). He is pictured as the Good Shepherd going out in search of his sheep until he finds it. (Lk. 15). His example of interest in the lost is an example for us. (I Peter 2:21).

HE CAME TO BE KING

John 18:36-37. A. So it had been prophesied. (Jer. 23:5-6, Isa. 9:6, Lk. 1:32-33). B. So he preached. (Mt. 4:17, Mt. 16:18-20). C. Announced on Pentecost. (Acts 2:29-36). D. His kingdom spiritual, not of this world. (Jno. 18:36, Ephesians 6:

12). E. Kingdom will be delivered up to God at his coming. F. Offers what no other king can give. Forgiveness. (Heb. 10:17). Hope of heaven (I Pet. 1:3). Eternal life (Rev. 2:10). Since he came to be such a wonderful King and is now reigning on high, I should ask myself, "Is he my king?" If not, I should correct this great mistake in my life.

HE CAME TO BEAR WITNESS

(Isa. 55:4, Rev. 1:5). A. Of the truth. (John 18:37, John 1:14, 8:45, 14:6). He revealed to man his true state. Showed him his sinfulness. The Samaritan woman: "Thou hast said truly, I have no husband." (Jno. 4). To the Jews he spoke the truth and told them their true condition. (Mt. 15:8, Matt. 23:23). In bearing the witness for the truth, he showed the true consequences of sin. (Jno. 8:24, Luke 13:5, Mt. 10:28). He revealed the truth that men needs a Savior and that he, himself, fills that need. (John 12:32, 15:6).

B. Of God's love. (Jno. 3:16, Rom. 5:8).

C. Of his own interest in man. (2 Cor. 8:9, I Peter 2:24).

D. Of the character of God. (Jno. 1:14, 14:9).

E. Of light and immortality. (2 Tim. 1:10, Jno. 5:28-29).

Conclusion: What has his coming meant to you? Has the truth he revealed convinced you of your sin and your need of a Savior? Have the sacrifices made by him touched your heart? Has he become your Savior and King?

TRYING TO HELP GOD

By J. Lloyd Moyer

Introduction

In Gen. 12:2-3 is the promise of God to Abraham concerning a great nation to proceed from him.

As the years passed and no son was born, Sarah became doubtful. When she was 76 years old and Abraham 86. (Gen. 16:16; 17:17) she concluded that it was impossible for her to bear children and that if the promise was fulfilled, then they must assist God in some other way. Thus she gave her handmaid, Hagar, to her husband to bear a child to him. Gen. 16:1-6. But her plan did not please Jehovah 18:14.

It is true that we are co-laborers with God. I Cor. 3:9. But we must work according to God's plan. When we fail to do so, and presume to devise plans of our own which conflict with God's, (as did Sarah) we become transgressors.

OTHER BIBLE EXAMPLES

1. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num. 16. These men envied the priestly functions of Aaron. Korah as a Levite, was entitled to tabernacle service, but not being a descendant of Aaron, could not be a priest, vv. 9:10. Num. 3:9-12. When they insisted on "helping" in a way that God had not intended for them they were punished. "The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up". 16:32.

2. Uzzah. During the days of Eli, the ark had been captured by the Philistines. I Sam. 4. During the seven months it abode in this nation's midst,

they were afflicted of God with various plagues. They sent it then to Kiriath-jearim where it remained in the house of Abinadab many years. I Sam. 7:1f. When David became king he proposed returning the ark. It was placed on a new cart and pulled by oxen. On the way the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah, a driver, took hold of the ark. Immediately he was struck dead. I Chron. 13:1-10.

Uzzah thought he was helping, but he had violated a law which carried the penalty of death. Num. 4:15-20.

3. Moses. In spite of the usual fidelity of Israel's leader, Moses on one occasion was guilty of this same mistake. When the Israelites were at Kadesh they murmured for lack of water. The Lord told Moses to take his rod and speak to the rock. Num. 20:8. He smote the rock instead of speaking to it. This was a seeming small thing, yet it kept him out of the promised land.

