

“LIGHT” FOR OUR AGE

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119:105*

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(Presented by email)

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Feature One: Editorial

“LOOKING AT THINGS BACKWARDS”

He loved the outdoors. His favorite place to be was out of town about ten miles away. There was a beautiful place to camp about a ten-minute walk to the falls. One evening he decided to visit his favorite get-away. He spent the night in his tent and got up early the next morning to walk to the falls. They were so beautiful. The water cascaded down about two hundred feet on granite rocks down below. On this day he decided to climb to the top of the falls and walk up river towards the lake. He was about five hundred yards from the falls when he heard a scream. A canoe had somehow slipped past the rope barrier that had been placed across the small river. It was the warning sign to canoeists that the waters past the rope were too swift and dangerous. This was a large canoe with five people in it. As they realized they were headed for a falls, and certain death, some panicked. The canoe flipped throwing them into the river. The current had

them.

The camper was standing by a tree that had a long rope with a life preserver attached. He yelled to the people in the water to swim to the life preserver as he cast it toward them. One man was on the far side of the canoe and did not hear him call. One man seemingly accepted his destiny and refused to try to swim toward the life preserver. A third man grabbed what he thought was thrown out, but it was a piece of drift wood, and not the life preserver. Two reached the rope, but for some reason, one didn't hang on, and drifted away toward the falls. With great effort our camper pulled the man to shore and helped him out of the water.

Suppose you were the camper on that occasion. A local paper heard the story and the headline of the paper said: CAMPER LETS FOUR MEN DROWN! How would you feel? Instead of being the hero for saving one from certain death, you were condemned for the deaths that happened on that day.

I would imagine that may be how our Lord feels when people talk about "God the Father, and Christ, sending people to Hell." They seem to forget what was written in 2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Imagine that it is Jesus standing by the river. He gave Himself to be our life line. He calls to us to take hold of Him. For various reasons, some do not.

1. Some never hear the call. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 tell us: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: [9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;
2. Some give up and do not seek salvation. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
3. Some grab the wrong thing, or doctrine. Galatians 1:6-8 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: [7] Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you,

and would pervert the gospel of Christ. [8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

4. Some grab the lifeline, but then let go of the rope. Revelation 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”
5. Some will grab the life line and hold on tight. Once again, we can refer to Revelation 2:10.

What is the purpose of this illustration? Simply this, Jesus came to be a perfect sacrifice for us. He came, lived a perfect life, and died a horrible death to offer us a way to escape the “river” of sin. Not all will grab on to our Lord, and some that do will let go. It is sin, and not God that sends people to Hell. God doesn’t want us to be lost. That is why he allowed his Son to go through the trials necessary.

Do not be caught in the trap of looking at things the wrong way and say, “God will not send this person to Hell for this or that.” It is sin that causes us to be lost. God has already done his part at great cost. If something is not according to His divine plan, then it is wrong, or sinful. As the text says in 2 Peter 1:10 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure....”

Editorial Next Quarter:
Do We See As God Sees?

Feature 2: An article from Light: by R C Oliver

"I DID WHAT YOU DID"

I was conscious of the little boy who sat just next to me as I sat quietly in the assembly of the saints, my mind intent upon acceptable worship.

That little boy was my own little boy, who does not too often sit beside me, because I do not wish to leave him sitting alone when it comes time for me to speak. But this was a

different night, and he was so happy he could occupy the seat just next to me, and I was happy also; for I love to have him near me.

But on this particular night I was especially grateful to have him with me; for he taught me an old lesson in a new light. It happened when the congregation bowed in prayer. It was a new experience for Bobby, because those occupying the front seats, where we were sitting, were wont to kneel in prayer and, though I did not tell him what to do, yet when I knelt with the others who were sitting by us, I felt a little body as it rubbed against mine, taking its place beside me. I knew then that he had been watching me and that he was following in my footsteps. But I realized it even more when I arose and looked down into his innocent little face. When his little blue eyes met mine, he smiled a radiant smile, and then he whispered- "I did what you did." Then I remembered:

*A careful man I want to be,
A little fellow follows me: I do not dare to go astray,
For fear he'll go The self-same way.
I cannot once escape his eyes,
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like he he says he's going to be,
The little chap who follows me.
He thinks that I am good and fine,
Believes in every word of mine;
The base in me he must not see,
The little chap who follows me.
I must remember as I go,
Through summer's sun and winter's snow:
I am building for the years to be,
That little chap who follows me."*

-Author unknown.

Note from R.C. Oliver: The above article I found the other day while browsing through my files. I wrote it some few years back and placed it in my files for just such a time as this. Bobby will be nine years old on March 24th.

Your editor's note: Some 53 years have passed since dad wrote that about me. I had the joy of raising two wonderful children. I, too, know that they watched me closely and I have always tried to live in such a way that would help them reach heaven as my parents did before me. I now have four wonderful grandchildren and my children are now in the

role my dad was in when he penned this article. My oldest grandchild, McKenna, will turn nine years old this year, so I guess that makes this article come full circle. (*Bob*).

Feature 3: Our Communication ---

It might be interesting to note that when you fold your arms “your credibility dramatically reduces.” (Taken from Nonverbal Communication Studies) We had a former headmaster here where I teach that felt comfortable with his arms crossed. Our media person on campus often reminded him not to cross his arms when being interviewed for television. In that he felt comfortable in that position, he sometimes did not remember that it does cause negative feelings in his audience. With crossed arms you are actually saying “nonverbally” that you are closed off, and not interested in what others think; or you feel yourself to be better than others.

While this might not be the case, in communication you must remember that it is not what you intend to communicate, it is what others receive from your communication that counts.

Ephesians 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.

Feature 4: Bible Questions

Many years ago I hosted a religious radio program where I tried to give Bible answers to Bible questions. If you have a Bible question send it to me by email and I will enjoy studying it with our readers. If it is a question that you would like an immediate answer, indicate that and I will try to return it to you personally. Remember, if you would like to communicate with me, use my school email address in that this is the one I most often use.

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The following question was raised in a Bible discussion. “In light of John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. [2] Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away....[5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. [6] If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

I know that text has been used to frighten many Christians. The way some have taught this passage, if you do not convert someone to Christ, you will be lost (cast into the fire). There are two other texts that we need to examine to find the true meaning. The first is found in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

If our salvation depends on our producing "fruit", and that "fruit" is new Christians; then our salvation is dependant on the actions of another. Paul teaches that we do not produce other Christians. We plant the seed (the word of God – Luke 8:11), water it, or continue to teach; and it is God that brings forth the fruit. So the new Christian is the fruit of the Lord.

What then is our fruit? The Bible answers this in Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

This is the fruit a Christian can produce. It is a fruit that we control. Our salvation is therefore not dependant on what others do.

In Closing: How fast time is flowing. It seems as though I just sent out the first issue. I have been able to dress up the journal by going to a Google account. The account I have at McCallie School does not allow me to edit as does the Google account. God bless you all. I pray for you that all will be well, and that you will serve the Lord. Until next time:

In the Master's service,

Bob Oliver