4. Saul of Tarsus. This student of Gamaliel thought he was helping to put into effect the will of God when put to death the disciples of Christ. Acts 26:9-11; 23:1; Gal. 1:13f.; I Tim. 1:13f. But he learned his mistake.

The foregoing examples were written for our benefit. Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:1-12. They show that God has always expected man to do His way. To try to help Him by changing his way is to err.

PRESENT DAY EXAMPLES

1. Establishing denominations. Man is liberal. He says: "Take the church of your choice". Yet inspiration says, "God gave Him (Christ) to be head

over all things, to the church which is his body". Eph. 1:22f. "There is one body". Eph. 4:4. Thus, ONE body — ONE church. If Sarah's liberality displeased God, then how can man be liberal in the same manner and please Him?

Christ established his church. Mt. 16:18. He provided it with his blood. Acts 20:28. Why should man seek to change it?

Denominations have the wrong foundation. I Cor. 3:11. God did not build these man-made churches, consequently, to be a member of and to work in them is vain. Psal. 127:1.

2. Changing the worship. Jesus said that worship must be according to the truth. Jno. 4:24. That truth is his word. Jno. 17:17. Men try to help God interest people by changing to that which appeals to the animal rather than the spiritual man. For example, we mention the introduction of instrumental music in church worship. God commands singing. Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19. But he did not provide for any other music. "It is generally believed that the Primitive Christians failed to adopt the use of instrumental music in their worship. . . . Neither Ambrose nor Basil in the noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music, make any mention of instrumental music. Basil, indeed, expressly condemns it as ministering to the depraved passions of men. . . . The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to an earlier date than the fifth or sixth centuries." McClintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia, Vol. 6, pp. 759-60.

There is also the candle-light service. Many other acts of ritualism could be mentioned. Thus

man has corrupted the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 Cor. 11:3. These render the worship vain. Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20-22.

3. The teaching program. We are commanded to study and teach God's word. 2 Tim. 2:15; I Pet 2:2; Acts 17:11. Many are unskilled in it because they have not had their senses exercised. Heb. 5:12-14.

In many places most of the people would not attend were it not for the social activities or the recreation offered. When men make the church a social or recreational institution the primary purpose of the church is lost sight of. The church is a spiritual institution to develop the spiritual man. I Tim. 3:5. Socials and recreation may increase attendance, but is God pleased? Sarah increased Abram's family but not the way God intended.

4. Changing the plan of Salvation. Many religious groups today teach salvation by "faith only". James says it is "not by faith only". James 2:24. They change God's rule.

Many say that baptism is non-essential. James said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". Mt. 16:16. Peter taught it was "for the remission of sins". Acts 2:38. Again he says, "Baptism doth also now save us". 1 Pet. 3:21. And these people also contend that obedience is not necessary to salvation. The Bible declares otherwise. Heb. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

Conclusion: Men often feel they can improve God's system. This is Satan's deception. The only way to help God is by doing exactly at His commands.

WHAT LACK I YET?

Jack W. Bates

Introd: This question should often be asked by the Christian in honest appraisal of values as one striving to attain full growth in the kingdom of God. During the ministry of Jesus, a young ruler asked this question of the Master. Let us integrate three gospel accounts as recorded in Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22, and Luke 18:18-30, and consider the reply of the Savior and its application to us in a decade beset with grave problems.

I. THE SEQUENCE OF ACTION

A. The young man's sincerity cannot be questioned. Luke tells us he was a ruler. Mark describes the intensity of his approach, 'he ran to him (Jesus), kneeled and asked. . . .' Cmp. Matt. 7: 7-8. Mark also adds that 'Jesus looking upon him loved him.'

B. In reply to this question, Jesus told him to keep the commandments given to Israel. Matt. 19:17. Neh. 9:29. He quoted five of these, all from the group that emphasizes social obligations and human responsibilities. Exod. 20:1-17. To these he added, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Cmp. Levit. 19:18.

C. The young man, in astonishing self-righteousness, replied 'all these things have I observed.' His inadequacy and spiritual dirth, however, are seen in his question, 'What lack I yet? Jesus with penetrating vision saw this, "One thing thou lackest . . . if thou wouldst be perfect . . . sell that thou

hast . . . come, follow me." While riches slowly undermined and dethroned God in his affections, he rejected the invitation to join the inner circle. Not another Paul. Phil. 3:8-11.

II. HE LACKED SELF-SURRENDER

A. Observed ritual of externals 'from his youth.' Keeping of 'things' barren, never satisfies, without consecration of self. Athenians erected an altar to the Unknown God for this reason. Acts 17:23. This young man had fulfilled a pattern of obedience without personal surrender of self. He loved his possessions more than he loved God.

B. This attitude typical of his age. The Pharisees failed Israel in this respect. Not neglect in tithing. Scrupulous in obedience to Law. They failed because they neglected 'the weightier matters of the law' to which these externals pointed. Matthew 23:23-25. Jesus indicted them, 'they say and do not.' Verbiage not enough. Matt. 5:20. Israel, as a race, had allowed worldliness and racial pride to obscure the inner purpose of the law. I Samuel 15:22-23; Isaiah 1:10-20.

(1) In Tel-Aviv, Palestine, the writer on a sabbath found the synagogues half-filled, the cafes and beach crowded. It would appear that Zionism today, behind a religious front, in reality is a nationalistic movement.

C. The Pharisees needed, more than anything else, a change of attitudes. They had not failed in things, yet they failed Israel. Luke 11:52.

(1). The Pharisee and the Publican, Luke 18:

9-14. (2) The Elder Brother, Luke 15:27-31.

They needed a change of attitudes because they had become filled with spiritual pride, feeling of monopoly. What a difference if the Pharisees had humbly cried 'What lack we yet?'

III. HE LACKED A RIGHT SENSE OF VALUES

A. Every choice indicates our sense of values. His reluctant decision led him back to riches and spiritual obscurity.

B. Modern life has confused proper evaluation of values. We have 'confused civilization with plumbing.' Need to realize not what man has but what a man is.

Illus: Temple, late Archbishop of Canterbury, said: "The world, as we live in it, is like a shop window, in which some mischievous person has got in overnight and shifted all the price labels round, so the cheap things have the high-priced labels on them and the really precious things are priced low. We let ourselves be taken in."

Modern living follows with unwearying purposes the round of getting on in the world, a good time, money, indiscriminate sex expression regardless of cost to others or to our better nature. Matt. 7:6. We let ourselves be taken in!

IV. AM I LACKING IN THESE RESPECTS?

Self-surrender, proper values of living?

A. The church today needs not only a restoration of principles but a restoration of Christ-like attitudes. Phil. 2:5; Romas 8:9. Only with appli-

cation of mind of Christ can we solve (a), racial question (b). international problems intensifying in immensity (c). individual needs (d). the challenge of spiritual living in a material age.

B. We need to emphasize inner change as well as outward obedience. Need to forget party loyalties, personality clashes, endless bickering in the ever-present need of our generation for Christ.

Illus: Lloyd George, driving in Wales, remarked to friend: "The church I belong to is torn with a fierce dispute. One section says that baptism is IN the name of the Father, and the other that it is INTO the name of the Father. I belong to one of these parties. I feel most strongly about it. I would die for it in fact—but I forget which it is!" We should be more concerned about "what is the truth", in any matter rather than "what does the group think."

C. We need to see life with Christ's attitude, clarity, purpose. To regain spiritual power. To achieve brotherhood. He ate with sinners, came to seek, save the lost, he touched the leper; died the death of a slave—two thieves. What an indictment, of spiritual pride.

Conclusion: The cost too great for this wealthy, young ruler. Now, the centuries have forgotten all but the great chance he let slip by. The years have proven he made the wrong choice. The question of no consequence. The application of Christ's answer to our individual need important. If unsaved, lack salvation. Remember, the young man lacked (1) Surrender of Self, (2) A Right Sense of Values. In giving up Christ, he gave up all.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DANCING?

Grover Stevens

Introduction:

I. WHY OPPOSE THE MODERN DANCE?

A. Those taking part in this kind of pleasure seem to get a great deal of joy out of it.

B. Spiritually minded Christians who have had to argue with those who see "no harm" in the dance are called a "kill joy."

II. THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERMON

A. To show that the modern dance is sinful in both its origin and in its makeup.

B. That it is antagonistic to the demands of pure Christian living.

m. YOUR ATTITUDE IS IMPORTANT

A. IF you have no real appreciation, true love or respect for Jesus Christ and His noble example—this lesson will offer little information.

B. IF you feel what Jesus meant when he said "Seek ye first the kingdom of God", and James when he said "Keep oneself unspotted from the world", and Paul when he said "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil"—to you then, the thoughts will be desirable and beneficial.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE MODERN DANCE IS NOT CHRIST-LIKE
(NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST)

A. Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God

dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

B. Dancing is of the world, the flesh and the devil.

1. Cocktails, night clubs road houses, drunkenness, revelling, fornication, adultery, riotous living, fighting, envy, murder, and such like.

2. Such as this draws men and women down to the very presence of the devil, temptation and the reality of sin and evil. a. The atmosphere is worldly and of the devil, b. No trace of the Spotless Lamb of God can be found there.

C. The spirit of Christ is expressed in

1. Self-denial of worldly lusts, Christian graces—Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love, hope, joy, prayer, the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the faithful witness, the good steward, the way of the cross, etc.

2. In these men and women are lifted up to the presence of God almighty.

H. DANCING DESTROYS CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE

Titus 2:7-8, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

A. Christians should be examples of Christ. (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Tim. 4:12).

1. Should see Christ living in them. (Gal. 2:20).

2. Should point constantly to Christ. (Matt. 5:14-16).

B. Does the life of a dancer point to Christ?

1. Dancers hardly ever exert spiritual influence among the people they associate with.

2. The Christian who dances is never respected as a faithful and zealous follower of Jesus Christ by the community.

C. The world is aware of the fact that dancing is wrong.

1. That's why it kills a Christian's influence.

III. DANCING TENDS TOWARD IMMORALITY

A. Had a sinful and degenerate origin.

1. It has its origin in the brothels and dives of our great cities.

2. Can we bring a clean thing from this unclean thing?

B. Dancing Leads To Loss of Virtue and Modesty.

1. Virtue is one of the orders of angels. It means "moral excellence, moral quality conceived as a good". It means "pure, chaste, innocent".

Modesty is "lack of boldness; observing the proprieties of sex; chaste, unassuming".

2. No boy or girl can be as virtuous or modest after handling or being handled by so many differ-

ent boys or girls. Girls will allow boys privileges after dancing that they would not allow before. There is a "middle wall" broken down by being handled by so many boys and so freely as the dance allows. This middle wall is that virtue and modesty spoken of above. There is not an honest, open-minded girl or boy reading this, but that knows that is the truth.

C. What has dancing done toward developing a sense of purity and deepening the respect for noble matters in life? Just what?

1. Can you name one tendency the dance has toward purer living in a higher and nobler sense?

IV. DANCING DESTROYS ONE'S PRAYER LIFE

A. A person who dances, either has quit or will quit praying to God. Their prayers are empty and they will cease praying or dancing one, in a short time.

B. 1 John 3:22 conditions the answering of our prayers on keeping His commandments, and doing those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1. Do you honestly think that dancing is "pleasing in His sight"?

V. DANCING IS A SIN AGAINST THE BODY

A. Our Body is the temple of God and the spirit of God dwells in us. 1 Cor. 6:19.

1. Render unto God the things that are Gods—
Matt. 22:21. a. In dancing we render unto the

world and the lusts thereof our bodies which we have surrendered to God and promised to serve him with them.

2. Rom. 8:13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." a. So, friends, it is a matter of choosing between "living" or "dying."

VI. DANCING IS A SIN AGAINST THE MIND

A. The unusual sexual strain placed on the bodies of opposite sexes in close contact is not conducive of mental or moral health.

B. The sexual desire and attraction is the very "soul" of the modern dance. Remove the sexual attraction and you have broken up the dance hall.

1. To prove this, suppose that only men dance with men and only women dance with women ALL THE TIME. a. Anybody that cannot see this, "the god of this world hath blinded their minds" so that you will not see.

VII. DANCING IS WORLDLY

A. Worldly company, places, time, thoughts talk, purpose. Nothing spiritual.

B. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15.

C. "Pure religion is to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27.

D. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed". Rom. 12:2.

E. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matt. 5:8.

P. "Then said Jesus, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matt. 16:24.

HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE JESUS??? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE????

WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED IN THE CHURCH?

(Matt. 19:16-26)

Trine Starnes

Introduction:

1. Discuss text: (Matt. 19:16-26).

a. Rich young ruler's apparent interest—his question—the Savior's answer. b. Then the disciples' question, "Who then can be saved?"

2. We ask this question with respect to those within the church.

3. Chief power of hindrance to Cause of Christ is within the church 5th column work of Satan.

I. THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING

A. Adam was the Son of God: (Luke 3:38). He sinned: (Rom. 5:12-19).

1. Multitudes since, who were in a covenant

relationship to God, have sinned: a. Picture: Noah, David, Saul. b. Describe: Judas—Acts 1:25; Simon—Acts 8:13-22; Ananias and Sapphira; Acts 5:1-10.

2. Galatians: Gal. 3:26-27; 1:7; 5:4.

B. Earnest Warning given to children of God:

1. I Cor. 10:1-12; 2 Pet. 1:5-10; I Jno. 2:1; 2 Messages to the seven churches of Asia—Rev. 2 and 3.

C. Discuss evils of the doctrine of "Impossibility of Apostacy."

1. It repudiates a large part of the Word of God which warns us "not to fall."

2. It destroys man's accountability to God, and his free moral agency.

3. It produces the bad fruit of uncontrolled living . . . contributes to vice and licentiousness.

4. It makes some feel safe and secure when they are in reality in the throes of guilt.

H. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED IN THE CHURCH?

A. Some who have no promise in the church:

1. Those who walk after the flesh: (Rom. 8:1).
a. A condition here implied . . . "If we walk after the flesh—then we are condemned." b. Works of the flesh: Gal. 5:19-21). c. Love not the world: (I Jno. 2:15-16; Jas. 4:4).

2. Those who do iniquity and cause stumbling: (Matt 13:41). a. We are held responsible for influence over others: (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15). b.

When we cause other to stumble, we sin against Christ: (I Cor. 8:9-12). c. Nathan's charge to David: (2 Sam. 12:14).

3. Those who willfully neglect Christian duty:
 a. James 4:17—Discuss specific items we may neglect, b. Heb. 2:3—this language addressed to those in the church, c. In all the parables picturing the "Judgment", Those lost were condemned for some "good thing left undone" rather than for some wrong thing done. (Emphasize and illustrate: (Matt. 25: 31-46).

4. Those who surrender to sin and are overcome: (2 Pet. 2:20-21). a. Distinguish between being "overtaken in a fault". (Gal. 6:1) and in being "overcome".

(1). One might be running in the right direction and be overtaken by Satan. (2). But one who gives up and surrenders to sin—pictured in 2 Pet. 2:21.

5. Those who do not bear good fruit: (John 15:1-6). a. Matt. 7:19. b. Luke 8:14.

B. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED IN THE CHURCH?

1. "He that endureth to the end:" Matt.24:13.

2. "Faithful unto death": Rev. 2:10.

3. "He that overcometh"—in each seven letters to churches of Asia.

"THE WORLD'S ONE SAVIOUR"

Jack W. Bates

Intro: The subject is completely scriptural.

(1). The world. Jesus said, 'the field is the world', Matt. 13:38. Cmp. Luke 8:11. Acts 10:34. Acts 17:30-31. Rev. 5:9.

(2). The World's Saviour, John 4:42.

(3). The World's One Saviour, Acts 4:12. The subject of apostolic preaching. Their emphasis. Acts 8:5, 12, 35.

I. THE WORLD'S GREAT NEED OF THAT SAVIOUR

A. Two terribly descriptive verses. Gen. 6:11 and Isa. 60:2. 'earth corrupt . . . filled with violence . . . gross darkness.' We are swimming upward thru' ebbtide of war striving to reach level beach of law and order. Problem yet profoundly before us.

(1). Dr. Trueblood of Stanford University, 'The Predicament of Modern Man': "The shadow of 1940 will not be removed by technical conclusion of military hostilities nor by organization of peace conference. This is because the war is only a symptom of the sickness of our civilization and not the primary cause of that sickness."

B. The real disease, Sin. Isa. 53:6. Romans 3:23. Society today akin to world of Paul's day. It had forgotten God altho' God had clearly revealed Himself, Romans 1:17-32:

(1). Through the Scriptures and His Judgments;

(2). By Nature's manifestations;

(3). By human conscience which knew when right was violated.

C. Therefore, God 'gave them up'—as He may give us up—to 'uncleanness', 'vile passions', 'a reprobate mind.'

D. The gospel offered as the antidote, antiseptic to poison in body of society, Romas 1:16-17. Only remedy now.

II. THIS NEED IS A PERSONAL ONE

A. Faith is an individual matter. Need for explanation to Suffering, Pattern of Life, Mysteries of Existence. Brittany sailors, 'Thy seas are so great, our boats so small.' Hunger in mens' souls for Truth, Jno. 6:68.

B. Important because without personal faith, Christianity and Democracy cannot endure. Great forces, ideologies, threaten world. False ideas about man. "Wherever we find a false idea about man, its origin lies in a false idea about God; and it is impossible to have a more false idea of God than to have no idea about him at all." Quote from Earl of Halifax, New York Times, March 25, 1946.

American living on religious momentum of fathers. Terrific misconceptions regarding things religious.

Illus: British General in India on Ascension Day (according to calendar of Episcopal Church) called out troops for ceremonial parade. Friends puzzled. Not a religious man. "Of course I parade them on the day her Gracious Majesty Queen

Victoria ascended the throne of Britain!" Stately cathedrals and stale Christianity in Europe. Indifference, apathy in America. In 'organized religion' dirth of personal consecration.

Illus: 'The public school teacher can tell all she likes about Nero, but she cannot tell about his distinguished contemporary, St. Paul. In any case she cannot tell what the open secret of St. Paul's life was.' Quote, *The Predicament of Modern Man*, P. 19.

Illus: The Chinese Wall still stands. It was breached by bribing the gate-keepers. The wall did not collapse, it was character.

III. THE WORLD'S ONE SAVIOUR

A. He appeared in a world of chaos. Brutal Herold, doubting Pilate. Simplicity of message from little, enslaved land in a sea of paganism. His words supply long-lost need. Extremely personal with people, John 1:30. John 9:25-37. Homely background. To a woman beside a well, John 4. To a little man up a tree, Luke 19. To two women in their grief, John 11. At a dinner party, Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 14:15-24.

C. We may marvel at his miracles; the greatest wonder the miracle of His life. Heb. 2:9. Never such a Divine Demonstration of Goodness; Triumph over Malignant Evil; such a Saviour. Isa. 53:11. Not Christ's Gospel that has failed, rather its' flouting and denial, the compromise of it. G. K. Chesterton, 'Christianity has not been tried and found

wanting. It has been found difficult and seldom tried.'

Illus: Boulder Dam notable engineering achievement. Eighty-nine men lost lives. Inscription, 'For those died that the desert might bloom.' Our Saviour died that life might blossom into meaning, certainty, the future.

Conclusion: Have seen (1) grave need of world for Saviour, (2) this need a personal one. It involves acceptance of rejection. John 20:31-31. John 5: 38-40. John 6:45. Rom. 10:17.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION

Raymond C. Kelcy

Intro: A misunderstood subject. A question shrouded in mysticism. Some regard it as something better felt than told, and have made no effort to tell about it. However, when the scriptural teaching is pointed out, it can be seen that we have not been left in the dark on this.

THE ISSUE STATED

Some points upon which there is usual agreement. Agreed that there is a Holy Spirit, that the Spirit does operate upon sinners, and that He produces faith, sanctifies, leads, etc. No controversy on these points. The controversy has rather been on HOW the Spirit does these things. There are two positions: (1). The immediate theory, which insists that the Spirit leads, sanctifies, etc. by ex-

exercising an influence in addition the written or spoken word. Belief of this especially evident in days of mourners' benches. However, the idea yet obtains in some quarters. (2). The other position, and the one we have maintained is the scriptural one, is that the Holy Spirit leads, sanctifies, etc. but that He does it through the word. So, we are face to face with the question, How does the Holy Spirit make Christians?

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

This is the first question to be settled. The Scriptures teach that He is one of three persons in the Godhead. (Matt. 28:19, I Jno. 5:8). In these passages He is mentioned along with God and Christ. That He is a person is borne out of the fact that personal pronouns are used. (John 14:16-17,26. Many other passages). Also, personal attributes are ascribed to Him. Teaches (Lk. 12:12, John 14:26), says (Heb. 3:7), speaks (I Tim. 4:1), Can be grieved (Eph. 4:30), knows (I Cor. 2:11), makes intercession (Romans 8:26). These can be affirmed only of an intelligent personality. When the idea is grasped that the Spirit is a personality, the method of His working will be more apparent. It can be seen that he influences us in much the same manner that one intelligent being would be expected to influence another.

HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT INFLUENCED SINNERS IN APOSTOLIC TIMES

The book of Acts is a book of conversions. Were those cases brought about by the Holy Spirit? Indeed, they were. Then let us see how the Spirit

operated in those cases. Let us pick out two typical cases and see how the Spirit influenced. (1). Let us notice Acts 2. This is the day the Spirit came to begin His work of conversion. Someone suggests that this is a case of miraculous operation. But you will notice that He came only upon the apostles in a miraculous fashion. This was before the audience had assembled. Notice the conversion of those people, one step at a time. Did the Spirit convert them? Yes. But even a casual reading will reveal that it was through the words of inspired men. (2). Next, notice the case of the eunuch in Acts 8. His conversion in detail. Was it brought about by the Spirit? Yes. But how? Through the preaching of the inspired evangelist, Philip. When men accepted the teaching of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:19-20, Acts 2:4). When men rejected their teaching, they were resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).

HOW THE SPIRIT CONVERTS TODAY

Does he do for us what he did for sinners in apostolic times? Certainly. But we do not have inspired men living. Days of miracles were to cease. However, He not only inspired them to speak but also to write. And the Scriptures they left claim to be the word of the Spirit. A quotation from Old Testament ascribed to Spirit (Heb. 3:7-8). Inspiration claimed (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21). They were to hear what the Spirit said by reading what John wrote to them. This is how we hear the Holy Spirit. Now, it is easily seen why the different things that are ascribed to the Spirit in conversion are also ascribed to the word. Begotten of Spirit and word

(John 3:5, 1 Peter 1:23). Sanctified by Spirit and word (John 17:17, 1 Cor. 6:11). This presents the truth in a plain way. The Spirit accomplishes the work THROUGH the word. The word is said to be the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). The Spirit is a person; the word is an instrument. Illus: If a man by using an axe cuts down a tree, it could be said that it was cut down by axe or by man. Both correct. Man a person; axe an instrument. Man wields an influence on tree only through the axe). The theory of direct influence insists that Spirit cuts heart without the sword! But He operates only through the sword. It is a case of an intelligent personality addressing the hearts and consciences of intelligent people. He pleads with them to turn. When men hear Him and follow, they are led by Him. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14).

Conclusion: Will you accept the Holy Spirit or resist Him? He pleads for you today? "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith."