

## RECOMMITTED TO VOCAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

### JAMES L. MEADOWS

**James L. Meadows** is a native of KY. He attended FHU (A.A.), Union University, and Harding Graduate School, and in 1997 was awarded a D.M. from Theological University of America. He has done local work in TN, KY, and SC; has preached in over 700 meetings and lectures; 20 years of radio preaching. He is married to Beverly and is currently the Dean of Students at the ETSPM.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Most members of the church of Christ know that we do not use mechanical instruments of music in our worship, but many do not know why we do not use them. Does it really matter? If so, "Why?"

It is my responsibility in this lecture to emphasize "Recommitted to Vocal Music in Worship." The methodology of study planned in this lesson is as follows: (1) The Importance of Recognizing and Accepting Bible Authority; (2) The Different Kinds of Worship Mentioned in the New Testament; (3) Arguments Offered in Favor of Instrumental Music in Worship and Answers to Them; (4) Why Churches of Christ Do Not Use Instrumental Music in Worship; (5) Testimonies Regarding the Use of Instrumental Music in Worship; and (6) Conclusion.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING AND ACCEPTING BIBLE AUTHORITY

On one occasion the chief priests and elders asked Jesus, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" (Matt. 21:23). By what authority does one accept or reject instrumental music? How then is Bible authority established?

Primary authority grows out of the relation of those who have the right to command and those whose duty it is to obey. At Jesus' trial, Pilate said, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee" (John 19:10). Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). "And the Lord God commanded the man saying" (Gen. 2:16), lays the foundation of Bible authority. It rests entirely on the Sovereignty of God.

God delegated authority to Christ. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. 28:18). On the mount of transfiguration God declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mt. 17:5). God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:2a).

We must not add to or take from the word of God. It is complete. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6). "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:6-10).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

To reject the authority of Christ and that of the apostles, or to go beyond his authority, is sinful (II John 9-11; John 12:48; I Cor. 4:6). Thus, we conclude that the type of music used in New Testament worship must come from his covenant (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9).

## THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORSHIP RECOGNIZED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

First, there is vain worship. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7). The Pharisees and scribes questioned Jesus about his disciples eating bread with unwashed hands and transgressing the tradition of the elders (Mt. 15:1-2). They were more concerned about their tradition than doing God's commandments. Their worship was vain. All worship that is not according to God's commandments is vain worship.

Second, there is ignorant worship. When Paul came to Athens he found "an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:23). The Athenians worshipped many gods, but they no doubt erected this inscription lest they leave a god out. Paul made known to them the true God (Acts 17:25-31). How many today are totally ignorant of the worship God has prescribed? How many today are totally ignorant of the Bible teaching regarding music in worship?

majority of translators find it there and thus translate it, why did not the New Testament church use it, and why did not the Greek Orthodox Church learn about it, and why did not the Roman Catholic Church find it in the first century, and why did not the church fathers find it there? If it is hidden in the Greek, it is so hidden that only a very, very few have found it as indicated by their translations.<sup>3</sup> (JAMES BALES)

✓ In 1958 G. F. Raines wrote professors of Greek in numerous colleges and universities throughout America inquiring as to the meaning of the word in the Greek New Testament. He received replies from Harvard University, the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, Princeton University, Lutheran Theological Seminary, and the University of Southern California. None of them maintained that instrumental music inhered in psallo. They said it means to sing, and one said in First Corinthians 14:15 and Ephesians 5:29 it is used metaphorically.<sup>4</sup>

Guy N. Woods wrote:

✓ If the instrument inheres in the word psalmos, it is impossible to render a psalm without an instrument. On this assumption, psalms, whether read or sung, would require instrumental accompaniment! Moreover since each worshipper is required to sing psalms (Eph. 5:18, 19), then each worshipper, in order to render acceptable worship to God, must pluck the strings of an instrument in Christian worship!<sup>5</sup>

Coleman Overby prepared the following table, on the word psallo, for the great Walker-Overby debate in October 1925.

#### TRANSLATION OF PSALLO

THE VERSION	ROM. 15:9	I COR. 14, 15	EPH. 5:19	JAMES 5:13
American R.V. – 1901	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Tyndale (1534)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Cranmer (1540)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Genevan (1560)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Rheim (1582)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Douay (1610)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
King James (1611)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Macknight (1795)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Rhomish (1833)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
German & Eng. (1853)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Anderson (1864)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Bible Union (1865)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Ellicott (1866)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Tischendorf (1868)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing

4:21; 5:1-6; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14-16; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15-17; 10; 8:11). All authority has been given to Christ (Mt. 28:18-20). To be pleasing to God one must heed his teachings and not those of Moses and the prophets (Mt. 17:1-5; Heb. 1:1-2). The instrument is not authorized by Christ, only singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17). To uphold our practices by what the law of Moses taught is to place Moses' authority on par with Christ's. He that tries to live under both laws is guilty of spiritual adultery (Rom. 7:1-4) and severs himself from Christ and falls from grace (Gal. 5:4). If having instrumental music under the law of Moses proves we can have it today in worship, then we can burn incense, have infant church membership, Sabbath keeping, and animal sacrifices because they were under the law of Moses. One who keeps the law in one point is debtor to keep it all (Gal. 5:3).

Fourth, "instrumental music is only an aid." Instruments do not aid in worship, they are an act of worship (2 ~~Cor.~~ <sup>Cor.</sup> 29:26-38). They are as much a part of the sound and praise in worship as the singing. An aid or expediency pertains to utility or advantage rather than principle. Lights in the church building enable one to worship at night. Songbooks help in singing, but they add nothing to the worship. They are only aids and when added or taken away we still have singing. But when the instrument is supplied we have singing and playing. Camp raised these questions:

If mechanical instruments are right because they aid the ear in singing (as some claim), why would incense not be right in connection with the Lord's Supper as an aid to the smelling? If mechanical instruments are right because they aid the ear in singing (as some claim), why would not butter and jelly on the loaf be right as these would aid the taste in observing the Lord's Supper?<sup>6</sup>

Fifth, "instrumental music is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament." In other words, one has the right to do anything the New Testament does not expressly forbid. If one means there is no passage in the New Testament that says "Thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship," he is entirely correct. But if one means the New Testament in no way forbids the use of such music, he is mistaken! The New Testament forbids the use of instrumental music in worship by the principle of exclusion. The "principle of exclusion" is very simple and may be illustrated in this manner: When God told Noah to make thee an ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14), he excluded the use of any other kind of wood in building the ark. If God had told Noah to make thee an ark of wood then Noah could have used any wood that he desired, but God did not say that. All of God's specific commands are of this character, i.e., when God commands that a thing be done in a specific way everything else in the same category is excluded.

Discussions about the hermeneutic of silence, or whether there is the principle of exclusion, are simply nuances of the authority issue. The inspired writer of Hebrews applied the hermeneutic of silence when he argued that the law did not authorize a priest from Judah by the simple fact that "Moses spake nothing concerning" a priest from Judah (Heb. 7:13-14). Things not authorized are excluded. Otherwise, authority is not



creature (see ch. 4:9; 18:2) or to the creator (see ch. 4:10)." The Greek word "denotes an act." Acts are an essential part of worship. The view that worship is simply and solely an attitude—to be distinguished from, and dissociated with acts—is not in harmony with the facts of the case. The Greek word denotes an act "paid." Worship is an attitude, but it is an attitude which expresses itself in an act—an act paid to another. To worship then one must engage in acts. The instrument of music is in the worship because worship is not just in the heart.

### WHY CHURCHES OF CHRIST DO NOT USE INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP

First, it is not because we dislike them. Its use in the worship is not opposed because there is no taste for music. It is not because we cannot afford them. It is not because we just want to be different.

Second, they violate the law of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). "So this faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). *(Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12, 13, 15)*

What does the New Testament say regarding the music which Christians are to offer to God? "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mt. 26:30). "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mk. 14:26). "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. 15:9). "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:15). "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12). "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of your lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms" (Jas. 5:13). 5:13

From these verses we learn that Christians are to sing. Where in the New Testament is there one reference authorizing instrumental music in worship? If one cannot be found, then its use is without the authority of Christ. It is not by faith. Its use cannot be the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16).

Third, they violate the law of worship. Our worship is to be "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23-24). Instrumental music in worship is not a part of "all truth" revealed by the Holy Spirit unto the apostles (Jn. 16:13; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:3). Their use renders our worship "vain" (Mt. 15:9) and would be classified as "will worship" (Col. 2:23).

Fifth, instrumental music cannot accomplish the purposes to be accomplished by Christian singing. It requires vocal music and can be satisfied only by the use of the voice. The following chart will illustrate this point:

The Bible Commands to:	The Voice	Instrument
Sing unto God (Rom. 15:9)	can	cannot
Speak in song (Eph. 5:19)	can	cannot
Make melody in the heart (Eph. 5:19)	can	cannot
Teach in song (Col. 3:16)	can	cannot
Encourage in song (Col. 3:16)	can	cannot
Sing with the spirit (I Cor. 14:15)	can	cannot
Sing with understanding (I Cor. 14:15)	can	cannot
Praise God (Heb. 2:12)	can	cannot
Give thanks (Heb. 13:15)	can	cannot
Sing psalms (Jas. 5:13)	can	cannot

Vocal music and vocal music alone can accomplish all these purposes.

### TESTIMONIES REGARDING THE USE OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

Most protestant denominations of today were founded by men who strongly disapproved of instruments of music in worship. Please consider the following:

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, said: "I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard."

Adam Clarke, a Methodist distinguished for his famous commentary on the entire Bible said: "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor."<sup>14</sup>

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest Baptist preachers, who preached for twenty years in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London, England, to ten thousand every Sunday, never used instruments in the tabernacle. Commenting on Psalms 42:4 he said:

David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly is the most delightful part of worship and that, which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.<sup>15</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1. All quotes are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.
2. Lusk, Maurice. "Music in the Worship of the Early Church." Doraville, GA: Southeastern School of Evangelism (Sept. 1976): 4-5.
3. Bales, James. Instrumental Music and New Testament Worship. Searcy, AK: 1973, p. 134.
4. Raines, G.F. "The Meaning of Psallo." Gospel Advocate. Dec. 1959: 775-76.
5. Woods, Guy N. "Instrumental Music in Christian Worship." Gospel Advocate. Dec. 1958: 825.
6. Camp, Franklin. "If Mechanical Instruments of Music Are Right in Christian Worship Will You Answer These Questions," The Word of Life 2.5 (1973): 1-2.
7. Pharr, David. "Does Instrumental Music Matter?" Carolina Messenger (Feb. 2000): 3.
8. Kurfees, M. C. "Walking by Faith: Origin of Instrument Music In Christian Worship." Louisville, KY: (No publisher). Tract (1939): 10-11.
9. The American Encyclopedia. 12:688.
10. Fortune, A. W. The Disciples in Kentucky. Published by Convention Center of Christian Churches In Kentucky (1932): 373.
11. N. B. Hardeman, "Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons." Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., Vol. 11, 1958, p. 281.
12. Kearley, F. Furman. "Sound, Biblical, Historical, and Practical Reasons for A Cappella Music in Christian Worship." An Unpublished Manuscript.
13. Clarke, Adam. Commentary on The Old Testament. "Isaiah To Malachi." New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, Vol. IV, 1823, p. 684.
14. Ibid.
15. Spurgeon, Charles. The Treasury of David. "An Expository and Devotional Commentary on Psalms. Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press, Vol. II, p. 301.
16. Luther, Martin. McClintock & Strong. "Music." 762.
17. Campbell, Alexander. Millennial Harbinger. Series IV, Vol. I, p. 581 in Mem. Of A. Campbell, p. 316.
18. McGarvey, J. W. "Instrumental Music in Churches." Millennial Harbinger. 8.11.(1864): 510.
19. Ibid.

Constantinus Copronymus, the Greek emperor. . . . But, now, it was only, used in princes courts, and not yet brought into churches; nor was it ever received into the Greek churches, there being no mention of an organ in all their liturgies ancient or modern." (Joseph Bingham, Works, London Edition. Vol. 11, p. 482-484)

BINGHAM "Music in churches is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music not so." (Joseph Bingham, Church of England, Works, vol. 3, page 137)

BURNEY "After the most diligent inquire concerning the time when instrumental music had admission into the ecclesiastical service, there is reason to conclude, that, before the reign of Constantine, ;is the converts to the Christian religion were subject to frequent persecution and disturbance in their devotion, the rise of instruments could hardly have been allowed: and by all that can be collected from the writings of the primitive Christians, they seem never to have been admitted." (Charles Burney, A general history of Music, 1957, p. 426)

CALVIN "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists therefore, have foolishly borrowed, this, as well as many other things, from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise; but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints, only in a known tongue (I Cor. 14:16) What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound?" (John Calvin, Commentary on Psalms 33)

CATHOLIC "Although Josephus tells of the wonderful effects produced in the Temple by the use of instruments, the first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice. Clement of Alexandria severely condemns the use of instruments even at Christian banquets. St. Chrysostum sharply contrasts the customs of the Christians when they had full freedom with those of the Jews of the Old Testament." (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 648-652.)

CATHOLIC "For almost a thousand years Gregorian chant, without any instrumental or harmonic addition was the only music used in connection with the liturgy. The organ, in its primitive and rude form, was the first, and for a long time the sole, instrument used to accompany the chant. . . . The church has never encouraged and at most only tolerated the use of instruments. She enjoins in the 'Caeremonials Episcoporum', - that permission for their use should first be obtained from the ordinary. She holds up as her ideal the unaccompanied chant, and polyphonic, a-capella style. The Sistene Chapel has not even an organ.'" (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, pg. 657-688.)

CATHOLIC "We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in pagan worship and the rites paid to the dead. But the Church, from a very early period, took them into her service, just as she adopted many other things indifferent in themselves, which seemed proper to enhance the splendor of

tradition to Ignatius ... The primitive church music was choral and congregational." (George Park Fisher, Yale Professor, History of the Christian Church, p. 65, 121)

FULLER "The history of the church during the first three centuries affords many instances of primitive Christians engaging in singing, but no mention, (that I recollect) is made of instruments. (If my memory does not deceive me) it originated in the dark ages of popery, when almost every other superstition was introduced. At present, it is most used and where the least regard is paid to primitive simplicity." (Andrew Fuller, Baptist, Complete works of Andre Fuller, Vol 3, P. 520, 1843)

GARRISON "There is no command in the New Testament, Greek or English, commanding the use of the instrument. Such a command would be entirely out of harmony with the New Testament." (J.H. Garrison, Christian Church)

GIRADEAU "The church, although lapsing more and more into deflection from the truth and into a corrupting of apostolic practice, had not instrumental music for 1200 years (that is, it was not in general use before this time); The Calvinistic Reform Church ejected it from its service as an element of popery, even the church of England having come very nigh its extrusion from her worship. It is heresy in the sphere of worship." (John Giradeau, Presbyterian professor in Columbia Theological Seminary, Instrumental Music, p. 179)

HASTING If instrumental music was not part of early Christian worship, when did it become acceptable? Several reference works will help us see the progression of this practice among churches: "Pope Vitalian introduced an organ in the church in the seventh century to aid the singing but it was opposed and was removed." (James Hasting, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.)

HUMPHREYS "One of the features which distinguishes the Christian religion from almost all others is its quietness; it aims to repress the outward signs of inward feeling. Savage instinct, and the religion of Greece also, had employed the rhythmic dance and all kinds of gesticulatory notions to express the inner feelings . . . The early Christians discouraged all outward signs of excitement, and from the very beginning, in the music they used, reproduced the spirit of their religion-an inward quietude. All the music employed in their early services was vocal." (Frank Landon Humphreys, Evolution of Church Music, p. 42)

KILLEN "It is not, therefore, strange that instrumental music was not, heard in their congregational services..... In the early church the whole congregation joined in the singing, but instrumental music did not accompany the praise" (W. D. Killen, The Ancient Church, pp. 193, 423).

KNOX "a kist (chest) of whistles." (John Knox, Presbyterian, in reference to the organ)

sacred service gave the place to instruments as accompaniments for Christian song, and from that time to this they have been freely used with few exceptions. The first organ is believed to have been used in the Church service in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Organs were however, in use before this in the theater. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in some of the Western churches." (McClintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, Vol 6, p. 759)

MCCLINTOCK Sir John Hawkins, following the Romanish writers in his erudite work on the history of music, made Pope Vitalian, in A.D. 660, the first who introduced organs into the churches. But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date; for Thomas Aquinas [Catholic Scholar in 1250 A.D.] has these remarkable words, 'Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may seem not to Judaize.'" (McClintock and Strong, Encyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. 6, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1894, pg. 762.)

MCCLINTOCK "The Greek word 'psallo' is applied among the Greeks of modern times exclusively to sacred music, which in the Eastern Church has never been any other than vocal, instrumental music being unknown in that church, as it was in the primitive church." (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 8, p. 739).

NAUMAN "There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was every where entirely of a vocal nature." (Emil Nauman, The History of Music. Vol. I, p. 177)

NEITHENINGTON (Exclusion of instrumental music from the church of England passed by only one vote in 1562, according to Neithenington's: History Of The Westminster Assembly Of Divines, p. 20)

NEWMAN "In 1699 the Baptists received an invitation from Thomas Clayton, rector of Christ Church, to unite with the Church of England. They replied in a dignified manner, declining to do so unless he could prove, "that the Church of Christ under the New Testament may consist or . . . a mixed multitude and their seed, even all the members of a nation, . . . whether they are godly or ungodly," that "lords, archbishops, etc., . . . are of divine institution and appointment," and that their vestments, liturgical services, use of mechanical instruments, infant baptism, sprinkling, "signing with the cross in baptism," etc., are warranted by Scripture." . . . "It may be interesting to note that this church (First Baptist Church of Newport, organized in 1644 cf. p. 88) was one of the first to introduce instrumental music. The instrument was a bass viol and caused considerable commotion. This occurred early in the nineteenth century.(Albert Henry Newman, A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States, American Baptist Publication Society 1915, p. 207, 255)

NICETA "It is time to turn to the New Testament to confirm what is said in the Old, and, particularly, to point out that the office of psalmody is not to be considered abolished merely because many other observances of the Old Law have fallen into disuse. Only the

introduced into the Christians church in the ninth century. There were unknown alike to the early church and to all ancients. The large wind organ was known, however, long before it was introduced into the churches of the west. The first organ used in worship was one which was received by Charlemagne in France as a present from the Emperor Constantine.' (J.E. Riddle, Christian Antiquities, p. 384)

RITTER "We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however purely vocal." (Frederic Louis Ritter, History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time, p. 28)

ROBERTSON "The word (psalleteo) originally meant to play on a stringed instrument (Sir. 9:4), but it comes to be used also for singing with the voice and heart (Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 14:15), making melody with the heart also to the Lord" (A. T. Robertson, Baptist Greek scholar, Baptist Studies in the Nestle James, comment on James 5:13)

SCHAFF "The use of organs in churches is ascribed to Pope Vitalian (657-672). Constantine Copronymos sent an organ with other presents to King Pepin of France in 767. Charlemagne received one as a present from the Caliph Haroun al Rashid, and had it put up in the cathedral of Aixia-Chapelle... The attitude of the churches toward the organ varies. It shared, to some extent, the fate of images, except that it never was an object of worship... The Greek church disapproved the use of organs. The Latin church introduced it pretty generally, but not without the protest of eminent men, so that even in the Council of Trent a motion was made, though not carried, to prohibit the organ at least in the mass." (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 4, pg. 439.)

SHAFF "The first organ certainly known to exist and be used in a church was put in the cathedral at Aix-la-chapel by the German emperor, Charlemange, who came to the throne in 768AD. It met with great opposition among the Romanists, especially among the monks, and that it made its way but slowly into common use. So great was the opposition even as late as the 16<sup>th</sup> century that it would have been abolished by the council of Trent but for the influence of the Emperor Ferdinand.... In the Greek church the organ never came into use... The Reform church discarded it; and though the church of Basel very early introduced it, it was in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation." (Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol 2, p. 1702)

SCHAFF "It is questionable whether, as used in the New Testament, 'psallo' means more than to sing . . . The absence of instrumental music from the church for some centuries after the apostles and the sentiment regarding it which pervades the writing, the fathers are unaccountable, if in the apostolic church such music was used" (Schaff-Herzog, Vol. 3, p. 961).

SCHAFF "In the Greek church the organ never came into use. But after the 8<sup>th</sup> century it became more and more common in the Latin church; not without opposition from the side of the monks." (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol 10, p. 657-658)

WESLEY "I have no objection to instruments of music in our worship, provided they are neither seen nor heard." (John Wesley, founder of Methodism, quoted in Adam Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 685)

## **RESTORATION LEADERS:**

CAMPBELL "[Instrumental music in worship] was well adapted to churches founded on the Jewish pattern of things and practicing infant sprinkling. That all persons singing who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditation, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such an aid is but natural. So to those who have no real devotion and spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the opposition or the oppression of church service I think that instrumental music would... be an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, that to all spiritually-minded Christians; such aid would be as a cow bell in a concert." (Alexander Campbell, recorded in Robert Richardson's biography, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Vol. 2., p366)

FRANKLIN "If any one had told us, 40 years ago, that we would live to see the day where those professing to be Christians who claim the Holy Scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice, those under the command, and who profess to appreciate the meaning of the command to 'observe whatsoever I have commanded you' would bring instruments of music into a worshipping assembly and use it there in worship, we should have repelled the idea as an idle dream. But this only shows how little we knew of what men would do; or how little we saw of the power of the adversary to subvert the purest principles, to deceive the hearts of the simple, to undermine the very foundation of all piety, and turn the very worship of God itself into an attraction for the people of the world and entertainment, or amusement." (Benjamin Franklin, *Gospel Preacher*, Vol 2, p. 411, 419-429)

FRANKLIN "Instrumental music is permissible for a church under the following conditions: 1. When a church never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ. 2. If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and lifeless preacher. 3. If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusements and secular entertainment and abandoning the idea of religion and worship. 4. If a church has within it a large number of dishonest and corrupt men. 5. If a church has given up all idea of trying to convert the world." (Ben Franklin, editor of *American Christian Review*, 1860.)

LIPSCOMB "Neither he [Paul] nor any other apostle, nor the Lord Jesus, nor any of the disciples for five hundred years, used instruments. This too, in the face of the fact that the Jews had used instruments in the days of their prosperity and that the Greeks and heathen nations all used them in their worship. They were dropped out with such emphasis that they were not taken up till the middle of the Dark Ages, and came in as part of the order of the Roman Catholic Church. It seems there cannot be doubt but that the use of



disapproved of the introduction of instrumental music to the churches. The full account shall appear in our next. To us, backwoods Americans, this conduct of those seceders appears be the extreme of folly, and it argues that they have a greater taste for music, than they have for religion. Editor." (Barton Stone, Christian Messenger, vol. 3, No. 2, Dec. 1828, p. 48 in bound volume)

WEST "Apostasy in music among 19<sup>th</sup> century churches that had endeavored to restore New Testament authority in worship and work began, in the main, following the Civil War' In 1868, Ben Franklin guessed that there were ten thousand congregations an not over fifty had used an instrument in worship." (Earl West, Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. 2, pp. 80, 81)

## ANCIENT FAITH AND OPINION

JAMES MEADOWS

The church we read about in the Bible is perfect on the divine side. It has God as its planner. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifest wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). [All scripture references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.] It has Jesus Christ as its head. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). It has the Holy Spirit as its director through the words revealed to the apostles (John 16:13). It has the Bible as its guide. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The ignorance and frailties of mankind keeps the church from being perfect on the human side. One of the crying needs in the church today is to show the distinction between "faith and opinion." "Confusion and fragmentation result when a clear distinction is not made between what is taught in the Bible and what is not" (Gardner, 230).

The pattern planned in this lesson is as follows: First, what is Bible authority and how is it established? Second, what are matters of opinion? Third, how does one decide in matters of opinion, methods, and expediency? Fourth, what is liberty and what are some principles that must regulate it? Fifth, to what does refusing liberty in matters of opinion always lead? Fifth, conclusion.

### WHAT IS BIBLE AUTHORITY AND HOW IS IT ESTABLISHED?

Authority means the right to command and enforce obedience; the right to regulate. There are two kinds of authority: primary authority and delegated authority. Primary authority belongs to God. On one occasion Jesus refused to answer a question asked by Pilate. "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have the power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above..." (John 19:10-11). The apostle Paul supports the Lord's statement, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). God delegated authority to Christ. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Christ delegated authority to the apostles (Matt. 16:19; 18:18). The apostles did not delegate authority to anyone but are still ruling through the truths the Holy Spirit revealed unto them. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto

you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28).

Scriptural authority is established by an express command or statement, an approved example, a necessary inference and expediency. The Lord's Supper illustrates all four of these points. "This do in remembrance of me..." (1 Cor. 11:23-24) is an express command. An express command is a God-given obligation. "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7) is an approved example. An example is binding when there is a stated or necessarily inferred background command for their doing what they did. "The first day of the week... to break bread is a necessary inference. It infers the frequency of observance. To expedite means to accelerate the process, to facilitate. There is no expediency where there is no obligation. In other words, I cannot seek to justify something by arbitrarily calling it an expedient.

We are obligated to sing. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Songs are necessary to carrying out this obligation. The song book is an expedient in that it enables us all to sing the same song at the same time.

The word of God places upon us an obligation to assemble on the Lord's day. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

Further, the obligation of Christians to assemble on the Lord's day is a matter of faith, but the matter of the hour of worship and/or place of worship are matters of opinion or expediency. In the former, the obligation is expressly enjoined, but in the latter, God has given no instruction; and brethren are left to determine the hour and place in keeping with the principle of Christian fellowship and orderliness (Turner, 66).

### WHAT ARE MATTERS OF OPINION?

An opinion is "an idea or notion arrived at by a process of deduction from facts and evidence not sufficient to produce a decided conviction or judgment" (Whiteside, 1931).

According to the lexicons, an opinion is that which a man thinks, but does not know; it is a judgment that is formed upon circumstances, but does not have conclusive proof. In our view things that are revealed in God's word are matters of faith; that which is not revealed is a matter of opinion, or speculation. What

God authorizes us to do we may do upon faith or by faith; what He does not authorize us to do, we must leave undone or do it upon opinion (Brewer, 1932).

We must ever be careful to distinguish between matters of faith and matters of opinion. "Opinions should not be exalted into faith, and faith should not be lowered to opinions." We must realize that it is a violation of scriptures to try to persuade others to accept our opinion (Rom. 14).

If the anti-meat eater does not want to eat meat, he does not have to eat it; but he has no right to bind his preference on the rest of the church. And if he keeps the matter to himself and only exercises his own private right to abstain from meats, it is none of our business. Let him do as he pleases about it, and don't disturb him over the matter; it is a matter of indifference. He is no better (religiously) for abstaining from meats, neither are we any better off religiously for eating meats (Nichols, Words of Truth).

"Everyone has a right to his opinion, but he has no right to propagate it or force it upon others... (Goodpasture). Men ought "...to maintain disturbing opinions as private property" (Kurfees).

It is not the right of any one citizen of Christ's kingdom to propagate any opinion whatever, either in public assembly or private; consequently it is not the duty of all nor anyone to listen to an opinionist in his efforts to establish his opinions. This is an important point, and we state it boldly and confidently... To walk by opinions rather than faith is effectually to make the book of God of no authority. Moreover, in the decisions of that volume, he that propagates an opinion or seeks to attach persons to it, or to himself on account of it, is a factionist in embryo, in infancy, or in manhood... Hence said the apostle: 'Foolish and untaught questions avoid knowing that they do gender strifes.' These untaught questions are precisely questions about opinions; and that they do gender strife we have proof... (All the contentions and divisions, all the sects and parties in Christendom are as certainly and indisputably the effects of opinionism in religion as the love of money is the root of all evil (Campbell)).

"Private opinions and judgments, like our hobbies, should be kept to ourselves, and the peace of the brotherhood should not be disturbed with them. A great moral principle is involved here. We must not merely refuse to do what we are sure is wrong, but also we must refuse to do what we are not sure is right. The Christian must do only that which he is sure is right; he must draw the line clearly between right and wrong; and if there are places where he is unable to draw the line, there he must not tread. When a man does that which he does not believe to be right, he has sinned in his own heart. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." A man may think that wrong which is not wrong in itself; and if he does it, he sins, for he tramples his conviction of right under foot" (Boles).

HOW DOES ONE DECIDE IN MATTERS OF

## OPINION, METHODS AND EXPEDIENCIES?

Christianity is a very personal religion and each one must have his convictions. It is not always easy to separate some of our personal convictions in matters of opinion from matters of faith. The very fact that one has strong convictions on a given subject means that he may confuse some things in this matter of opinion with things that do not belong there. One needs to learn to hold his convictions without stifling his own conscience, or seeking to bind it on others. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eatest not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin<sup>n</sup> (Rom. 14:22-23).

But what are some guides that cannot be used? First, it cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not it has been done that way before. Second, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is different from the way it has been done before. Third, it cannot be decided on the basis of whether we like the preacher and the congregation that happens to be doing it. Fourth, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is getting tremendous results. Fifth, it cannot be decided on the basis of our likes and dislikes. Some of us judge people and actions on the basis of our likes and dislikes. Sixth, it cannot be decided on the basis of what the brotherhood as a whole thinks of it, although the advice and wisdom of well-grounded brethren ought not to be ignored.

In deciding the acceptance of an expediency or method before God, several truths need to be considered.

First, expediencies or methods are in the realm of human judgment, not in the realm of direct commands from God. To "expedite" means to accelerate the process. In "expedient" there is the inherent idea of advantage. It involves human judgment (what hour of the Lord's day does the church meet). Common sense enables one to know certain things (a congregation without children would not need a class and a teacher for children).

Second, matters of expediency vary from generation to generation and from congregation to congregation; this distinguishes them from matters of faith which do not vary.

Third, the Bible does not regulate matters of expediency. If so, then one would find details of the methods of carrying out a command.

Since the Bible does not bind upon the church today methods of expediting general commands, it must follow that the Bible does not regulate matters of expediency. A matter of expediency, or method, cannot change, alter, an authorized act. One cannot scripturally expedite an unauthorized act. An expedient cannot be coordinated with an act; it is supposed to expedite it. Something that is coordinate with or equal to it is not an expedient; it is an addition (Camp).

Matters of expediency and matters of faith must be separated because when they are not, one either repudiates the Bible as his authority, or else he puts his own judgment on equality with the authority of the scriptures.

### WHAT IS LIBERTY AND WHAT ARE SOME PRINCIPLES THAT MUST REGULATE IT?

The New Testament makes it very clear that liberty gives one the right to do certain things or to omit certain things having no relation to salvation. "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other; for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience" (1 Cor. 10:29)?

First, liberty must not be used to confuse things that differ.

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body (1 Cor. 6:12-13).

When one obeyed the gospel and abandoned temple worship was he to refrain from meats offered to idols? Paul's reply was that one had the liberty to eat meat since it was a matter of indifference. "All things are lawful unto me." The general principle is that one has the right to do whatever is not sinful. On the other hand there may be some things that are not always expedient. "But all things are not expedient." Likewise it is possible to come under bondage in things that differ. Eating is right, but if one becomes gluttonous, then one is brought under bondage.

Fornication and eating of meats are not in the same category. Fornication is condemned everywhere in God's word (Exod. 20:14; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19). Eating of meats, on the other hand, was a matter of indifference. Liberty must not be used to confuse things indifferent with things that are unlawful.

Second, liberty must be regulated by love. Some Christians at Corinth knew that eating of meats offered to idols was nothing; others did not have that knowledge.

Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him...Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge..." (1 Cor. 1-3, 7a).

Christians disagreed. What should they do? Love must regulate liberty. One must not use his liberty at the expense of others. Where liberty and love cannot walk together, love must have the preeminence. "But meat commendeth us not to God: for

neither if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak" (1 Cor. 8:8-9).

Third, liberty must be regulated by its effect on preaching the gospel. Paul clearly shows in 1 Corinthians 9:1-11 that those who preach the gospel have the right to be supported by those who receive it. He did not question the right of others to receive support. "...Nevertheless we have not used this power; but rather suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:12).

Fourth, liberty must be regulated by whether or not it will edify. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. 10:23). Edify, in this verse, "is used metaphorically, in the sense of edifying, promoting the spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching or by example, suggesting such spiritual progress as the result of patient labor" (Vine). "All things are lawful" refers to things that are not wrong within themselves. One would have the right to do these things, but it would not be expedient if it caused a weak brother ~~into~~ sin, or encourage one in sin to remain in it, we sin against Christ who died to save the weak and lost" (Lipscomb). *check here*

Fifth, liberty must be regulated by its effect on others.

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth...whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:24, 31-33).

### REFUSING LIBERTY IN MATTERS OF OPINION ALWAYS LEADS TO POSITIONS AND ATTITUDES THAT ONE DOES NOT WANT TO ACCEPT

First, it leads to extremism or radicalism. Extremism means going to great or exaggerated lengths. It means going beyond the limits of reason, necessity, or propriety (uncompromising, fanatical). Radical means considerable departure from the usual or traditional. There is a tendency to make extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions or institutions. Liberalism finds its basis of operation in the liberty that is found or set forth in the gospel, and then abuses it. The book of Galatians clearly shows this. Radicalism or extremism finds its basis on the desire and understanding of people that we must follow the Bible. From this basis many jump into the radical or extreme positions that the Bible does not support. They have definite convictions about a certain scruple. They decide that in order to follow the Bible I must submit to their scruple. The honest desire on the part of people to follow the Bible, and then not being able to distinguish some things, leads to extremism.

Second, it leads to extremes in worship. We see the pendulum swing from a highly emotional setting to a cold legalistic approach. There is the faith healing, Pentecostal-type service. Then there is cold ritualism on the other hand.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or lambs, or of he goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain obligations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them (Isa. 1:11-14).

Churches can become "custom-bound" on the one hand to constantly changing on the other hand.

Third, it leads to extremes in discipline. The Bible clearly teaches church discipline. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6; cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13). Some go to the extreme of not practicing discipline at all. Some begin to practice discipline upon those that are not evangelistic enough (Pharr, 5). Some may not actually withdraw, but practice withdrawal by "shunning" some, and asking others to do the same, to pressure them back in line.

Fourth, it leads to extremes regarding translations. Certainly we need to be careful regarding translations and warn of some dangers involved, but some brethren go to extremes. Some have the translation they like and feel others are liberal if they don't use the same translation. One should not be labeled liberal or conservative on the basis of the translation he uses, but what he teaches. Certainly we should be aware of the modernistic influence in the Revised Standard Version but, as Franklin Camp says, it clearly presents the thought of 1 Peter 3:21: "And baptism which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

Fifth, it leads to extremes in defending the truth. Christians are to earnestly contend for the faith. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Some, by their actions, seem to feel that any attitude and method in defending the truth is justified. The proper attitude and proper method go together. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God



peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Sixth, it will end up in continual hair-splitting if followed to its logical conclusion. We will allow no one to think different from what we think and, if they do, we will have no fellowship with them. We fail to recognize the difference between things on which we must agree and things on which we can differ. If there can be no fellowship unless we completely agree on everything then a man and his wife can never have fellowship. On the question of circumcision, the brethren were of "one accord" (Acts 15:25), but when Paul and Barnabas disagreed over who would go with them they did not allow it to stop their work (Acts 15:36-41).

Seventh,

It causes people to develop an intolerant attitude toward opinions: There is a tolerance of differences which is not true tolerance but indifferent to the truth. Some individuals are so opinionated that they are of the intolerant opinion that no one has a right to any opinion if he is to stay in fellowship (Bales).

It is unscriptural to say that no opinions may be tolerated. "This does not mean that we fellowship the opinion in that we endorse and encourage an opinion which we do not accept; but it does mean that all opinions, even when acted upon do not destroy fellowship" (Bales).

Eighth, it causes people to have an intolerance which binds their opinions on all others. He loves his opinions so much, that if you do not love them, he not only does not want to have anything to do with you, but he refuses those who accept any who refuse his opinions. He has the spirit of Diotrephes.

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church (3 John 9-10).

In his intolerance he makes and binds laws which God hath not bound.

## CONCLUSION

One must always steadfastly hold to matters of Faith, be ready always to give liberty in matters of opinion, and must continually manifest charity, or love, in all things. To manifest sincere love to an enemy of the cross, or the truth, does not signify that we condone him in his activities, but rather we are striving to carry out the spirit of Christ to all men. Our attitude and bearing, though firm, should always be permeated with love

and kindness, realizing that misunderstandings arise and can be overcome, and that we, ourselves, are weak and human.

#### WORKS CITED

- Bales, James D. Personal Interview.
- Boles, H. Leo. Elam's Notes on Improved Uniform Series of International Bible Lessons. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1931. 165.
- Brewer, G.C. *The Gospel Advocate*, October 20, 1932.
- Campbell, Alexander. *The Millennial Harbinger*, Old Paths Publishing Co., Rosemead, Calif. 1837, Vol. 2, 327-333
- Camp, Franklin. Personal Interview.
- Gardner, Claude. *The Gospel Advocate*. Vol. 124. April 15, 1982. 230.
- . *The Gospel Advocate*. Vol. CXXIV. May 6, 1982. 260.
- Goodpasture, B. C. *The Gospel Advocate*. Vol. LXXXVIII, August 8, 1946. 740.
- Kurfees, M. C. *The Gospel Advocate*. July 17, 1869.
- Lipscomb, David. A Commentary on the New Testament Epistle – First Corinthians. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company. Vol. II, 1952, 158.
- Nichols, Gus. *Words of Truth*. Vol. 7. March 23, 1973, 157
- Pharr, David. *Carolina Christian*. Vol. 23, No. 3, March, 1981.
- Turner, Rex Allairn. Sermons and Addresses on the Fundamentals of the Faith. Montgomery: Published by Rex A. Turner, 1972.
- Vine, W. E., An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Company, Vol. II, 1962, 18.
- Whiteside, R.L. *The Gospel Advocate*. June 23, 1931.

## Ancient Faith and Opinion

### I. What is authority and how is it established?

#### A. There are two kinds of authority:

1. Primary: This grows out of the relation of those who have the right to command and those whose duty it is to obey. God is the fountain of all primary authority (cf. John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1)
2. Delegated: This is the right to command and enforce obedience which can be given to another by the party holding primary authority.

- B. God is the fountain of all primary authority (John 19:10-11; Rom. 13:1).
- C. God delegated authority to His Son (Matt. 28:18; John 5:26-27).
- D. Christ delegated authority to the apostles:
1. They bound and loosed (Matt. 16:19; 18:18).
  2. The Holy Spirit protected them from error (John 16:13).
  3. They are still exercising that authority (Matt. 19:28).
  4. To receive them is to receive the Lord (Luke 10:16; John 13:20).

D. How is authority established?

The Lord's Supper defines and illustrates Bible authority:

1. Direct statement or express command: *This do in remembrance of me* (I Cor. 11:23-24)
2. Approved action or example: *And upon the first day of the week* (Acts 20:7). "An example is binding when there is a stated or necessarily inferred background for their doing what they did" (Gus Nichols).

B. "According to lexicons, an opinion is that which a man thinks, but does not know; it is a judgment that is formed upon circumstances, but does not have conclusive proof. In our view, things that are revealed in God's word are matters of faith; that which is not revealed is matter of opinion, or speculation. What God authorizes us to do, we may do upon faith or by faith; what He does not authorize us to do, we must leave undone or do it upon opinion" (G. C. Brewer, *Gospel Advocate*, October 20, 1932).

C. "What is an opinion? Persuasion without proof, say some of the lexicographers. It is speculation built on probable evidence. It is neither knowledge or faith; but in the absence of these, it is an inference, a conclusion to which the mind assents according to its information or mode of reasoning" (Alexander Campbell, *Millenial Harbinger*, 1837, p. 439).

D. We must also realize that it is a violation of scripture to try to persuade others to accept our opinion (Rom. 14). "If the anti-meat eater does not want to eat meat, he does not have to eat it; but he has no scriptural right to bind his preferences upon the rest of the church. And if he keeps the matter to himself and only exercises his own private right to abstain from meats, it is none of our business. Let him do as he pleases about it, and don't disturb him over the matter; for it is a matter of indifference. He is no better (religiously) for abstaining from meats, neither are we any better off religiously for eating meats" (Gus Nichols, *Words of Truth*, March 23, 1973).

E. One may hold an opinion as private property.

1. "Everyone has a right to his opinion, but he has no right to propagate it or force it upon others (B.C. Goodpasture, *Gospel Advocate*, August 8, 1946).
2. M. C. Kurfees wrote that men ought "...to maintain disturbing opinions as private property" (*Gospel Advocate*, July 17, 1919).

### **III. How does one decide in matters of opinion, methods and expedience?**

#### **A. What are some guides that cannot be used?**

1. It cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not it has been done before.
2. It cannot be decided on the basis that it is different from the way that it has been done before.
3. It cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not we like the preacher and congregation that happen to be doing it.

4. It cannot be decided on the basis that it is getting tremendous results.
5. It cannot be decided on the basis of our likes and dislikes. Some of us judge people and actions, many times, on the basis of our likes and dislikes.
6. It cannot be decided on the basis of what the brotherhood as a whole thinks of it, although the advice and wisdom of well-grounded brethren ought not to be ignored.

**B. Some truths that must be recognized:**

1. Expediencies or methods are in the realm of human judgment.
2. Matters of expediency vary from generation to generation.
3. The Bible does not regulate matters of expediency. If so, then one would find the details of carrying out a command.

**IV. What is liberty and what are some principles that must regulate it?**

- A. Liberty must not be used to confuse things that differ (I Cor. 6:12-13).
- B. Liberty must be regulated by love (I Cor. 8:1-3, 7a).
- C. Liberty must be regulated by its effect on preaching the gospel (I Cor. 9:1-11).
- D. Liberty must be regulated by whether or not it will edify (I Cor. 10:23).



**V. What positions and attitudes develop from refusing liberty in matters of opinion?**

- A. It leads to extremes or radicalism.
- B. It leads to extremes in discipline.
- C. It leads to extremes regarding translations.
- D. It leads to extremes in defending the truth.
- E. It will end up in continual hair-splitting.
- F. It causes people to have an intolerant attitude about opinions.
- G. It causes people to have an intolerance which binds their opinions on all others.

## THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF AUTHORITY:

1. Primary: This grows out of the relation of those who have the right to command and those whose duty it is to obey. God is the fountain of all primary authority. (cf. John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1)
2. Delegated: This is the right to command and enforce obedience which can be given to another by the party holding primary authority.

**GOD IS THE FOUNTAIN OF ALL  
PRIMARY AUTHORITY - JOHN 19:10-  
11; ROMANS 13:1.**

**GOD DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO HIS  
SON - MATT. 28:18; JOHN 5:26-27.**

**CHRIST DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO  
THE APOSTLES -**

- 1. THEY BOUND AND LOOSED - MT.  
16:19; 18:18**
- 2. THE HOLY SPIRIT PROTECTED  
THEM FROM ERROR - JN. 16:13.**
- 3. THEY ARE STILL EXERCISING THAT  
AUTHORITY - MT. 19:28.**
- 4. TO RECEIVE THEM IS TO RECEIVE  
THE LORD - LK. 10:16; JOHN  
13:20.**

## HOW IS AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED?

### THE LORD'S SUPPER DEFINES AND ILLUSTRATES BIBLE AUTHORITY

**DIRECT STATEMENT OR EXPRESS COMMAND:** "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:23-24).

**APPROVED ACTION OR EXAMPLE:** "And upon the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). "An example is binding when there is a stated or necessarily inferred background for their doing what they did" (Gus Nichols).

**IMPLICATION:** "The first day of the week...to break bread" (Frequency of observance).

**EXPEDIENCY:** Any hour within the first day of the week.

1. In "expedient" there is the inherent idea of advantage.
2. There is no expediency where there is no obligation.

3. The building is an expedient because we are obligated to ~~sing~~ meet.

# IS IT A SIN TO WORSHIP WITH MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC?

James Meadows

## Introduction

The Florida School of Preaching Lectures have been well-known for their soundness, their in-depth study of God's word, and their great contributions to the kingdom of God. I commend the lectureship committee for selecting the great theme, DO YOU UNDERSTAND WORSHIP, one of the most controversial subjects of our day.

It is my responsibility in this lecture to discuss the question: Is it a Sin to Worship with Mechanical Instruments of Music? The method I plan to use is as follows: (1) The importance of recognizing and accepting Bible authority; (2) The different kinds of worship mentioned in the New Testament; (3) Arguments for instrumental music in worship and answers to them; (4) Why churches of Christ do not use instrumental music in worship; (5) Testimonies regarding the use of instrumental music in worship; and (6) Conclusion.

## The Importance of Recognizing and Accepting Bible Authority

On one occasion the chief priests and elders asked Jesus, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? (Mt. 21:23). By what authority does one accept or reject instrumental music? How then is Bible authority established?

Primary authority grows out of the relation of those who have the right to command and those whose duty it is to obey. At Jesus' trial, Pilate said: "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have proven to crucify thee, and have power to release thee" (John 19:10). Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above... (John 19:11). "And the Lord God

commanded the man saying" (Gen. 2:16), lays the foundation of Bible authority. It rests entirely on the Sovereignty of God.

God delegated authority to Christ. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. 28:18). On the mount of transfiguration God declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mt. 17:5). God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Heb. 1:2a).

Christ delegated authority to the apostles. Jesus said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 16:19). Later Jesus said to all of the apostles, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 18:18).

Just before his ascension Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

The apostles were to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (Luke 24:49). They would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit came on them on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

Paul claimed that God revealed the very words unto him.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:6-13).

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:10-12).

We must not add to or take from the word of God. It is complete. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6). "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:6-10).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

To reject the authority of Christ and that of the apostles, or to go beyond his authority, is sinful (2 John 9-11; John 12:48; 1 Cor. 4:6). Thus we conclude that the type of music used in New Testament worship must come from his covenant (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9).

#### The Different Kinds of Worship Mentioned in The New Testament

First, there is vain worship. "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7). The Pharisees and scribes questioned Jesus about his disciples eating bread with unwashed hands and transgressing the tradition of the elders (Mt. 15:1-2). They were more concerned about their tradition than doing God's commandments. Their worship was vain. All worship that is not according to God's commandments is vain worship.

Second, there is ignorant worship. When Paul came to Athens he found "...an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship I declare unto you" (Acts 17:23). The Athenians worshipped many gods, but they no doubt erected this inscription lest they leave a god out. Paul made known to them the true God (Acts 17:25-31). How many today are totally ignorant of the worship



God has prescribed? How many today are totally ignorant of the Bible teaching regarding music in worship.

Third, the Bible also mentions will worship.

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances. (Touch not, taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh (Col. 2:20-23).

"Will worship" means one worships according to his own will, not God's will. Cain was a will worshipper (Gen. 4:1-5).

Fourth, there is worship in spirit and in truth:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Jesus sets forth two tests (criteria) of genuine worship. He is not making a contrast between Old Testament worship and New Testament worship because he has always required his people to worship in spirit and truth.

The spirit (pneuma) here is the human spirit; i.e., the conscious or rational life force which animates the body. True worship must be worship which proceeds from the human spirit; and it must be in truth (aletheia-truth as contained in rational precepts, propositional truth). In John 17:17 Jesus declared of the word of God, "they word is truth (aletheia)." True worship then must be a proceeding toward God (or entering into his presence) from the inner man (the human spirit), and it must be in accordance with the word of God (i.e., the activities wherein we express our adoration to God as he has prescribed (Lusk 4-5).

"Vain worship," "ignorant worship," and "will worship" God will not accept, but worship "in spirit and in truth" God will accept. If the use of mechanical music in worship is authorized then we cannot worship God "in spirit and truth" unless we use it. If

instrumental music is not authorized then we cannot worship God "in spirit and truth" if we use it.

Arguments Offered in Favor of Instrumental Music  
In Worship and Answers to Them

First, "the mechanical instrument of music inheres in the Greek word psallo."

What those who use the argument on psallo are saying is that the instrument is hidden in the Greek. If it is, why did not the overwhelming majority of translators find it there and thus translate it, why did not the New Testament church use it, and why did not the Greek Orthodox Church learn about it, and why did not the Roman Catholic Church find it in the first century, and why did not the church fathers find it there? If it is hidden in the Greek, it is so hidden that only a very, very few have found it as indicated by their translations (Bales, 134).

✓ In 1958 G. F. Raines wrote professors of Greek in numerous colleges and universities throughout America inquiring as to the meaning of the word in the Greek New Testament. He received replies from Harvard University, The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, Princeton University, Utheran Theological Seminary, and the University of Southern California. None of them maintained that instrumental music inhered in psallo. They said it means to sing, and one said in First Corinthians 14:15 and Ephesians 5:29 it is used metaphorically (Raines 775-76).

Guy N. Woods wrote:

✓ If the instrument inheres in the word psalmos, it is impossible to render a psalm without an instrument. On this assumption, psalms, whether read or sung, would require instrumental accompaniment! Moreover since each worshipper is required to sing psalms (Eph. 5:18,19), then each worshipper, in order to render acceptable worship to God, must pluck the strings of an instrument in Christian worship! (Woods 825).

Coleman Overby prepared the following table, on the word psallo, for the great

Walker-Overby debate in October, 1925.

TRANSLATION OF PSALLO

THE VERSION	ROM. 15:9	I COR 14,15	EPH. 5:19	JAS 5:13
American R.V.-1901	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Tyndale (1534)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Cranmer (1540)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing

Genevan (1560)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Rheim (1582)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Douay (1610)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
King James (1611)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Macknight (1795)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Rhomish (1833)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
German & Eng. (1853)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Anderson (1864)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Bible Union (1865)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Ellicott (1866)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Tischordorf (1868)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Conybeare & H. (1869)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Living Oracles (1873)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Eng. R.V. (1881)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Bible Union R. (1883)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Worrells (1904)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Modern R. B. (1907)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Newcome's N.T. (?)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Newberry Bible (?)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Polyglott Bible (?)	Sing	Sing	Make Melody	Sing
Greek Int. Eng. (?)	Praise	Praise	Praising	Praise
Greek Int. (?) Handy	Praise	Praise	Praising	Praise
Greek Int. (?) Barry	Praise	Praising	Praise	Praise
Goodspeed (1924)	Sing	Sing Praise	Sing	Sing
Weymouth (1902)	Sing Praise	Praise	Offer Praise	Sing Praise
Moffatt (1918)	Sing	Sing Praise	Praise	Sing Praise
Shorter Bible (Kent)	Omitted	Praise	Praising	Sing Praise
Montgomery (1924)	Sing	Praise	Make Music	Play Harp
Twenty Cen. (1902)	Sing	Sing	Make Music	Sing
Emphatic Dia. (1864)	Sing	Sing Praise	Make Music	Sing Praise
Rotherham (1872-8)	Sing	Sing	Make Music	Sg to Harp
Hayman (?)	Sing	Praise	Make Music	Sing
Ferrar Fenton (1905)	Sing	Sing	Dancing	Sing
Seriac Poshito (?)	Sing	Sing Praise	Sing	S & Praise
Doddridge (1821)	Sing Praise	Sing Praise	S & Chant	Sing Praise
Rotherham (1897)	Str. String	Strike String	Str Strings	Str String
Wycliffe (1380)	Sing	Sing	Sing Psalms	Sing Psalms
Coptic (?)	Sing	Sing	Chanting	Sing Praise
Vulgate (?)	Sing	Psalm	Psalming	Psalm
Ballantine (1923)	Sing	Sing	Playing Harp	S to Harp
Luther's (?)	Sing	Sing	Playing	Sing
Coptic Version (1905)	Sing	Sing	Playing	-----
Alford's (?)	Sing	Sing	Playing	Sing

The above table was prepared by Coleman Overby for the great Walker-Overby debate held in Murray, KY, October 1925. Later used by professor Boles in his debate with brother Clubb in 1927.

Second, "playing upon an instrument is a natural talent with some people and should be devoted to God." Dancing is a natural talent with some people, but should it be devoted to God? Many of the pagan practices are based on natural talent and, according to this argument, should be devoted to the worship of God. No ordinance of

worship or Christian service is based on natural talent such as giving, the Lord's supper, prayer, etc. Then why bring the piano into the worship because playing it is a natural talent with some people?

Third, "it was used under the law of Moses, then why not today?" We are no longer under the Old Covenant (Rom. 6:14-15; 7:1-4, 6-7; 2 Cor. 3:7-14; Gal. 3:19-25; 4:21; 5:1-6; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14-16; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15-17; 10; 8:11). All authority has been given to Christ (Mt. 28:18-20). To be pleasing to God one must heed his teachings and not those of Moses and the prophets (Mt. 17:1-5; Heb. 1:1-2). The instrument is not authorized by Christ, only singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17). To uphold our practices by what the law of Moses taught is to place Moses' authority on par with Christ's. He that tries to live under both laws is guilty of spiritual adultery (Rom. 7:1-4) and severs himself from Christ and falls from grace (Gal. 5:4). If having instrumental music under the law of Moses proves we can have it today in worship, then we can burn incense, infant church membership, Sabbath keeping, and animal sacrifices because they were under the law of Moses. One who keeps the law in one point is debtor to keep it all (Gal. 5:3).

Fourth, "instrumental music is only an aid." Instruments do not aid in worship, they are an act of worship (2 Chr. 29:26-28). They were as much a part of the sound and praise in worship as the singing. An aid or expediency pertains to utility or advantage rather than principle. Lights in the church building enables one to worship at night. Song books help in singing, but they add nothing to the worship. They are only aids and when added are taken away we still have singing. But when the instrument is supplied we have singing and playing. Camp raised these questions:

If mechanical instruments are right because they aid the ear in singing (as some claim), why would incense not be right in connection with the Lord's Supper as an aid to the smelling? If mechanical instruments are right because they aid the ear in singing (as some claim), why would not butter and jelly on the loaf be right as these would aid the taste in observing the Lord's Supper? (Camp 1-2)

Fifth, "instrumental music is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament." In other words, one has the right to do anything the New Testament does not expressly forbid. If one means there is no passage in the New Testament that says "Thou shalt not use instrumental music in worship," they are entirely correct. But if they mean the New Testament in no way forbids the use of such music, they are mistaken! The New Testament forbids the use of instrumental music in worship by the principle of exclusion. The "principle of exclusion" is very simple and may be illustrated in this manner: When God told Noah to make thee an ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14) he excluded the use of any other kind of wood in building the ark. If God had told Noah to make thee an ark of wood then Noah could use any wood that he desired, but God didn't say that. All of God's specific commands are of this character, i.e., when God commands that a thing be done in a specific way everything else in the same category is excluded.

Discussions about the hermeneutic of silence, or whether there is the principle of exclusion, are simply nuances of the authority issue. The inspired writer of Hebrews applied the hermeneutic of silence when he argued that the law did not authorize a priest from Judah by the simple fact that "Moses spake nothing concerning" a priest from Judah (Heb. 7:13-14). Things not authorized are excluded. Otherwise, authority is not authority. When Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire," it was a ritual which was not commanded (Lev. 10:1-2). It was not "strange" because there was a specific prohibition, but there was no instruction by which it was permitted (Pharr 3).

This kind of reasoning leaves us free to pray in the name of Paul or in the name of the pope. It leaves us free to count beads in prayer, wear religious robes, pray to the virgin Mary, dance, drink, gamble, baptize infants, etc.

Sixth, "they are used in the home, then why not in the worship of the church?" Many things are morally right that are religiously wrong. Washing one's hands is not wrong, yet Jesus condemned it in the strongest terms (Mk. 7:3,7). Why? It was condemned because they were doing, as a religious service, something which, although right itself, had not been commanded. Is it wrong to eat meat? The answer to that question would be no (1 Cor. 8:8; 10:25-33; 1 Tim. 4:4-5).

Then, suppose we place it on the Lord's table with bread and wine? ~~You?~~ You ~~can either say~~ are ready to say, that would not be right. Why not? You can either say, it is forbidden because the act is wrong itself, not because it is forbidden; for we not only know it is not wrong to eat meat, but that God nowhere said we must not put it on His table...there is only one correct answer, and that is, the wrong consists of the fact that the Lord has not told us to do so. (Kurfees, 10-11)

Instruments of music are not wrong within themselves. If so, then they would be wrong in the home or anywhere else. They become wrong when put in places that God has not authorized.

Seventh, "there are instruments of music in heaven, why not in the church?" There is no proof for instruments of music in heaven. John heard a voice from heaven "as" the voice of many waters (in unison) and "as" the voice of a great thunder (in volume) and the voice he heard was "as" the voice of harpers harping with their harps (the melody): and they sung as it were a new song before the throne..." (Rev. 14:2). The figure of speech employed here is the simile, which ascribes a given thing characteristics "like" or "as" another thing. The book of Revelation is full of similes and if

they are all taken literal then the words of the Scriptures become a conglomeration of absurdities. If this argument is sound then it would authorize the following things as acceptable to God in worship: falling down dead, the worship of a literal lamb, the riding of red, black, grey and white horses, the blowing of trumpets, flaming fire on a altar, etc. But assuring there are instruments of music in heaven does not mean we can have them in the church.

Eighth, "instrumental music is never in the worship. Worship is in the heart. A mechanical instrument can never be put in the spiritual heart, even though one is put in the place of assembly. The inner man worships. The outer man seeks to give expression to what is within." Worship is more than an attitude of the heart. In the American Standard Version of the New Testament there is a footnote at Matthew 2:2 which reads as follows: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (see Ch. 4:9; 18:2) or to the creator (see ch. 4:10)." The Greek word "denotes an act." Acts are an essential part of worship. The view that worship is simply and solely an attitude—to be distinguished from, and dissociated with acts—is not in harmony with the facts of the case. The Greek word denotes an act "paid." Worship is an attitude, but it is an attitude which expresses itself in an act—an act paid to another. To worship then one must engage in acts. The instrument of music is in the worship because worship is not just in the heart.

#### Why Churches of Christ do not use Instruments of Music in Worship

First, it is not because we dislike them. It's use in the worship is not opposed because there is no taste for music. It is not because we cannot afford them. It is not because we just want to be different.

Second, they violate the law of faith. We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). "So this faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

What does the New Testament say regarding the music which Christians are to offer to God? "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mt. 26:30). "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Mk. 14:26). "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. 15:9). "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12). "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms" (Jas. 5:13).

From these verses we learn that Christians are to sing. Where in the New Testament is there one reference authorizing instrumental music in worship? If one



cannot be found, then its use is without the authority of Christ. It is not by faith. Its use cannot be the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

Third, they violate the law of worship. Our worship is to be "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23-24). Instrumental music in worship is not a part of "all truth" revealed by the Holy Spirit unto the apostles (Jn. 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Their use renders our worship "vain" (Mt. 15:9) and would be classified as "will worship" (Col. 2:23).

Fourth, they violate the law of unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5).

"Pope Vitalian is related to have introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670 A.D.; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present to the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 755" (The American Encyclopedia 688).

In 1851 there was a brief flare-up of the instrumental question at Millersburg, Kentucky. Aylette Raines, on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1851, wrote these words in his diary: "Bro. S(aunders) wishes to introduce a melodeon into the church." In 1860 L. L. Pinkerton of Midway, Kentucky wrote a response to an article written by Benjamin Franklin:

So far as known to me, or, I presume to you, I am the only preacher in Kentucky of our brotherhood who has publicated the propriety of employing instrumental music in some churches, and that the church of God in Midway is the only church that has yet made a decided effort to introduce it (Fortune 373).

The Midway, Kentucky church is the first congregation on record to use the instrument. The melodeon is believed to have originated a controversy that eventually split the Campbell-Stone religious movement into two separate churches: the Christian church (Disciples of Christ) and the Church of Christ.

In 1869 in St. Louis, Missouri, at the Vine Street Church of Christ, the mechanical instrument was introduced. "The result was a division in what had been a happy, contented and united brotherhood" (Hardeman 269). It has in the past, and continues even today, to cause much division.

Fourth, it was never used in the primitive church.

It is clear from the Old Testament and from history that instruments of music were available to be used in accompaniment of singing, that these were used in the Old Testament worship, and they were used extensively in a secular sense at times prior to Christ and contemporary with him. Yet in spite of the availability of the instruments, Jesus and the early church did not use instruments in accompaniment of Christian singing. This fact underscores strongly that those who would add instruments of music to the Christian worship are walking on dangerous ground. If Jesus and the early Christians had the instruments available but deliberately did not use them, there must have been some reason (Kearley 5).

✓ Fifth, instrumental music cannot accomplish the purposes to be accomplished by Christian singing. It requires vocal music and can be satisfied only by the use of the voice. The following chart will illustrate this point:

The Bible Commands to:	The Voice	Instrument
Sing unto God (Romans 15:9)	can	cannot
Speak in song (Ephesians 5:19)	can	cannot
✓ Make melody in the heart (Ephesians 5:19)	can	cannot
Teach in song (Colossians 3:16)	can	cannot
Encourage in song (Col. 3:16)	can	cannot
Sing with the spirit ((I Corinthians 14:15)	can	cannot
Sing with understanding (I Cor. 14:15)	can	cannot
Praise God (Hebrews 2:12)	can	cannot
Give thanks (Hebrews 13:15)	can	cannot

Sing psalms (James 5:13)

can

cannot

Vocal music and vocal music along can accomplish all these purposes.

Testimonies Regarding the Use of Instrumental Music in Worship

Most protestant denominations of today were founded by men who strongly disapprove of instruments of music in worship. Please consider the following:

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church: "I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard" (Clarke 684).

Adam Clarke, a Methodist distinguished for his famous commentary on the entire Bible said: "I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor" (Clark's Commentary, Vol. IV, Page 686).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the greatest Baptist preachers, who preached for twenty years in the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle in London, England, to ten thousand every Sunday, never used instruments in the tabernacle. Commenting on Psalms 42:4 he said:

David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it (Spurgeon 301).

Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church, said: "The organ in the worship is the ensign of Baal." (McClintock & Strong, 762)

Alexander Campbell, of the Restoration Movement, commenting on the use of instrumental music, said:

That all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aid is but natural. Pure water from the flinty rock has no attraction for the mere toper or wine-bibber. A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac brandy, or good old Madeira is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would be no only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert." (Campbell, p. 581)

Early in the year 1864, J. W. McGarvey wrote the following:

In the earlier years of the present Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our public worship. It was declared unscriptural, inharmonious with the Christian institution, and a source of corruption. In the course of time, individuals here and there called in question the correctness of this decision, and an attempt was occasionally made to introduce instruments in some churches.

### CONCLUSION

It is sinful to use instruments of music in worship today. It is utterly without New Testament sanction since Christ did not authorize it, no apostle commended it, and no apostolic church practiced it. (We are to walk by faith which comes by the word of God. Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7).

Instrumental music had its origin in the Catholic Church. This was in the seventh century after the Christian era began.

It split asunder the body of Christ, when introduced by its supporters, during the past century. It has been the cause of alienation, heartache, and great strife among those who claim to follow the New Testament.

Every argument which its friends make, drawn from the Old Testament, opens the flood gates for the introduction of the entire Jewish ritual, such as infant church membership, the burning of incense and the other shadows of the law (Woods 825).

#### WORKS CITED

The American Encyclopedia. 12:688.

Bales, James. Instrumental Music and New Testament Worship. Searcy, Ark: James Bales, 1973, p. 134.

Clarke, Adam. Commentary on The Old Testament. "Isaiah To Malachi." New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, Vol. IV, 1823, p. 684.

Campbell, Alexander. Millennial Harbinger. Series IV, Vol. I, p. 581 in Mem. Of A. Campbell, p. 316.

Camp, Franklin. "If Mechanical Instruments of Music Are Right in Christian Worship Will You Answer These Questions," The Word of Life 2.5 (1973): 1-2.

Fortune, A. W. The Disciples In Kentucky. Published by Convention Center of Christian Churches In Kentucky (1932): 373.

Kurfees, M. C. "Walking By Faith: Origin of Instrumental Music In Christian Worship." Louisville, Ky: (No publisher listed). Tract (1939): 10-11.

Kearley F. Furman. "Sound, biblical, Historical, and Practical Reasons For A Cappella Music in Christian Worship." An Unpublished Manuscript.

Luther, Martin. McClintock & Strong. "Music." 762.

Lusk, Maurice. "Music In The Worship of The Early Church." Doraville, GA: Southeastern School of Evangelism (Sept. 1976): 4-5.

Pharr, David. "Does Instrumental Music Matter." Carolina Messenger (Feb. 2000): 3.

McGarvey, J. W. "Instrumental Music In Churches." Millennial Harbinger. 8.11 (1864): 510.

Raines, G. F. "The Meaning of Psallo." Gospel Advocate. Dec. 1959: 775-76.

Spurgeon, Charles. The Treasury of David. "An Expository and Devotional Commentary on Psalms. Grand Rapids, Mich: Guardian Press, Vol. II, p. 301.

Woods, Guy N. "Instrumental Music In Christian Worship." Gospel Advocate. Dec. 1958: 825.

---. "The Pattern's 'Cordial Challenge' Accepted." Gospel Advocate. Nov. 1969: 729.

# **Things that Accompany Salvation**

James Meadows

## **Introduction**

The Spiritual Sword Lectures have stood the test of time and continue faithfully in upholding the Bible as the Word of God. To Gary McDade, the lectureship committee, the elders, and the members at Getwell, I express my sincere thanks for inviting me to be a part of this lectureship.

The decision to study the book of Hebrews in this lectureship is, in my judgment, a needed and wise decision. The central theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. It is my responsibility to discuss "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9).

The methodology planned in the lesson, regarding "things that accompany salvation," is as follows: (1) What are the better things?; (2) What are some things that accompany salvation?; and (3) Conclusion.

## **What Are Some Things that Accompany Salvation?**

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister (Heb. 6:9-10).<sup>1</sup>

In a sense the whole Bible is written about them. All the good that can come, all the gifts of God to man, his forgiveness, his provident care, his mercies, the growing kingdom, these all belong to salvation.<sup>2</sup>

It seems quite natural that the writer would discuss "better things," since the key word in Hebrews is better. We have a better revelation (1:1-4), a better covenant (8.6), a better priesthood (7:17, 23-24), a better promise (8:6), a better sacrifice (9:11-14), a better hope (7:19), a better blood (9:13-15), and a better resurrection (11:35).

Salvation is used at least two ways in the New Testament. First, it means deliverance from the power and effects of sin (Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46-47). Second, it means eternal salvation or entrance into heaven (I John 2:25; I Pet. 1:3-5, 9; Titus 1:2). One must receive the first salvation (Mark 16:16) in order to have hope of the eternal salvation. One must do something in order to be saved from past sins (Acts 2:37-38), and one must "work out" his eternal salvation (Phil. 2:12).

But there are some things that "accompany" salvation. The Greek phrase here means "near to salvation; or things that are conjoined with salvation."<sup>3</sup> Accompany then means "belong to" or "connected with." There are some things connected with salvation that are never separated from salvation, things to show a person to be in a state of salvation, and will issue in eternal salvation.<sup>4</sup> What are these things that "belong to" or go along with "working" out eternal salvation?

**First, "things that accompany salvation" involve going on unto perfection.**

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;



not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb. 6:1). “Perfecting,” as used in the text, has reference to full growth or maturity.

Earle writes:

The noun teleiotes occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Col. 3:14, where it is translated “perfectness” (KJV). It comes from the noun telos which means “end.” So the basic idea is completeness. ...So the primary emphasis of this exhortation is not on Christian character or experience but on advance in learning the higher teachings of the Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

**One of the essentials in going on unto perfection is mastering the first principles.**

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

From these verses we learn several vital principles needed in going on to perfection. First, it takes time, but time alone will not make one a mature Christian. The Hebrews had been Christians thirty years, but they were still babes in Christ, needing the milk of God’s word. “...you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God...,” indicates they had gone backward instead of forward. Even though time alone will not make one a mature Christian, yet it does take time. One is not baptized today and becomes a mature Christian tomorrow. We can easily drive babes in Christ back into the world by failing to give them time to grow.

Second, it takes the use of one's sense to grow to maturity or to be able to handle "strong meat" (the harder things of God's word). One cannot turn to the scriptures and find a "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not" in every situation one faces, but they contain principles that one must use. Consider some universal principles. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). I Corinthians 14:26 says, "...Let all things be done unto edifying." Colossians 3:17 says we are to "...do all in the name of the Lord..." We take these principles, use our senses, and learn to discern between good and evil. This is how one grows to perfection and without such a practice one will not mature.

Third, Peter gives some inspired advice on how the process works. He first presents God's side and then the human side.

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:3-4).

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge: And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:5-11).

**Another essential in going on to perfection is not laying again the foundation.**

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit” (Heb. 6:1-3).

They must lay them [first principles, JM] up in their hearts, and lay them as the foundation of all their profession and expectation; but they must not rest and stay in them, they must not be always laying the foundation; they must grow, and build upon it. There must be a superstructure; for the foundation is laid on purpose to support the building.<sup>6</sup>

Progress is, and must be, the watchword of the Christian. Christianity creates the passion for progress, and progress will usually be in proportion to one's acceptance of Christ.

The idea in the injunction in verse 1 is, according to Thayer, to leave the subject matter he mentions in the sense of not discussing it for the time being...the writer is urging that progress is taking additional steps, and not simply remaining with the first things which are learned.<sup>7</sup>

**Another essential in going on to perfection involves guarding against “failing away” or apostasy.**

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh off upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned” (Heb. 6:4-8).

The words "falling away" are from a Greek word which literally means "to fall beside a person or thing, to slip away, to deviate from the right path, to turn aside."<sup>8</sup> The Hebrews had left Judaism, but were now in danger of going back to the abrogated ritual of the Levitical system. The sin is described as "slipping away" or "drifting away" from New Testament truth (Heb. 2:1), a hardening of the heart against the Holy Spirit (Heb. 3:7-8), a falling away and a crucifying the Son of God afresh (Heb. 6:6), trodding "under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29).

The principles set forth in Hebrews to keep the Jewish Christians from going back into Judaism, will keep us from going back into the world. First, we need to give earnest heed to the word spoken by the Lord and the apostles.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:1-4.)

Second, we must "hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6,14). Third, exhorting "one another daily" will help us to be faithful in our service to God (Heb. 3:13). Fourth, we must labour to enter into the rest that awaits the people of God (Heb. 4:11). The rest of Canaan was not this rest because long after they entered Canaan David spoke of a rest that still remained (Heb. 4:6-10). Fifth, we

must depend upon the blood of Christ to remove all sins and give us a clean conscience and assurance (Heb. 9:11-14; I John 1:7-10).

**Second, “things that accompany salvation” are hope, faith, and patience.**

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (6:11-12).

Hope is built on a foundation of faith. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). We have this hope “as an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19).

The word rendered ‘full assurance’ means firm persuasion, and refers to a state of mind where there is the fullest conviction, or where there is no doubt (cf. Col. 2:2; I Thess. 1:5; Heb. 10:22; Luke 1:1; Rom. 4:21). Hope is a compound emotion...made up of an earnest desire for an object and a corresponding expectation of obtaining it. The hope of heaven is made up of an earnest desire to reach heaven and a corresponding expectation of it or reason to believe that it will be ours.<sup>9</sup>

John clearly shows that it is hope which moves a child of God to purify himself.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I Jn. 3:1-3).

Faith is essential to pleasing God "...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). It was unbelief that kept the children of Israel out of the promised land (Heb. 3:12-4:11). It is our faith that gives us victory over the world (I Jn. 5:4). Peter tells us to resist the devil stedfast in the faith (I Pet. 5:8-9). Faith means taking God at his word. On the ship to Rome Paul made this statement: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).

"Patience is steadfastness, faithfulness when the going is hard."<sup>10</sup> Patience might be rendered "longsuffering."

The simple etymology of the word is that it is composed of the preposition hupo, which means primarily "under," and the word (in its verbal form, of course) menoō, which means "to stay, to abide, to stand fast." ...Those who have learned the act of abiding under pressure are those who are able to go through life without breaking under the strain.<sup>11</sup>

Abraham was seventy-five years of age when God called him and made a promise, but he was one hundred years of age when the child of promise was born (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 4:16-21). "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:15).

Faith does not win its inheritance without persevering endurance; hence longsuffering is not only presented as an independent quality, but is predicated of faith... Their present faith and perseverance are now making for their final inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

Christians need patience today. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). We need patience to withstand the trials of life (James 1:2-4). "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "...let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

These qualities "accompany" (belong to; are connected with) eternal salvation. Faith guides the Christian life (2 Cor. 5:7); hope stimulates the devotion of the Christian life (Rom. 8:24); patience undergirds the soul and provides the necessary faithfulness to Christ (Heb. 6:12).<sup>13</sup>

**Third, "things that accompany salvation" would include the church.** The church was in God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). Isaiah prophesied that the church would begin in the last days (Isa. 2:2-3). Daniel prophesied that the church would begin in the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44-45). Christ promised to build his church (Matt. 16:13-18). The church began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1-47).

The church is the saved, and one cannot enjoy present salvation from past sins and eternal salvation to come outside of the church. Consider the following:

First, let us establish the fact that to be in Christ is the same as being in his body, the church. I Corinthians 12:13 affirms that one is baptized into his body. Galatians 3:27 affirms that one is baptized into Christ. Hence to be baptized into Christ, is to be baptized into his body which is the church. It follows that if one can be saved without

being in the church (one body) he can be saved without being in Christ, because to be in Christ is to be in the church.

Second, Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23); therefore Christ is the Savior of the church. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without a Savior.

Third, forgiveness of sins is only in the body of Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22); therefore, forgiveness of sins is only in the church. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without the forgiveness of sins.

Fourth, only those in the body are reconciled to God (Eph. 2:14-16); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22); therefore, only those in the church are reconciled to God. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without being reconciled to God.

Fifth, only those in the church enjoy the benefits of the blood of Christ. Christ shed his blood for the whole world (I John 2:2), but all will not be saved, because all will not accept the blessings. Every drop of Christ's blood went into the purchase of the church (Acts 20:28). If one would enjoy the benefits of the blood then one must get them where the blood went. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without the blood of Christ.

Sixth, only those in Christ enjoy all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). Salvation is one of the spiritual blessings (2 Tim. 2:10). But to be in Christ is to be in his church. To



argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without salvation.

### Conclusion

The Hebrew writer gives a stern warning to the Hebrews, but he immediately speaks words of encouragement. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation..." He points out the ministering they had done and were still doing. "Just as they had been careful to maintain good works (Tit. 3:8,14), so the same diligence should be expended in maintaining the joyous certainty of the final outcome of things (3:6-14)."<sup>14</sup> He assures them that God "is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love" (Heb. 6:10). They were continuing (as we also are) in the things that belong to salvation in order to enjoy the eternal salvation.

### ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> All quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), Vol. XI, p. 655.

<sup>3</sup> Albert Barnes, "Hebrews" (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955) pp. 137-139.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (New York: Revell Co., 1960), Vol. VI, p. 914.

<sup>5</sup> Ralph Earle, Word Meanings In the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Book House), p. 423.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry, "Acts to Revelation" (New York: Revel Co., n.d.), p. 912.

<sup>7</sup> Annual Lesson Commentary (Nashville, TN, Gospel Advocate Co., 1964), p. 141.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies (Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973) Vol. 3, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Barnes, op. cit., pp. 137-139.

<sup>10</sup> Tom Holland, Focus on Faith (Henderson, TN, Holland Publications, 1972), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup> Spiro Zolhates, The Behavior of Belief (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 4<sup>th</sup> Printing 1973), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies In the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub. Co., Reprinted 1946), Vol. IV, pp. 449-50.

<sup>13</sup> Holland, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), Vol. X, pp. 75-76.

## What Is The Bible?

### Introduction

1. The 39<sup>th</sup> Street Lectures is one of the finest in the land.
2. It is my responsibility in this lesson to discuss What Is The Bible?
3. The methodology planned is as follows:
  - a. The Bible Is The Word of God: It Claims To Be.
  - b. The Bible Is The Word of God: The Evidence Supports It.
  - c. The Bible Is The Word of God: It Meets Human Needs.

### Discussion

#### I. The Bible Is The Word of God: It Claims To Be.

- A. Varied reactions to the Bible:
  1. Some hate it because it condemns their evil lives.
  2. Some are indifferent to it – out of date, etc.
  3. Some love it and believe it.
- B. One is not arguing in circles when he claims the Bible is the word of God.
- C. What are its claims?
  1. First, it claims to have come from God.
    - a. If one accepts the claims then he believes it can be studied as the word of God.
    - b. If one rejects the claims then the Bible becomes controversial.
  2. Second, the OT abounds with claims it is God's word.
    - a. Such expressions as "God spake," "the Lord testified saying" appears 2,500 times.
    - b. It appears 100 times in Jeremiah and 28 times in Isaiah.
  3. Third, the NT abounds with claims it is the word of God.
    - a. It claims to be a record of things Jesus did (Jn. 20:30-31).
    - b. It claims to be the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).
    - c. It claims to be the mind of God spoken in words chosen by God (I Cor. 2:6-13).
    - d. It claims to be inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
    - e. It claims to be given by men moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
    - f. It claims to be the perfect, complete will of God (1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:13-14; Jude 3).
  4. Either the Bible is what it claims to be or it is a fraud.

#### II. The Bible Is The Word of God: The Evidence Supports It

- A. No belief is required without sufficient evidence.
  1. God gave Pharaoh evidence (Ex. 7:9).
  2. Jesus' works proved him to be the Son of God (Jn. 15:22,24).
  3. John selected seven miracles (Jn. 20:30-31).
  4. To whatever extent your faith is not rational, then to that same extent you cannot defend it.

- B. First, the indestructibility of the Bible proves it to be the word of God.
1. Jesus said his word would not pass away (Mt. 24:35).
  2. Peter said the word "liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23,25).
  3. Diocletion (284-305) decreed that the Scriptures be destroyed, but in 330 A.D. Constantine made Christianity the state religion.
  4. Voltaire, the French infidel boasted that in a century no Bible would be on earth but in 1978, 25 years before he died, the British Bible Society uses his presses to print the Bible.
  5. Robert Ingersoll (1853-1899) in his book "The Mistakes of Moses" boasted that in 25 years the Bible would be a forgotten book; Ingersoll is dead, but the Bible is still here.
- C. Second, the unity of the Bible proves it to be the word of God.
1. Written by 40 men, over a period of 1,500 years, in six different countries, and in three different languages. How does one explain a book of perfect unity without one mind guiding all the writers.
  2. There is unity in the theme of the Bible.
    - a. The theme – Christ is coming, has come, will come again.
    - b. Christ is pictured in every book in the Bible.
  3. There is unity in purpose – the glory of God and the salvation of man. Five basic facts lead to this conclusion.
    - a. The Bible meets the needs of human redemption (Gen. 1-3).
    - b. The Bible teaches that all accountable beings are sinners (Rom. 3:23).
    - c. The Bible teaches that redemption is only in Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
    - d. The OT points to Christ (Luke 24:44; 1 Pet. 1:9-12).
    - e. The redemption of man from sin through Christ glorifies God (Eph. 1:6; 3:21; Rom. 16:27).
- D. Third, one of the strongest, most convincing evidences that the Bible is the word of God is prophecy and its fulfillment.
1. The prophecy of Scriptures is beyond human origin because of the following characteristics:
    - a. Sufficient time lapse.
    - b. Specific.
    - c. Accuracy of fulfillment (100%).
    - d. Impossibility of artificial fulfillment.
  2. There are over 360 OT prophecies about Christ and all of them were fulfilled.
    - a. The amazing prophecies of Isaiah<sup>53</sup> were made more than 700 years before Christ.
    - b. One college professor, trained in mathematics and astronomy, calculated the probability of Christ fulfilling just 8 OT prophecies.
      - (1) The odds of such occurring were 1,000,000,000,000,000,000.
      - (2) But in Isaiah 53, we have 20 prophecies about Christ.
      - (3) Isaiah could not have guessed these.
  3. Isaiah prophesied about the church (Isa. 2:2-3), Daniel the kingdom (Dan. 2:44-45).

4. If the Bible contains prophecy that is beyond human production, then the Bible is the word of God. The Bible contains prophecy beyond human production.

### III. The Bible Is The Word of God: It Meets Human Needs

- A. First, the Bible meets man's spiritual needs. What are these needs?
  1. There is man's desire to create a spiritual concept of God (Jn. 4:24; Psa. 41:13).
  2. There is the desire for clear and certain rulings about ethics (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
  3. Man seeks hope for his spiritual life (Jn. 3:14-17; Mk. 16:15-16).
- B. Second, the Bible meets man's emotional needs. The Bible is psychologically sound.
  1. It deals with how we think (Prov. 23:7; 4:23; Mt. 15:18-19).
  2. It deals with how we feel – the emotions.
    - a. Love begins with God (Mt. 22:37) and leads us to love others and to hate some things (cf. Rev. 2:6,15).
    - b. Envy, anger, etc., are harmful.
  3. Sin brings guilt, but forgiveness brings peace (Psa. 51:7-8, 12).
- C. Religion is not a psychological crutch – it is the only way of life.

### Conclusion

1. The Bible is the Word of God because it claims to be, the evidences supports it and it meets human needs.
2. Read it, believe it, love it, obey it and it will lead to eternal life.
3. The Bible – Quote the Poem.

↓ The BIBLE DOES NOT FAIL

1. IT TELLS MAN OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE (JN. 3:16)
2. IT TELLS " THAT CHRIST CAME TO SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST (LK. 19:10)
3. IT TELLS MAN THE PLAN OF SALVATION (MK. 16:15-17)
4. IT TELLS MAN THAT IF HE CONTINUES TO WALK IN THE LIGHT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST WILL BLOT OUT HIS SINS (1 JOHN 1:7-10)
5. IT TELLS MAN THAT HE WILL BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD (1 COR. 15:51-58)

FHW  
LECTURES-1997

## "GOD'S EXISTENCE -- THE CREATOR"

James Meadows

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1, King James Version). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psa. 33:6). The Psalmist wrote that all creation should "...praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created" (Psa. 148:6).

Our age is one of skepticism and doubt. There is the Atheist who denies the existence of God; the Agnostic who claims to be neutral, neither denying nor affirming the existence of God; the Deist who acknowledges a Supreme Being, but denies the Bible as his revelation to man; and the Destructive critics who profess to believe in God and his word, but usually reject the miracles and inspiration of the Bible. Ours is an age that needs to be grounded in the truths set forth in Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 is full of simple words, yet they are eternal in the truths taught. There are ten words--seven of them has one syllable; two of them has two syllables; and one of them has three syllables. It is simple, sublime, satisfactory. It meets the needs of the case. It leads us to God by exhibiting power, design and intelligence. It provides a plausible explanation, without which we are in the dark.

### AN EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 1:1

"In the beginning." The word "beginning" is used a number of ways in the Bible. It means the beginning of months (Ex. 12:2); the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7); the beginning of the gospel (Mk. 1:1); and the beginning of the Christian life (1 Jn. 2:7). In

this verse it means "the beginning of the existing universe as conditional by time."

"God." God is named thirty-five times in the first chapter of Genesis and the first two verses of chapter two. God is plural here and appears over 3,000 times in the plural in the Hebrew scripture.

The word God, which is the name of the divine nature, is often used under the figure of synecdoche to stand for each member of the Godhead. Because there is one divine nature, there is but one God, though this nature is possessed by three distinct personalities, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and each of them is called God in the scriptures (Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers - Open Forum, Henderson, Tenn., Freed-Hardeman College, 1976, p. 15).

"Created." Three different words are used in Genesis 1 regarding the creation.

"Created" is from the Hebrew word Bara which means to "create something from nothing" (Psa. 33:9; Heb. 11:3). "Made" is from the Hebrew word Asah which means "to make--form out of pre-existing material as a man takes lumber to make a desk." Bara and Asah are sometimes used as synonyms. Nehemiah 9:6 mentions that angels were made. "Formed" is from the Hebrew word Yatsar which means to "form, fashion, from pre-existent material." The word "create" occurs approximately fifty times in the Bible and is always affirmed of what God does and never of what man does. It is affirmed of three things in Genesis one, namely: (1) matter (Gen. 1:1); (2) animal life (Gen. 1:21); and (3) the origin of the soul (Gen. 1:27). Man was made (Gen. 1:26), formed (Gen. 2:7), and created (Gen. 1:27). Animals were created (Gen. 1:21) and formed (Gen. 2:19).

"The heaven and the earth." The American Standard Version has "the heavens and the earth." The place where God placed the heavenly bodies is called "the

(18a)

firmament of the heaven" (Gen. 1:14). The birds fly above "the earth in the open firmament of heaven" (Gen. 1:20). Peter wrote "that by the word of God the heavens were of old" (2 Pet. 3:5). The "earth" refers to the dry land (Gen. 1:10).

### PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FROM GENESIS 1:1

First, it clearly sets forth three great truths concerning God. These three great truths have, from the beginning, constituted the glory of true religion. Homer Hailey wrote:

- (1) the unity of God, in contradistinction to all polytheisms and dualism of heathen philosophy through the ages;
- (2) the personality of God, in opposition to the pantheistic philosophies which acknowledge the presence of God in all creation but deny his transcendence;
- (3) the omnipotence of God, in contra-distinction to all helpless and useless man-made images and idols, either physical or mental. (Homer Hailey, From Creation To The Day of Eternity, Louisville, Kentucky: Religious Supply, 1992, p. 18).

Second, James G. Murphy wrote:

It assumes the existence of God; for it is He who in the beginning creates. It assumes His eternity; for He is before all things; and as nothing comes from nothing, He Himself must have always been. It implies omnipotence; for He creates the universe of things. It implies His absolute freedom; for He begins a new course of action. It implies His infinite wisdom; for a cosmos, and order of matter and mind, can only come from a being of absolute intelligence. It implies His essential goodness; for the Sole, Eternal, Almighty, All-wise, and All-sufficient Being has no reason, no motive, and no capacity for evil. It presumes Him to be beyond all limit of time and place; and He is before all time and place... The simple sentence denies Atheism; for it assumes the being of God. It denies Polytheism, and among its various forms, the doctrine of two eternal principles, the one good and the other evil; for it confesses the one Eternal Creator. It denies Materialism; for it asserts the creation of matter. It denies Pantheism; for it assumes the existence of God before all things, and apart from them. It denies Fatalism; for it involves the freedom of the Eternal Being. (James G. Murphy, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Boston: Estes and Lauriat,

was there in the sea (Jonah 1:4). "The darkness and the light are both" alike to God (Psa. 139:2). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3).

Fifth, the fact that God exists and that he is there brings great comfort or indispensable consolation to the righteous. Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers..." (I Pet. 3:12). God is not asleep, or engaged in a conversation which cannot be interrupted, or on a journey (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:27-29), but he is ever present to bless and help us (Mt. 28:20).

## CONCLUSION

Homer Hailey wrote:

The creation of the universe by an intelligent Creator possessing purpose in that which He does accounts for the design beheld in all nature. This universally observed design, connotes a Designer. The recognition of such a Creator accounts for the design, purpose and orderliness in the universe; whereas, apart from such recognition there is no adequate explanation of such order and law (Hailey, p. 20). 21

It is reasonable to believe in God. Man's mind has never faced a greater challenge than to attempt to comprehend God. It is reasonable to believe that something existed from all eternity. Dr. Robert Clark, a scientist at Cambridge University, writes:

What is to be said of the other evidences of apparent design which are to be seen on every hand? Are they also due to chance? The truth is, that as Eddington has pointed out, the chance theory undermines the grounds of science itself (R. Clark, The Universe and God, London: The English Universities Press, n.d., p. 181). 21

The universe exhibits design, therefore there must be a great Designer; it operates with mathematical precision, therefore there must be a great Mathematician; there must



---

---

# Things That Accompany Salvation

James Meadows

---

---

## Introduction

The Spiritual Sword Lectures have stood the test of time and continue faithfully in upholding the Bible as the word of God. To Gary McDade, the lectureship committee, the elders, and the members at Getwell, I express my sincere thanks for inviting me to be a part of this lectureship.

The decision to study the book of Hebrews in this lectureship is, in my judgment, a needed and wise decision. The central theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. It is my responsibility to discuss "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9).

The methodology planned in the lesson, regarding "things that accompany salvation," is as follows: (1) What are the better things? (2) What are some things that accompany salvation? and (3) Conclusion.

## What Are Some Things That Accompany Salvation?

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister (Heb. 6:9-10).<sup>1</sup>

In a sense the whole Bible is written about them.

All the good that can come, all the gifts of God, to man, his forgiveness, his provident care, his mercies, the growing kingdom, these all belong to salvation.<sup>2</sup>

It seems quite natural that the writer would discuss "better things," since the key word in Hebrews is *better*. We have a *better* revelation (Heb. 1:1-4), a *better* covenant (Heb. 8:6), a *better* priesthood (Heb. 7:17, 23-24), a *better* promise (Heb. 8:6), a *better* sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-14), a *better* hope (Heb. 7:19), a *better* blood (Heb. 9:13-15), and a *better* resurrection (Heb. 11:35).

Salvation is used at least two ways in the New Testament. First, it means deliverance from the power and effects of sin (Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46-47). Second, it means eternal salvation or entrance into heaven (1 John 2:25; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 9; Titus 1:2). One must receive the first salvation (Mark 16:16) in order to have hope of the eternal salvation. One must do something in order to be saved from past sins (Acts 2:37-38), and one must "work out" his eternal salvation (Phil. 2:12).

But, there are some things that "accompany" salvation. The Greek phrase here means "near to salvation; or things that are conjoined with salvation."<sup>3</sup> Accompany then means "belong to" or "connected with." There are some things connected with salvation that are never separated from salvation, things to show a person to be in a state of salvation, and will issue in eternal salvation.<sup>4</sup> What are these things that "belong to" or go along with "working" out eternal salvation?

First, "things that accompany salvation" involve going on unto perfection. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Heb. 6:1). "Perfecting," as used in the text, has reference to *full growth* or *maturity*. Earle writes:

The noun *teleiotes* occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Col. 3:14, where it is translated "perfection" (KJV). It comes from the noun *telos* which means "end." So the basic idea is completeness . . . So the primary emphasis of this exhortation is not on Christian character or experience but on advance in learning the higher teachings of the Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

**One of the essentials in going on unto perfection is mastering the first principles.**

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

From these verses we learn several vital principles needed in going on to perfection. First, it takes time, but time alone will not make one a mature Christian. The Hebrews had been Christians thirty years, but they were still babes in Christ, needing the milk of God's word. "You have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God" indicates they had gone backward instead of forward. Even though time alone will not make one a mature Christian, yet it does take time. One is not baptized today and becomes a mature Christian tomorrow. We can easily drive babes in Christ back into the world by failing to give them time to grow.

Second, it takes the use of one's senses to grow to maturity or to be able to handle "strong meat" (the harder things of God's word). One cannot turn to the scriptures

and find a "thou shalt" or "thou shalt not" in every situation one faces, but they contain principles that one must use. Consider some universal principles. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). I Corinthians 14:26 says, "Let all things be done unto edifying." Colossians 3:17 says we are to "do all in the name of the Lord." We take these principles, use our senses, and learn to discern between good and evil. This is how one grows to perfection, and without such a practice one will not mature.

Third, Peter gives some inspired advice on how the process works. He first presents God's side and then the human side.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Pet. 1:3-4).

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge: And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting

kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:5-11).

**Another essential in going on to perfection is not laying again the foundation.**

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit (Heb. 6:1-3).

They must lay them [first principles] up in their hearts, and lay them as the foundation of all their profession and expectation; but they must not rest and stay in them, they must not be always laying the foundation; they must grow, and build upon it. There must be a superstructure; for the foundation is laid on purpose to support the building.<sup>6</sup>

Progress is, and must be, the watchword of the Christian. Christianity creates the passion for progress, and progress will usually be in proportion to one's acceptance of Christ.

The idea in the injunction in verse 1 is, according to Thayer, to leave the subject matter he mentions in the sense of not discussing it for the time being . . . the writer in urging that progress is taking additional steps, and not simply remaining with the first things which are learned.<sup>7</sup>

**Another essential in going on to perfection involves guarding against "falling away" or apostasy.**

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And

have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned (Heb. 6:4-8).

The words "falling away" are from a Greek word which literally means "to fall beside a person or thing, to slip away, to deviate from the right path, to turn aside." The Hebrews had left Judaism but were now in danger of going back to the abrogated ritual of the Levitical system. The sin is described as "slipping away" or "drifting away" from New Testament truth (Heb. 2:1), a hardening of the heart against the Holy Spirit (Heb. 3:7-8), a falling away and a crucifying the Son of God afresh (Heb. 6:6), trodding "under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29).

The principles set forth in Hebrews to keep the Jewish Christians from going back into Judaism, will keep us from going back into the world. First, we need to give earnest heed to the word spoken by the Lord and the apostles.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both

with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (Heb. 2:1-4).

Second, we must "hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6, 14). Third, exhorting "one another daily" will help us to be faithful in our service to God (Heb. 3:13). Fourth, we must labour to enter into the rest that awaits the people of God (Heb. 4:11). The rest of Canaan was not this rest because long after they entered Canaan David spoke of a rest that still remained (Heb. 4:6-10). Fifth, we must depend upon the blood of Christ to remove all sins and give us a clean conscience and assurance (Heb. 9:11-14; I John 1:7-10).

Second, "things that accompany salvation" are hope, faith, and patience. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:11-12).

Hope is built on a foundation of faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). We have this hope "as an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19).

The word rendered "full assurance" means firm persuasion, and refers to a state of mind where there is the fullest conviction, or where there is no doubt (cf. Col. 2:2; I Thess. 1:5; Heb. 10:22; Luke 1:1; Rom. 4:21). Hope is a compound emotion . . . made up of an earnest desire for an object and a corresponding expectation of obtaining it. The hope of heaven is made up of an earnest desire to reach heaven and a corresponding expectation of it or reason to believe that it will be ours.<sup>9</sup>

John clearly shows that it is hope which moves a child of God to purify himself.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Faith is essential to pleasing God "for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). It was unbelief that kept the children of Israel out of the promised land (Heb. 3:12-4:11). It is our faith that gives us victory over the world (1 John 5:4). Peter tells us to resist the devil steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. 5:8-9). Faith means taking God at his word. On the ship to Rome Paul made this statement: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25).

"Patience is steadfastness, faithfulness when the going is hard."<sup>10</sup> Patience might be rendered "longsuffering."

The simple etymology of the word is that it is composed of the preposition *hupo*, which means primarily "under," and the word (in its verbal form, of course) *meno*, which means "to stay, to abide, to stand fast." . . . Those who have learned the act of abiding under pressure are those who are able to go through life without breaking under the strain.<sup>11</sup>

Abraham was seventy-five years of age when God called him and made a promise, but he was one hundred years of age when the child of promise was born (Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 4:16-21). "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:15).

Faith does not win its inheritance without persevering endurance; hence longsuffering is not

only presented as an independent quality, but is predicated of faith . . . Their present faith and perseverance are now making for their final inheritance.<sup>12</sup>

Christians need patience today. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). We need patience to withstand the trials of life (Jas. 1:2-4). "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

These qualities "accompany" (belong to; are connected with) eternal salvation. Faith guides the Christian life (II Cor. 5:7); hope stimulates the devotion of the Christian life (Rom. 8:24); patience undergirds the soul and provides the necessary faithfulness to Christ (Heb. 6:12).<sup>13</sup>

Third, "things that accompany salvation" would include the church. The church was in God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). Isaiah prophesied that the church would begin in the last days (Isa. 2:2-3). Daniel prophesied that the church would begin in the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44-45). Christ promised to build his church (Matt. 16:13-18). The church began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1-47).

The church is the saved, and one cannot enjoy present salvation from past sins and eternal salvation to come outside of the church. Consider the following:

First, let us establish the fact that to be in Christ is the same as being in his body, the church. I Corinthians 12:13 affirms that one is baptized into his body. Galatians 3:27 affirms that one is baptized into Christ. Hence to be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into his body which is

the church. It follows that if one can be saved without being in the church (one body) he can be saved without being in Christ, because to be in Christ is to be in the church. Second, Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23); therefore Christ is the Savior of the church. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without a Savior.

Third, forgiveness of sins is only in the body of Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22); therefore, forgiveness of sins is only in the church. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without the forgiveness of sins.

Fourth, only those in the body are reconciled to God (Eph. 2:14-16); the body is the church (Eph. 1:22); therefore, only those in the church are reconciled to God. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without being reconciled to God.

Fifth, only those in the church enjoy the benefits of the blood of Christ. Christ shed his blood for the whole world (1 John 2:2), but all will not be saved, because all will not accept the blessings. Every drop of Christ's blood went into the purchase of the church (Acts 20:28). If one would enjoy the benefits of the blood, then one must get them where the blood went. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without the blood of Christ.

Sixth, only those in Christ enjoy all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). Salvation is one of the spiritual blessings (II Tim. 2:10). But, to be in Christ is to be in his church. To argue that one can be saved outside the church is to argue that one can be saved without salvation.

### Conclusion

The Hebrew writer gives a stern warning to the Hebrews, but he immediately speaks words of encouragement. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." He points out the ministering they had done and were still doing. "Just as they had been careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8, 14), so the same diligence should be expended in maintaining the joyous certainty of the final outcome of things (3:6-14)."<sup>14</sup> He assures them that God "is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love" (Heb. 6:10). They were continuing (as we also are) in the things that belong to salvation in order to enjoy the eternal salvation.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>All quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup>*The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 1955), Vol. XI, p. 655.

<sup>3</sup>Albert Barnes, *Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1955), pp. 137-139.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (New York, NY: Revell Co., 1960), Vol. VI, p. 914.

<sup>5</sup>Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings In the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n.d.), p. 423.

<sup>6</sup>Matthew Henry, *Acts to Revelation* (New York, NY: Revell Co., n.d.), p. 912.

<sup>7</sup>*Annual Lesson Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964), p. 141.

<sup>8</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), Vol. 3, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup>Barnes.

<sup>10</sup>Tom Holland, *Focus on Faith* (Henderson, TN: Holland

Hebrews 6

Publications, 1972), p. 50.

<sup>11</sup>Spiro Zolhates, *The Behavior of Belief* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 4th Printing, 1973), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies In the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., Reprinted 1946), Vol. IV, pp. 449-450.

<sup>13</sup>Holland, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup>*Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1967), Vol. X, pp. 75-76.

# RELATIONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL

*By James Meadows*

## Introduction

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:13-19). [All scripture references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.]

The church that Jesus promised to build had its beginning on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2). The church went forth preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world. Persecutions arose on every hand (Acts 8:1-4; 11:19ff) and the “sect” (church) was everywhere spoken against (Acts 28:22).

Today, the church is facing some of the biggest battles of her life. One of the latest charges against the church is that she is too institutional, when she needs to be more relational.

The methodology of study proposed in this lesson is as follows: (1) a definition of modernity and postmodernity; (2) a definition of institutional and relational; (3) the beliefs of the institutional church, (4) the beliefs and practices proposed by the relational church; and (5) conclusion.



## A Definition of Modernity and Postmodernity

Modernity and postmodernity must be clearly understood because this is what might be called a "cultural shift." The cultural shift is what now demands a relational church instead of an institutional church. ("Modernity, the name we have fixed to that culture, demanded fixed, rational, and clearly marked boundaries. It formulated categories for classification purposes. It labeled and assigned. It judged and excluded. It fostered and furthered division" (Shelly & York 9).)

The institutional church belongs to the culture of modernity. "Institutional unity thinks more in terms of structures, doctrinal formulations, exclusion of diversity, and external connections... The former is church as presently experienced with its emphasis on separation rooted in distinctive beliefs and practices" (77-78).

(Now there has been a major paradigm shift to what is called – for the lack of a better term – postmodernity. It acknowledges and embraces a degree of ambiguity that modernity could not tolerate. It sees fuzzy rather than fixed boundaries. It rejects rigid categories, judgmentalism, and exclusion; it affirms inclusion, association and flexibility. In its extreme forms, postmodernity is as dangerous for its "fuzziness" as modernity was for its "rigidity" (9).)

(The relational church proponents admit that they are "proposing a different way of viewing the people of God, a different way of describing what it means to be a Christian" (110-111).) They maintain that they are not drawing another set of blueprints, but "dubbed it a relational model as opposed to an institutional model" (111). All of this is deemed necessary because we live in the Postmodern atmosphere of the twenty-first century. "We believe that the relational faith we are proposing has a better chance of acceptance now than ever in the past two centuries. And we believe it is closer to the experience of the church one reads about in the New Testament than we have known" (10).

### **Definition of Institutional and Relational**

Institution means “an organization, establishment, foundation, society, or like, devoted to the promotion of a particular object” (Webster 737). Institutional means pertaining to or established by an institution.

The church was viewed as a “giant machine” in the world of the institutional church. Thus the idea was to have a “better church machine.”

✓ (But what if the church is not a machine? What if objective truth isn't so scientifically objective at all? What if the goal is not to have all the right answers to Bible trivia questions? What if the goal is not to be doctrinally sound? What if, in a relational model, people once again focus on the Christ instead of each group's particular set of proof texts and practices? What if all that looks so random actually is relational)(Shelly & York 9)

### **What are the Beliefs of the Institutional Church?**

We are using the term “institutional church” because that is the term used by those of the “relational” persuasion. The beliefs of the “institutional church,” however, are those clearly set forth in the word of God. The fact that some have not always practiced these matters does not change the Bible teaching. The fact that some members of the church have manifested a repulsive attitude in teaching others does not change God's will.

First, the “institutional church” believes that Jesus Christ is head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23), the builder of the church (Matt. 16:18), the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11), and the Saviour of the church (Eph. 5:23). Paul said, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Second, the “institutional church” believes that the relationship between members of the church is so close that what affects one affects all (1 Cor. 12:13-26). Each member has a responsibility to contribute his measure to the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16).

Third, the “institutional church” believes that one can know the exact moment when he/she is saved – that is when God forgives sins. The Romans were made free from their sins when they obeyed that form of doctrine (Rom. 6:17-18). That form of doctrine is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). One obeys a form of the death, burial, and resurrection when one is baptized (Rom. 6:3-4).

Fourth, the “institutional church” believes that the Bible clearly sets forth God’s will for how his church is to worship. That means observance of the Lord’s supper every first day of the week (Mt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7), vocal music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), prayer (Acts 2:42), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2) and teaching God’s word (Acts 2:42). Yes, the “institutional church” believes that God has a pattern.

#### **What are the Beliefs of the Relational Church?**

First, the “relational church” believes

✓ (the Spirit of God can work with denominations today very much as he did with local churches or city churches in the first century...Was the unity of the one church every really structural so much as relational? If the latter, can we not envision relational unity among Christian denominations so long as we avoid sectarianism? And could such relational unity not be healthy rather than detrimental to the life of the body of Christ)(10)?

Second, the “relational church” believes “God is not bound to a pattern that has him doing things with uniformity, that God is more concerned with relationship than with regularity” (88-89).

Third, the “relational church” believes when we read the Scriptures we must not ask “what does this mean to me” but we must have a “group mentality” and ask “what does this mean to us.”

Fourth, the "relational church" believes one cannot know at a certain moment when one is saved. "I think this is so because salvation is not an event but a journey, not a single moment at which but a pilgrim direction toward God" (135).

Fifth, the "relational church" believes in what they call the "larger body of Christ."

✓ (Community Bible Study and Women's/Men's Bible Fellowship Groups are drawing hundreds of thousands together for a fresh reading of the word of God. Promise Keepers, the Billy Graham Crusades, and many similar efforts provide people who have known each other only in caricature the chance to know how sincere the passion of Christ really is in the larger body of Christ. These are things for which we surely ought to be praising God rather than growing defensive)(166).

✓ Sixth, the "relational church" makes a plea for honest souls to seek Christ with humility (to which we all would agree, JM), but observe how this seeking is to be done. ("In whatever denomination or non-denomination any one of us may be, seek Jesus above all. If you are not affiliated with any group of believers, we can only plead with you to find a Jesus-intoxicated group within which you can flourish" (167).)

Seventh, the "relational church" believes the Lord's Supper should be observed on the first day of the week, but as to frequency and additional days of the week they take no firm stand.

✓ (But does anyone have the right to restrict its observance to Sunday and to say that its celebration on another day of the week is sinful? The Bible itself makes no such declaration. By what right would we presume to do so...Again, however, one is hard pressed to make a case that one sins by monthly or quarterly observance of the communion rather than weekly participation. Where is the biblical precedent for such a judgment)(186-187).

### Conclusion

The word of God clearly sets forth the truths about the Lord's church. The "manifold wisdom of God" is to be made known by the church (Eph. 3:10). The church must love lost people and go forth to teach them. But the church must not compromise and change God's rules

just because culture changes. It must not “water down” the good news in order to get more people to accept it. The “institutional church” may fail in many ways, but it is still the church that the Lord established.

#### Works Cited

Shelly, Rubel & York, John. The Jesus Proposal. Siloam, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2003.

Webster’s Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Gramercy Books, 1989.

## **Foundations of Faith**

**James Meadows**

The Spiritual Sword Lectures have stood the test of time and continue faithfully in upholding the Bible as the word of God. To Gary McDade, the lectureship committee, the elders, and the members at Getwell, I express my sincere thanks for inviting me to be a part of this lectureship.

The decision to discuss the foundational truths crucial to Christian living recognizes a greatly needed lesson in today's society. There are so many forces trying to destroy the very foundations of Christianity. The Psalmist said, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. 11:3)<sup>1</sup>

It is my responsibility to discuss *Foundations of Faith*. The methodology planned in this lesson is as follows: (1) What is the meaning of foundation? (2) What are some efforts being put forth today to destroy the foundations of faith? (3) What are some of the foundations of faith? and (4) Conclusion.

### **What is the Meaning of Foundation**

Foundations is from *skathak*, which Strong defines as "a basis, i.e. (figuratively) political or moral support." Webster defines a foundation as (1) that on which something is founded; (2) the basis or groundwork of anything.<sup>2</sup>

Foundations or foundation is used many ways in the Bible. Sometimes, it refers to the foundations of the earth. "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever" (Psa. 104:5). There are times that it refers to a righteous individual. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Prov. 10:25). It is used to refer to the foundation of a building. "...But the foundation of the temple of the Lord

was not yet laid” (Ezra 3:6b). Sometimes, it refers to the work one has done, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation...” (I Cor. 3:10). Sometimes, it refers to that on which one builds his life – either on a rock or on sand (Matt. 7:24-27).

### **What Are Some Efforts Being Put Forth to Destroy the Foundations**

**First, the so-called “New Hermeneutic” is one of the most dangerous doctrines being taught today.** Robert Taylor, Jr., wrote: “It is my seasoned judgment that this will be the most far-reaching error in widespread consequences that we have faced in this century.”<sup>3</sup> “Hermeneutics is the procedure by which certain logical principles are applied to a document in order to ascertain the author’s original meaning.”<sup>4</sup> All literature is subject to hermeneutical analysis. The Judiciary branch of our government has been designed to practice “legal hermeneutics,” i.e., to interpret the law. “Sacred hermeneutics is the science of Bible interpretation.”<sup>5</sup>

The “old” hermeneutic considered the immediate context regarding who was speaking, to whom it was spoken, the setting, and figurative or literal language. It depended upon logic, inference, and reasoning. The “New Hermeneutic states that the method by which we have traditionally interpreted the Bible is viewed as a hermeneutic that no longer provides the answers for the issues which face us as individuals or collectively in the church.”<sup>6</sup>

The “new hermeneutic” says “no conclusion, which has been drawn as the result of human reasoning, can be established as a test of Christian fellowship.”<sup>7</sup>

The ‘Fundamentals of the Faith’ must be held onto at all costs... They are the only ‘absolutes’ I know. All other matters must be arrived at ‘hermeneutically’ (that is, by a process of reasoning!)... But any conclusion reached by such a process should not be made a test of fellowship.<sup>8</sup>

How would one establish, without human reasoning, the existence of God, the lordship of Christ, Bible authority, the one church, and immersion in water as a part of the new birth?

The "new hermeneutic" sets forth the following commonly accepted views:

There are Christians in all denominations; the approval of using instrumental music in worship; the acceptance of the believer's baptism; the idea that one cannot be certain of knowing the truth; that we must emphasize love over doctrine; the church must reach out and spiritually fellowship her Protestant religious neighbors, etc., all stem from the acceptance of the theory of the New Hermeneutic. These views, in essence, are but mere symptoms of a much more dangerous condition.<sup>9</sup>

Second, many today are saying "there is no New Testament pattern." More than thirty years ago a well-known gospel preacher wrote these words:

There can be no spiritual fellowship between New Testament Christians and individuals or groups which teach anything other than the pure gospel of Christ, worship in the manner other than that authorized in the New Testament, organize themselves differently from the pattern of organization set forth in Scripture and/or live a worldly life.<sup>10</sup>

On April 20-21, 1990, that same preacher writes the following:

Are we really looking for a pattern? We have taken Acts and tried to make it a prison, a rigid pattern. Acts was not meant to be a pattern. I reject pattern theology. The scripture are not a book of case law to be cited like a bunch of proof-texts. The way to teach people about the Bible is not to quote a series of steps to salvation. I am not looking for a pattern. I am looking for a person.<sup>11</sup>

Larry Ray Hafley raises these questions for those who say there is no pattern. First, what/who says there is no pattern? Second, if there are no patterns for worship and service, are there perversions? Third, is there a pattern for moral behaviors? Fourth, is Jesus a pattern for salvation? "If Christ is the ground of salvation and a pattern of deliverance, by what process do we learn that there is no pattern for the conditions of salvation?"<sup>12</sup>

During the Lipscomb Spring Lectures in 1957, Reuel Lemmons delivered a lecture entitled, "The Scriptures – Our Patterns." He stated:



God has given us a pattern for obedience, a pattern for the church, a pattern for worship, and a pattern for work. Strict compliance with that pattern produces Christians only, the church of Christ only, and scriptural worship and scriptural work. The real legitimacy of Christianity rests in strict adherence to the pattern. Either God's word is that pattern or there is no pattern...if God's word is intended to be a pattern it is a perfect pattern, for God cannot be charged with imperfection, and following it is important – yes, absolutely essential. If God's word is not intended to be a pattern, then it doesn't matter what we are, or what we do, in religion, nor does it matter whether we are anything or do anything.<sup>13</sup>

**Third, the “new morality” presents one of the greatest threats to the faith by Christians.** Morality is a doctrine or system of ideas concerned with conduct.

The new-morality says that the Bible and the traditional concept of a personal God is for a pastoral society, is old fashioned and is wholly unfit for man in the modern space age. Rules of conduct based upon the Bible are outmoded and produce unnecessary sense of guilt. Man should free himself from all restraints except ‘love’ and look upon himself rather than a heavenly being for his salvation.<sup>14</sup>

An acceptance of the basic principles and foundation stones of the “new-morality” removes God and degrades man. There are three basic principles of the “new-morality.”

**First, there is its attitude toward God.** 19<sup>th</sup> century modernists developed a new theology which sought to do away with God and the supernatural, while holding on to the moral teachings of the Bible. God to them is just another name that referred to their own being.

**Second, there is a change in attitude toward man.** A new idea based upon the theory of evolution developed. Since God was not, then man could not be created in his image, but was nothing more than a highly developed animal.

**The third foundation stone of the “new-morality” was a change in attitude toward the scriptures.** It denies there are moral laws given by God, who does not exist. It says there are no Christian standards that are always valid. The philosophy is well expressed in the statement that “a universally binding moral law is legalistically blind to concrete, peculiar needs of a particular person in a particular situation. Love becomes blind obedience to a moral code.”<sup>15</sup>

## What Are Some of the Foundations of Faith?

**First, the throne of God is a sure foundation.** Following the statement in Psalms 11:3, "If the foundations be destroyed," David announced the existence of a sure foundation. "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven..." (Psa. 11:4). This plainly states that the Lord has a throne in heaven, and that he is occupying it. "That would constitute the surest of all bases of support."<sup>16</sup>

**Secondly, the Bible, the word of God, is the support of our faith.** "But all flesh is a grass, and all the glory of men as though the flowers of grass. The grass withereth, and the flowers thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1: 24-25).

The Bible claims to be complete. Miracles were given for the purpose of confirming the word of God (Mk. 16:17-20; John 20: 30-31; Heb. 2:1-4). Miracles were to cease when "that which is perfect is come" (I Cor. 13: 8-13). Miracles were to cease when we come to "the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4:7-16).

The Bible claims to be able to furnish man unto all good works. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

The Bible claims to contain all that is necessary to life and godliness. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3).

The Bible claims to be the faith once delivered. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you

that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

**Third, Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which all rest.** “For other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11). “...Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). The truths set forth in these verses are comforting to the Christian. God permits no other foundation. No other foundation is needed. No other foundation is possible.

**Fourth, the church is another foundation of faith.** The church is built upon a solid foundation.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:13-18).

The church is built upon a rock, “Petra,” which means a ledge of rock.

Jesus did not say nor mean to say that his church would be built upon “a stone,” but upon a solid “ledge of rock”; a stone might be too small for a foundation, but a ledge of rock furnished sufficient foundation for the greatest superstructure....it seems clear from the context that Jesus, by using the term “Petra,” referred to the truth that Peter had just confessed, which was the deity of Christ. The truth that Jesus is the Son of the living God is the most fundamental basis of all truths pertaining to man’s redemption.<sup>17</sup>

The church is a solid foundation of faith because it is eternal. Daniel said the kingdom would “stand forever” (Dan 2:44-45). “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God, acceptable with reverence and godly fear”

(Heb. 12:28). Christ, the head of the church is eternal (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:24-25; I Tim. 6:14-16).

**Fifth, the resurrection of Christ is another foundation of faith.**

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (II Tim. 2:16-19).

Saying that the resurrection was past already was one example of the “vain babblings” to be shunned. They were not denying the resurrection of Christ, but the future resurrection of the body which is promised to all (I Cor. 15:21-22; Acts 24:15). Such teaching was destroying the faith of some.

“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure...”

That is to say, though some may go astray from the truth and upset the faith of others, yet assuredly God’s firm foundation stands unshaken...it is likely that “firm foundation” has reference to the truth of the Gospel, the foundation of men’s faith. Part of this foundation was the doctrine of the resurrection, the very doctrine the false teachers have twisted as they mishandled the word of truth. Well, in spite of the false teachers, the foundation stands.<sup>18</sup>

**Sixth, another foundation of faith is to be well-grounded in the truth.** Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We must be well grounded in the truth so we can defend our faith. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Pet. 3:15). We must be well grounded in the truth to keep from being “carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleigh of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14).

Growth is essential to being well-grounded in the truth. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:2). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen." (II Pet. 3:18).

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:12-14).

### Conclusion

The principles of religion are the foundations on which the faith and hope of the righteous are built. If you destroy the foundation, if you take good people off from their home in God, if you can persuade them that their religion is a cheat and a jest and can banter them out of that, you ruin them, and break their hearts indeed, and make them of all men most miserable.<sup>19</sup>

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> All quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
- <sup>2</sup> Webster's Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, (New York: Gramercy Books, 1989), p. 560.
- <sup>3</sup> Robert Taylor, Jr., Ripley Benson, "James Did Not Subscribe to the New Hermeneutics" (Ripley, Tenn., 1994) Vol XXI, Number 8.
- <sup>4</sup> Wayne Jackson, *The Christian Courses*, July 20, 2000.
- <sup>5</sup> Jackson, *Ibid*.
- <sup>6</sup> Joseph Meador, "The Gospel Versus the New Hermeneutics - I," *The Southwestern*, March 6, 1994, p. 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Jackson, *op. cit*.
- <sup>8</sup> Marvin Phillips, "Free to Differ," *Image*, May/June 1990, pp. 5-6.
- <sup>9</sup> Meador, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Rubel Shelby, "Liberalism's Threat to the Faith," (Memphis, Tenn: Simple Studies Publishing Co., 1972), p.4.
- <sup>11</sup> Rubel Shelby, taken from taped lessons presented in a series of meetings in West Memphis, Ark., April 20-21, 1990.
- <sup>12</sup> Larry Ray Hafley, *Guardian of Truth*, April 4, 1991, p. 4.
- <sup>13</sup> Reuel Lemmons, *Lipscomb Spring Lectures*, "The Scriptures - Our Pattern," 1957.
- <sup>14</sup> Clifton Ganus, *Abilene Christian College Lectures*, 1966, pp. 255-56.
- <sup>15</sup> James Bales, FBI Enforcement Bulletin, September 1965, p. 1.
- <sup>16</sup> E.M. Zerr, *Bible Commentary* (Marion, Ind.: Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1954), Vol. 3, p. 8.
- <sup>17</sup> H. Leo Boles, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co., 1936), p. 345.
- <sup>18</sup> Garth L. Reese, *I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy* (Moberly, Mo.; Scripture Exposition Books, 1977), p. 479.
- <sup>19</sup> Matthew Henry, *Job To Song of Solomon* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1710), Vol. III, p. 277.

# DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

1 Corinthians 10:23-33

## Introduction

What would God have me to do in this case? What is the right thing to do? Every concerned Christian boy or girl, man or woman, has been faced with this question in one form or another, at some time or another.

Has God given us a specific law for everything we can or cannot do as a Christian? In other words, has God spelled out in detail "what thou shalt do" and "what thou shalt not do?" The answer is no. But God has given principles that will apply and work in answering all these questions.

Four great principles set forth in the New Testament, when applied and used, will enable one to always decide what one can or cannot do in any situation. They are: First, "...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Second, "let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). Third, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col.3:17). Fourth, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

It is my responsibility in this study to emphasize "do all to the glory of God." The methodology planned is as follows: (1) What does it mean to glorify God? (2) Some Bible examples of men glorifying God. (3) It is right for Christians to glorify." (4) How may Christians glorify God? (5) How may Christians cause others to glorify God?

## What Does It Mean To Glorify God?

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness

thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved (1 Cor. 10:23-33).<sup>1</sup>

Glorifying God "does not mean and is not to be understood as if (man) could add anything to God's essential glory" (Cruden). Webster says glorify means "to make glorious by bestowing glory upon; esp. to elevate to celestial glory...to make glorious by presentation in a favorable aspect...to adore, exalt." Vine defines glorify like this: "To magnify, extol, praise, especially of glorifying God, i.e., ascribing honor to Him, acknowledge Him as to His being, attribute and acts. To do honour to, to make glorious."<sup>2</sup>

When do we glorify God then? First, we acknowledge him to be glorious and ascribe to him the glory of his excellence. Second, we honor, exalt, adore, and praise his attributes before men. Third, just as a son honors his father by being reverent, obeying his laws, thankful to his father for his favors, and endeavors to advance his plans and interest, so we honor and glorify God.

#### Some Bible Incidents of Men Glorifying God

The Psalmist glorified God by praising his name. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name forever" (Psa. 86:12).

The shepherds glorified God at the birth of Christ by spreading the good news.

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (Luke 2:17,20).

Jesus healed a man "sick of the palsy, lying on a bed" (Matt. 9:2). "But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (Matt. 9:8).

Jesus Christ glorified God by doing the work which God sent him to do. "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

Jesus told Peter how he would die (John 21:18). "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God" (John 21:19).

#### It is Right for Christians to Glorify God

First, it is due him. "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psa. 29:1-2).

Second, he is worthy to receive honor and praise. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

Third, it is commanded. "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isa. 41:12). "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him..." <sup>Rev.</sup> ~~(Prov.~~ 14:7).

Fourth, we belong to God. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye



are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Fifth, ~~if~~ it is according to God's eternal purpose that Christians should be to the praise of his glory. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Eph. 1:11-12).

#### How May Christians Glorify God?

First, we can glorify him by praising his name, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psa. 50:23).

Second, we glorify God when we bear much fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). Paul prayed that the Philippians might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11).

Third, we glorify God by being strong in faith and believing God's promises even though we may not be able to see how they will be accomplished. Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. 4:20).

Fourth, we glorify God when we present our bodies a living sacrifice. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1; cf. 1 Cor. 6:20).

Fifth, we glorify God when we are united. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1). "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus; That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5-6).

Sixth, we glorify God by suffering afflictions and reproaches for the name of Christ. "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Pet. 4:13-14).

Seventh, we glorify God by wearing the name Christian. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" ("in this name," ASV) (1 Pet. 4:16).

#### How May We Cause Others To Glorify God?

First, we can cause others to glorify God by letting our light shine before men. "Ye are the light of the world....Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).

Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego, by their refusal to bow before the golden image, caused Nebuchadnezzar to give glory to God (Dan. 3:28-29). Daniel, by his life, caused Darius to give glory to God (Dan. 6:25-26).

Second, we can cause people to glorify God by liberally administering to the needs of those about us.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men (2 Cor. 9:8-13).

Third, we can cause others to glorify God by living an honest life before the people of the world. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12).

#### Conclusion

Albert Barnes wrote, regarding the rule of doing all to the glory of God, the following: "This rule is designed to be one of the chief directors of our lives. It is to guide our conduct and to constitute a test by which to try our actions. Whatever can be done to advance the honor of God is right; whatever cannot be done to that end is wrong."<sup>3</sup>

In activities which are not specifically good or evil but left to the Christian conscience, the primary question should not be: What is most satisfying or desirable? The question should be: "What will bring honor to God's cause?"<sup>4</sup>

The goal should always be, "Do all to the glory of God." No sacrifice or adjustment is too great with this end in view. So those things that have no moral significance, things neither moral nor immoral, must be given up if hurtful to another.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>All quotes are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1962), p. 152.

<sup>3</sup>Albert Barnes, Notes On The New Testament--I Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>Donald S. Metz, Beacon Bible Commentary - I Corinthians (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968), p. 412.

## **“All Men Will Believe on Him”**

*by James Meadows*

### **Introduction**

Each of the gospel accounts gives some special emphasis to Jesus Christ. In Matthew, he is king of the Jews; in Mark, he is the servant of God; in Luke, he is the perfect son of man; and in John, he is the Son of God.

John's gospel might well be called a selective gospel, because he records only a few of the miracles performed by our Lord. He turned water into wine – the miracle of quality (John 2:1-11). He healed the son of an officer without being present – the miracle of distance (John 4:46-54). He healed a man who had been a cripple for thirty-eight years – the miracle of time (John 5:1-9). He fed five thousand at one time with five barley loaves and two small fishes – the miracle of quantity (John 6:5-14). He walked on water – the miracle over nature (John 6:19). He gave sight to a man who was born blind – the miracle over misfortune (John 9). He raised Lazarus from the dead – the miracle over death (John 11). All of the signs in John's gospel were to convince men that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

One will observe that in the Lord's resurrections there are progressional manifestations of his power. Jairus' daughter was raised immediately after death (Mark 5:22-23, 35-43). The young man at Nain was being carried to the grave (Luke 7:11-16). Lazarus had been dead and buried four days when Jesus raised him (John 11:39). “This was the consummating act of the

Lord's signs recorded in the Gospel, as a testimony of His deity as the Son of God (v. 4)... The crown of His miracles was both a witness to the critics and a means of establishing the faith of His followers" (Vine, p. 279).

### The Context of the Miracle

Christ received word that Lazarus was sick. "When Jesus heard that, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified" (John 11:1-4). This was the ultimate goal! The cure would enable men to see the glory of God in action (cf. John 9:3). The raising of Lazarus was to take a step which would end in the cross – Jesus' glorification (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:16; 23; 13:31; 17:1).

After receiving news about Lazarus' sickness, Jesus continued to abide two days in the same place. "Then after that, he saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again" (John 11:7). Upon arriving in Bethany, Jesus was told, "Lazarus is dead" (John 11:14). After giving assurances about the resurrection to Mary and Martha, Jesus went to the graveside of Lazarus. Jesus commanded them to take away the stone from the place where he lay.

And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me, And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou has sent me. And when he had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead, came forth..." (John 11:41b – 44c).

### The Fourfold Effect of the Miracle

The raising of Lazarus from the dead had a fourfold effect, which is clearly implied or definitely recorded. This fourfold effect is stated and seen in John 11:43 through John 12:1-8.

First, the miracle caused many of the Jews, who had previously been unfriendly to Jesus, to believe in him. "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him" (John 11:45).

1. The evidence was such that no honest-hearted person could fail to believe on him.
2. "The strange thing is that any should fail to believe on him" (David Lipscomb, *John*, p. 178)

Second, it added to the bitterness of the enemies. “But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done” (John 11:46). Some hold the view that the Jews went with the idea that the Pharisees would now accept Jesus. But the context indicates that these Jews did not go in order to tell the Pharisees that they were wrong about Jesus, but in order to convince them that some drastic action had to be taken against this miracle-worker (cf. John 11:47).

Third, it caused great excitement among the Passover crowds at Jerusalem. “And the Jews’ Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spoke among themselves, as they stood in the temple, what think ye, that he will not come to the feast?” (John 11:55-56).

Fourth, it strengthened the faith of Mary and Martha and the disciples. It is not recorded, in so many words, that their faith was strengthened, but it may be inferred from 11:4, 15, 26, 40. Also, in the case of Mary it manifested itself in a glorious act of love (John 12:1-8).

#### **Plans to Kill Jesus**

“Then gathered the chief priest and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation” (John 11:47-48).

First, one will observe that when the enemies of Jesus counseled about their strategy, in answer to this miracle, “not one minute inference can be found that Lazarus was not really dead – nor indeed, that the miracle had not really happened” (Butler, p. 154)

The evidence was and is sufficient that rejection of this miracle cannot be intellectual. The only other reason is moral! The Pharisees admitted to the historicity of it, but denied it because they simply did not want to surrender to its

implication – Jesus Christ, Divine Son of God, King and Commander of man's entire being – so men deny it today from the same motive (Butler, p. 154).

Second, they concluded that if they let him alone all men would believe on him. The whole nations will receive him as the Messiah, and proclaim him their king, and yield obedience to him.

News in the East travels fast and mysteriously, and so it was not long be-tidings of these amazing happenings were carried throughout the city by the excited spectators of the miracles as they scattered far and wide. It sadly flustered the Jewish authorities, filling them with a sense of helplessness. For something, they felt, must be done; yet what could be done; and yet again, to do nothing at all spelled ruin. The people would be swept away by their enthusiasm into some stupidity; and Rome would grow suspicious, and would crush them with their iron heel, and they would lose everything that was left to them (Buttrich, p. 650-51).

Third, the Pharisees and chief priests had a mighty strong opinion regarding their power. They seem to think that the success of Christ's work depends on them. "They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight and foresight, and great sagacity in their moral prognostications" (Henry, p. 1061). They prophesy that if we let him alone all men will believe on him. They foretell that the Romans will come and destroy them. They begin to plot his death. This shows the blind ignorance with which the Lord's enemies often reason and act. They should have known that the Lord did not come to set up an earthly kingdom (John 18:35-36). It was an unbelieving argument because they should have known if he was really the Messiah they could never have conquered any way.

### **Some Lessons to be Learned**

First, enemies of the Lord often unite when the Lord and truth are the enemies. The chief priest came, as a rule, from the Sadducees. The Pharisees and Sadducees hated each other, yet they joined in their fight against Jesus. The Pharisees and Herodians, who also hated each other, joined forces when Jesus was the enemy (Matt. 22:15-22).



Second, wicked people often assign untrue reasons for their conduct to keep back the true motives. The Pharisees' saying that the Romans will come and take our place was an excuse used as a weapon against the Lord. What they really hated was the doctrine of our Lord, which exposed their system and weakened their authority. Demetrius and his friends stirred up the people of Ephesus against Paul. Here is the reason they put forth.

But also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians (Acts<sup>19</sup> 27b-28).

But here is the real reason behind the accusation.

For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana brought no small gain unto the craftsmen...Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth...So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought (Acts 19:24,25,27).

The unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica pretended great zeal for "the decrees of Caesar" (Acts 17:6-9) when their real motive was hatred of Christ's gospel.

Third, pride kept the Pharisees and chief priests from admitting they were wrong and from accepting the Son of God. "They were so hardened that they preferred to reject God's Son rather than admit that they were wrong. Beware of pride! If we allow it to grow, it can lead us into enormous sin" (Life of Publications Study Bible, p. 1648). Pride was the problem of the Pharisee that went up to the temple to pray (Luke 18:9-14). The lukewarm church at Laodicea had the problem of pride (Rev. 3:14-17). *Pride in Eder (Rev. 3:1-6)*

Fourth, when people do not want to accept Jesus they will do all that is within their power to keep others away. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for such action. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that entering to go in (Matt. 23:13). Jereboam

changed the place of worship, the time of worship, the means of worship, and the priesthood, because he was afraid that if the Jews went back to Jerusalem they would reject him and go back to Rehoboam (I Kings 12:25-33).

Fifth, when men are more concerned for their own wealth and safety than they are for truth and deity, it is wisdom from beneath that is earthly, sensual and devilish (Jas. 3:13-17). Such individuals are not willing to pay the cost of following Jesus. The rich young ruler that came to Jesus was unwilling to pay the cost to receive eternal life (Matt. 19:16-26). Some hard decisions have to be made if one follows Jesus, and some are unwilling to make the right decision.

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned and said unto them. If an man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply after he had laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:25-33). *Luke 12:51-52*

Sixth, when individuals are unconcerned about what is right and what is wrong, they will do evil that good (as they see it) will come. The Sadducees always aimed at the retention of their political and social power and prestige. They were afraid the Romans would come and take away their positions of authority.

It never even occurred to them to ask whether Jesus was right or wrong, or whether this was the will of God or not. Their only question was: "What effect will this have on my ease and comfort and authority?" They judged things, not by the standards of right and wrong, not in the light of principle, but by the standards of their own comfort, and in the light of their career. It is still possible for a man to set his own career before the will of God (Barclay, pp. 121-22).

Caiaphas, the high priest that year said, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:49b-50).

Caiaphas' suggestion was purely political, and involved nothing less than the destruction of an innocent man to save the Jewish commonwealth. It was truly a diabolic suggestion; for, though the representative of God, Caiaphas held that it is right to do evil that good may come (Pulpit Com., p. 105).

Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20)!

"When Satan is unable to answer an argument, his response has always been to kill the witness; that was his response here, and another example of the same is found in the martyrdom of Stephen" (Acts 7:58). (Coffman, p. 286).

Seventh, we also learned that miracles themselves did not, and cannot, convert souls to Christ. The Pharisees admitted that he did the miracle, which makes it clear what they should have done. Accept him as the Messiah, but they did not. Sometimes people will say, "But if I could see a miracle I would believe." Jesus told Thomas "blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed" (John 20:29). The rich man believed that if one went back from the dead to his brothers they would repent (Luke 16:29). Abraham said unto him, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:30). If people will not obey the perfect law of the Lord we have today (II Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3), then they will not be persuaded though one comes from the dead.

Eighth, the same source hardens the hearts of some and softens the hearts of others. Some of the Jews on this occasion believed on the Lord, but others were hardened. Paul recognized this principle.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge to us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things" (II Cor. 2:14-16).

Just as the sun will harden clay, but soften wax, so the gospel softens the hearts of some and hardens the hearts of others. Some obey unto life and others disobey unto death. The two thieves on the cross heard and saw the same things. One repented and the other did not (Luke 23:42-43).

Ninth, when one expends all his energy on the outward to the neglect of the inward his life and religion are vain. Some of these same Jews had come to Jerusalem to purify themselves (John 11:55) while inwardly they were filled with hatred for the Lord. The Jews in Isaiah's day were doing exactly what God commanded outwardly, but God rejected everything they were doing.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood (Isa. 1:11-15).

Their ungodly lives and their reduction of worship to mere formalism brought complete rejection by God.

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day were greatly concerned about how they appeared outwardly, but within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead

men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto me, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23:27-38).

### Conclusion

It should be the desire of everyone that "all men will believe on him" (John 11:48). The evidence clearly shows that he is the Son of God. We should never do anything that will discourage or hinder people from believing on Jesus Christ. We should recognize that the same power that raised Lazarus from the dead will raise the faithful in the last day to eternal life (John 5:28-29; I Thess. 4:13-18).

### References

1. All quotes are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
2. W. E. Vine, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine* (Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), p. 279.
3. Paul T. Butler, *The Gospel of John* (Joplin, MO College Press, 1961), Vol. II, p. 154.
4. George A. Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), Vol. VIII, pp. 650-51.
5. Matthew Henry, *Matthew To John* (Old Tappan, New Jersey, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1721), Vol. V, p. 1061.
6. *Life Publications Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL, Tyndale House Publishers), p. 1648.
7. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), Vol. 2, pp. 121-22.
8. T. Croskery, *The Pulpit Commentary "The Gospel of St. John"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950), Vol. 17, p. 105.
9. James Burton Coffman, *Commentary on John* (Austin, TX, Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1974), p. 286.

# **AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY AND REPENTANCE FOR TODAY**

**JAMES MEADOWS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of repentance has long been recognized and admitted by all people. John the Baptist, in prepare the Jews for the reception of Christ called upon them to repent (Matt. 3:2)<sup>1</sup>. Jesus began his personal ministry by saying “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Jesus sent forth the twelve, and “they went out and preached that men should repent” (Mark 6:12). Repentance was a part of the final commission Jesus gave to the apostles (Luke 24:47). On the day of Pentecost, believing sinners were told to repent (Acts 2:37-38). Jesus said: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). Paul told the Athenians that God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

The average congregation thinks that the main evangelistic work is to gather more new members. It is assumed that the present membership is in good shape, thus no call to repentance. There will be little permanency of change unless there is a genuine turning away from sin in the lives of professed Christians. Mordecai Ham once said “that until we get some of God’s people right, we cannot hope to get sinners interested in religion.”

The methodology of study planned in this lesson is as follows: (1) How is the word repentance used in the Bible; (2) What repentance is not; (3) What repentance is; (4) Repentance involves restitution as far as possible; (5) How are men moved to repentance; (6) Who needs to repent; and (7) Conclusion.

## HOW IS THE WORD REPENTANCE USED IN THE BIBLE?

We find that the word *repent* occurs in our common English Bible forty-two times; *repented* occurs thirty-six times; *repentance* twenty-six times; *repenteth* five times; *repentest*, *repenting* and *repenteth* one time each – in all, one hundred and six times. *Repent* is used with reference to God sixteen times, and with reference to man twenty-six times. It is used to indicate sorrow eleven times, a change of mind or purpose fourteen times, and includes the idea of reformation of life eighteen times. *Repented* is used with reference to God thirteen times, and with reference to man eighteen times. It is used to indicate sorrow twelve times, a change of mind eight times, and includes a change of life or reformation ten times. *Repentance* is used with reference to God twice, and with reference to man twenty-four times. It is used to indicate sorrow twice, a change of purpose once, and extends to reformation of life twenty-three times. *Repenteth* is used with reference to God three times, and with reference to man twice. Twice it indicates sorrow, once a change of mind, and twice includes a change or reformation of life. *Repenting* and *repentest* are each used once with reference to God to indicate a change of purpose. *Repentings* is once used with reference to God to indicate sorrow.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

*First*, repentance is not simply conviction. Conviction is to recognize; be aware of; convinced of one's sinful and lost condition. Every person must be convicted. But conviction is more than just saying "I have sinned." Only eleven individuals in all of God's word said "I have sinned." Saul, with the exception of David, said it more times, but it had little influence in his life. You have met the man who says over and over, "I have sinned." You are convinced he will soon obey the gospel, but six months later his is still saying, "I have sinned."

*Second*, it is not fear. There is such a thing as godly fear (Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13; Acts 10:34-35). Sinful man is described as having no fear of God before his eyes (Rom. 3:18). Some people are just scared but don't repent. Such may be the condition of soldiers during war times, an individual who is seriously ill, and those who are facing death.

*Third*, repentance is not sorrow. The sorrow of this world does not work repentance. Paul said, "but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10b). Some people are sorry they got caught but not sorry for what they did. When Herodias' daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist "the kind was exceeding sorry," but it did not cause him to repent (Mark 6:22-26). The results of worldly sorrow can be seen in the lives of such men as Cain (Gen. 4:12), Saul (1 Sam. 31:3-6), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23), and Judas (Matt. 27:3-5).

Great is the difference between godly sorry and worldly sorrow. (1) The one is *selfish*, the other generous. In the former the man regrets having done the wrong thing simply on account of inconvenience to himself; in the latter the anguish is in the wrong itself. (2) The one results in future *regret*, the other in future *joy*. All the sorrow that an ungodly man has felt will lead to some deeper, darker, more terrible distress. (3) The one leads to *ruin*, the other to salvation.<sup>3</sup>

*Fourth*, repentance is not reformation of life. Reformation of life is definitely connected with repentance, but reformation of life is the fruit of repentance (Matt. 3:8).

That is repentance is not: (1) fear, (2) confession, (3) being sorry, (4) simply and solely a reformation of life, (5) being aware of sin, (6) prayer, (7) a coming forward, (8) penance, (9) remorse or regret, (10) and "if I have..." statement, (11) etc.<sup>4</sup>

### WHAT REPENTANCE IS

Repentance is a change of mind (mental act), brought about by godly sorrow which results (leads to) a change or reformation of life. There are two words used for repentance in the New Testament, and it is imperative that these be understood. Both words, *metamelomoi* and *metamoeo*, are used in 2 Corinthians 7:8-10. *Metamelomoi* means "after case" and carries with it



the thought of remorse or regret. Judas regretted his sin, but it did not lead to repentance. *Metamoeo*, on the other hand, means “after knowledge” and denotes a change of mind. There are several Bible examples that clearly confirm our definition of repentance.

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go sir: and went not (Matt. 21:28-29).

The mind of the first son was not to do what his father said, but afterward he repented. He changed his mind and went. The going is the result of his repentance, not the repentance itself.

And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, arise, go unto Ninevah, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee...So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them...And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way...” (Jonah 3:1-2, 5, 10a).

Jesus called what they did repentance and reformation of life. “The men of Ninevah shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here” (Matt. 12:41). The people of Ninevah repented, and the proof of it was their turning to practice the message preached by Jonah.

The prodigal son pictures all three parts of our definition of repentance. When he finally came to himself, he said: “I have sinned against heaven, and before thee” (Luke 18:15b). *That is godly sorrow.* “I will arise and go to my father” (Luke 18:15a). *That is a change of mind.* “And he arose, and came to his father...” (Luke 18:20). *That is reformation of life.*

Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought on you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

*First*, there was godly sorrow in their lives. Paul said they “sorrowed to repentance” (v. 9). *Second*, this godly sorrow worked repentance in their lives (v. 10). *Third*, they changed their lives as a result of their repentance (v. 11).

Reformation of life definitely follows repentance. John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees to “bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8). They did not have to make all these changes before John baptized them, but they must resolve to do them. John told them of the changes that needed to be made (Luke 3:7-14). They were to live a course of life that proved they had repented. The Thessalonians demonstrated their repentance by turning from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9). The Ephesians also proved their repentance “by bringing their books together and burning them in the sight of all...” (Acts 19:19).

### **TRUE REPENTANCE INVOLVES RESTITUTION AS FAR AS POSSIBLE**

Restitution means the act of restoring; specifically restoration of anything to its rightful owner; the act of giving an equivalent for loss, damage, etc. Adam Clarke, in his great commentary on Genesis said:

No man should expect mercy at the hand of God, who, having wronged his neighbor, refuses, when he has it in his power, to make restitution. Were he to

weep tears of blood, both the justice and mercy of God would shout out his prayers if he not make his neighbor amends for the injury he has done him.<sup>5</sup>

Restitution has always characterized God's law. Under the law of Moses, if a man lied about something left in his care (Lev. 6:1-2); lied about that which was lost and he found (Lev. 6:3); then "he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it to him to who it appertaineth..." (Lev. 6:5).

Speak unto the children of Israel, when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the Lord, and that person be guilty; then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest...(Num. 5:6-8).

Several truths about restitution are emphasized in these verses. *First*, a trespass against a man was against the Lord (v. 6). *Second*, one had to confess his sin (v. 7). *Third*, one had to repay the principal plus a fifth to the one wronged (v.7). *Fourth*, if the man was dead then it was to be paid to a kinsman (v. 8). *Fifth*, if there was no kinsman then it was to be given to the Lord through a priest (v. 8).

Samuel recognized the principal of restitution by the promise he made at the end of his ministry (1 Sam. 12:1-3). Zacchaeus resolved to restore fourfold that which he had taken by false accusation (Luke 19:8).

Indeed, it is difficult to conceive it possible for the heart of a man to be wholly subjugated to the will of the Lord and he not feel a *desire* to restore anything unjustly taken from anyone. If his pretensions be real he will make restitution if in his power to do so. We do not mean that all this must be consummated before remission of sins and adoption into the family can take place, but we insist that

the disposition of heart must be present before the party is in a fit frame of mind to further obey God in anything.<sup>6</sup>

### HOW ARE MEN MOVED TO REPENTANCE?

God grants repentance to people. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). *First*, God grants repentance in that he gives man the privilege of repenting. *Second*, he grants repentance in that he gives the motives that move men to repentance. God does not give man repentance directly. God gives man repentance through a system of means calculated to produce it. God gives man faith by giving him testimony calculated to produce it (John 20:30-31). God gives man bread by giving him the means to produce it. If man does not use the means he will starve. The Scriptures set forth three motivating factors that are designed to lead men to repentance.

*First*, the goodness of God should lead men to repentance. "Or despisest the riches of his goodness and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). "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" (2 Pet. 3:9).

*Second*, the fact that a judgment day is coming should lead men to repentance.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by trial man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Act 17:30-31).

One will observe that men are to repent “because.” This is not “scare religion,” but rather the result of an understanding of the facts of God’s goodness and severity. This method was used by the apostle Paul when he preached to Felix (Acts 24:25).

*Third*, godly sorrow for sin will lead men to repentance. The Corinthians “sorrowed to repentance...” (2 Cor. 7:9). “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

### WHO NEEDS TO REPENT?

*First*, the alien sinner needs to repent. Jesus said, “I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13: 3,5). On the day of Pentecost, sinners who had been “pricked in their heart” asked, “what shall we do?” (Act 2:37). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

*Second*, the erring child of God needs to repent. Simon, the sorcerer, was a genuine convert (Acts 8:13), but he sinned when he tried to buy the power the apostles had.

But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee (Acts 8:20-22).

*Third*, the individual who has transgressed against his brother needs to repent. “Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him (Luke 17:3-4).

*Fourth*, those (individuals or the whole church) that have left their first love need to repent.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from when thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove they candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (Rev. 2:4-5).

*Fifth*, those that support false teachers and hold false doctrines need to repent. The church at Pergamos held fast the Lord's name and had not denied his faith (Rev. 2:13).

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam...So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. *Repent*; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (Rev. 2:14-16).

*Sixth*, those that have a name they live (Rev. 3:1). The church at Sardis was living on a fast reputation, but God said they were dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and *repent*. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee (Rev. 3:2-3).

*Seventh*, the church at Loadicea was a lukewarm church. the Lord said, "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). They made the Lord sick. They had driven the Lord out (Rev.

3:20). He told them some changes they needed to make (Rev. 3:18). "As may as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and *repent*" (Rev. 3:19)

## CONCLUSION

Many members of the church give no evidence whatever of feeling the need to repent. Increasing the number of those who call themselves Christians, who are hazy in their convictions and weak in their dedication is not enough. The church must get ready to evangelize if she is to evangelize. The church must repent if she is to improve the quality of her work. The church must have spiritual depth. Jesus Christ must be a necessity before he is ever a reality. Every Christian must realize that without repentance, there is no contact with God.

"There is no way to be forgiven in that repentance and if there is no repentance, there is no pardon (Luke 17:304). He promises forgiveness to repentance, but does not promise tomorrow to procrastination" (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7).<sup>7</sup>

An unknown poet has blessed us with these words:

"Tis not enough to say,  
I'm sorry and repent  
And then go on from day to day  
Just as we always went.  
Repentance is to leave  
The sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve  
By doing them no more."

## ENDNOTES

1. All Scripture references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
2. T.W. Brents, God's Plan of Salvation (Nashville, Tn. Gospel Advocate Co., 1950), p. 235.
3. Archdeacon Farrar, The Pulpit Commentary, "Corinthians" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmann Publishing Co., 1950), Vol. 19, p. 174.

4. Goebel Music, The Spiritual Sound, "The Challenge to Preach the Truth on Repentance" (Memphis, Tn. Getwell Church of Chirst, July 1983), Vol. 14, Number 4, p. 35.
5. Adam Clarke, quoted by T.W. Brents in The Gospel Plan of Salvation, p. 240
6. Brents, op. cit. 241.
7. Music, op.cit. p. 37.



# THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

## HEBREWS 6:9-10

*James Meadows*

### Introduction. 1. Read or quote the text.

1. The book of Hebrews is truly one of the great N.T. books, and it vividly presents the greatness of Christianity.
2. It is my responsibility to discuss "things that accompany salvation."
3. The method of study is as follows:
  - a. Definition of terms.
  - b. Things that accompany salvation.
  - c. Conclusion.

### Discussion

#### I. Definition of Terms

##### A. It seems quite natural that the writer would discuss better things.

1. The word better appears 13 times.
2. We have:
  - a. A better revelation (1:1-4).
  - b. A better priesthood (7:17, 23-24).
  - c. A better hope (7:19).
  - d. A better covenant (8:6).
  - e. A better promise (8:6).
  - f. A better sacrifice (9:11-14).
  - g. A better blood (9:13-15).
  - h. A better resurrection (11:35).

##### B. Salvation is used at least two ways in the N.T.

1. First, it means deliverance from the power and effect of sin (Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47).
2. Second, it means eternal salvation or entrance into heaven (Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:9, 9). *Rom. 13:11*
3. Third, one must receive the first salvation to have hope of eternal salvation.
4. Fourth, one must do something in order to be saved from past sins (Acts 2:37-38).
5. Fifth, one must work out his eternal salvation (Phil. 2:12).

##### C. "Accompany" is from a Greek phrase which means "near to salvation; or things that are conjoined with salvation."

1. Accompany then means "belongs to" or "connected with."
2. There are some things connected with salvation.

## II. What Are Some Things That Accompany Salvation?

- A. First, it involves going on unto perfection (Heb. 6:1).
1. One of the essentials in going on unto perfection is mastering the first principles (Heb. 5:12-14).
    - a. First, it takes time, but time alone will not make one a mature Christian.
    - b. Second, it involves the use of one's sense to grow to maturity.
    - c. Third, Peter gives some inspired advice on how the process works (2 Pet. 1:3-4, 5-11).
  2. A second essential in going on to perfection is not laying again the foundation (Heb. 6:1-3).
  3. Another essential is guarding against apostasy (Heb. 6:4-8). The principles set forth to guard them against apostasy will guard us.
    - a. First, we must give earnest heed to the word spoken by Christ and the apostle (Heb. 2:1-4).
    - b. Second, we must hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope (Heb. 3:6, 14).
    - c. Third, we must exhort one another daily (Heb. 3:13).
    - d. Fourth, we must labor to enter into that rest (Heb. 4:1-11).
    - e. Fifth, we must depend upon the blood of Christ to save us and keep us saved (Heb. 9:11-14; 1 Jn. 1:7-10).
- B. Second, "things that accompany salvation" are hope, faith, and patience (Heb. 6:11-12).
- C. Third, "things that accompany salvation" would include the church (Eph. 3:8-11).
1. Isaiah prophesied that the church would begin in the last days (Isa. 2:2-3).
  2. Daniel prophesied that it would begin during the days of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44-45).
  3. Christ promised to build the church which began on Pentecost (Matt. 16:13-18; Acts 2:47).
  4. The church is the saved and one cannot enjoy salvation from past sins outside the church.
    - a. Being in Christ is the same as being in his body (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27).
    - b. Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Eph. 5:23).
    - c. Forgiveness of sins only in the body of Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14).
    - d. Only those in the body are reconciled to God (Eph. 2:14-16).
    - e. One enjoys benefit of the blood of Christ only in the church (Acts 20:28).
    - f. All spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

### Conclusion

1. The Hebrew writer gives stern warning, but he also speaks words of encouragement (Heb. 6:9-10).
2. The things they were told to continue in must likewise be practiced by us.

## **SIN IN THE CAMP**

**Exodus 32**

*JAMES MEADOWS*  
**INTRODUCTION**

The nation of Israel journeyed from the Red Sea to mount Sinai, arriving in the third month "after they left Egypt" (Ex. 19:1).<sup>1</sup> God gave instructions to Moses for the people to sanctify themselves, wash their clothes and come not at their wives. On the third day the Lord came down "in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Ex. 19:11). The Divine manifestation was most awe-inspiring (Ex. 19:16,18).

The Lord then called Moses to the top of mount Sinai where he received the words recorded in Exodus 20-23. In Exodus 24:3 we read that "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do." The vow of the people was most solemnly ratified:

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning these words" (Ex. 24:7-8; Cf. Heb. 9:19-20).

Following these events the Lord "said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written: that thou mayest teach them" (Ex. 24:12). Moses told the elders to remain on the side of the mount and, leaving Aaron and Hur in charge, he ascended the mount with Joshua (Ex. 24:13-17). It was on this occasion that Moses received the Divine communications recorded in chapters 25 through 31. "Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Ex. 24:18). These happenings prepare us for the conduct of the people recorded in Exodus 32.

## THE DIVISIONS OF EXODUS 32

Exodus 32 divides itself easily into six paragraphs: the making of the golden calf (vv. 1-6); Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel (vv. 7-14); Moses' wrath (vv. 15-20); the excuses of Aaron (vv. 21-24); the faithfulness of the Levites (vv. 25-29); and Moses' renewed intercession on behalf of Israel (vv. 30-35).

### THE MAKING OF THE GOLDEN CALF

It was not yet six weeks since the people had sworn "all that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." How soon people forget! "Unto Aaron," in the Hebrew, is more properly rendered "against Aaron." "And so the expression will denote that they came upon him in a tumultuous manner; insisting to have their demands complied with."<sup>2</sup> This request is much like Israel's request for a king (1 Sam. 8:5) but, unlike Samuel, Aaron did not consult God. The people's rebellion was not so much their being peeved at Moses' long absence, but they had cast off their allegiance to Jehovah (Cf. Acts 7:39-40). It was a national rebellion. No one dared protest. Where were the elders? Where was Hur?

The molten calf was made from the jewelry which the people received from the Egyptians (Ex. 12:35-36). Thus they used the very blessings that God had given them to dishonor God and "abused to the basest idolatrous purposes." Some make the allegation that the Israelites were here worshipping God under the symbol of the golden calf. Such a view seems impossible of acceptance for several reasons. First, God said "they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto . . ." (Ex. 32:8). Second, they sinned against the Lord their God when they made the molten calf (Dt. 9:16). Third, "they made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. .

. They forgot God their Savior. . ." (Psa. 106:19,21). This means they were not worshipping God in any sense in the events recorded here.

When the people saw the golden calf "they became almost delirious with ecstasy."<sup>3</sup> They rose up early the next morning, offered their sacrifices to the idol, and then "sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (v. 6). The eating and drinking were probably innocent enough, but Paul classifies the "play" as idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7). The "play" included singing and dancing (vv. 18-19). Some Bible students think there was sexual immorality involved. ". . . afterwards they sat down to feast and drink at a wild party, followed by sexual immorality."<sup>4</sup> "The picture is that of the orgiastic type of worship associated with fertility cults."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, some "seriously question that the 'play' around the idol involved any sex orgy" since the Hebrew word tsachag (translated play) does not "basically refer to sex acts."<sup>6</sup>

### MOSES' INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL

God was angry enough to destroy them (Dt. 9:19). He referred to them as "thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt. . ." (v. 7).

God accused them of three things: First, they "have corrupted themselves" (v. 7). Second, "they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (v. 8). How quickly Adam turned aside from God's command (Gen. 3). How quickly Noah failed after he came out of the ark (Gen. 9). How quickly sin entered the camp of Israel after they entered the land of Palestine (Josh. 7). How quickly many Christians leave their "first love" (Rev. 2:1-7) and the joy of their salvation. Third, they have made a molten calf, "worshipped it" and "sacrificed thereunto."

God described them as a "stiffnecked people." "Stiffnecked" signifies a state of

④

insubordination. "For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck. . ." (Dt. 31:27). It is the opposite of submission to God's will. "Now be ye not stiffnecked . . . but yield yourselves unto the Lord . . ." (2 Chron. 30:8). "But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction" (Jer. 17:23). To be stiffnecked means to "be stubborn or obstinate or contrary; inclined to have one's own way and to be disrespectful of authority."<sup>7</sup>

God determined to destroy them and to make Moses "a great nation" (v. 10). God made this same promise to Moses at Kadesh (Num. 14:12). God placed the fate of the whole nation in the hands of Moses. Would he show himself worthy of his calling and sacrifice his own exaltation to be with a guilty nation? Earlier Moses had

refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:24-26).

Now Moses refuses to be made the head of another nation, "choosing rather to be identified with this stiff-necked and disobedient people."<sup>8</sup>

"Now therefore let me alone" indicates the mediatorship of Moses—he stood between God and the people! At the Red Sea Moses had cried unto God to deliver the people from the Egyptians (Ex. 14:15). At the bitter waters of Marah he had supplicated God for them (Ex. 15:25). At Rephidim Moses had pleaded with God to give them water (Ex. 17:4). "In 'Let me alone' there is an acknowledgment that Moses' intercession could alter (at least delay) God's threatened punishment."<sup>9</sup> "Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them" (Psa. 106:23).

Moses' appeal to God to spare Israel was based on three things. First, he asked God to remember his special relationship with Israel. They are ". . . thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand" (v. 11). Second, the Egyptians will hear what you have done and they will gloat over it (v. 12). Israel was to have an impact on the nations about them, but if God destroyed them this purpose would be defeated. Third, he called upon God to remember the promise he had made to Abraham, Isaac and Israel (v. 13). He reminds God that he had sworn by himself which means his oath was backed by his character (Cf. Heb. 6:17-18).

God "repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (v. 14). One of the most prominent and basic aspects of God's nature is "repenting of evil" (Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:2; Cf. Jer. 26:19; 18:10; Jonah 3:10). Nacham is the word translated repent here and it means "to have compassion, to pity, to be comforted, to console." It was a change in God's response based on a change in man's relation to him.

### MOSES' WRATH

God had earlier told Moses to "Go, get thee down. . ." (v. 7). Now Moses "turned, and went down from the mount . . ." (v. 15). In Exodus 31:18 we are told that God gave unto Moses ". . . two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." Now we are told that the tables "were written on both sides . . . and the writing was the writing of God . . ." (vv. 14-15).

Joshua had earlier gone with Moses upon the mount (Ex. 24:13), but it was Moses alone who went into the midst of the cloud (Ex. 24:15). As Moses descended he was joined by Joshua. Moses had not revealed unto Joshua what was happening at the foot of

mount. When Joshua heard the "shouting" he thought it was "a noise of war in the camp" (v. 17), but Moses corrected him and said "it is the noise of them that sing do I hear" (v. 18).

When Moses saw "the calf, and the dancing" (v. 19) his anger waxed hot "and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount" (v. 19).

We are not informed as to whether we should interpret the breaking of the ten commandments as merely an act of Moses in anger, or as a symbol of the breaking of the covenant between God and Israel. The scripture does not definitely state the latter idea, but the symbolism comes immediately into our minds. Certainly there was a rupture in the covenant relationship.<sup>10</sup>

The Interpreter's Bible states that Moses breaks the tablets "as a sign that the covenant relationship no longer exists between Israel and God."<sup>11</sup> Some think that Moses' breaking ALL the laws illustrates James 2:10: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Israel in breaking one law had broken them all.

Moses took the calf and (1) "burnt it with fire," (2) "ground it to powder," (3) "strawed it upon the water," and (4) "made the children of Israel drink it" (v. 20). The water was that "in the brook that descended out of the mount" (Deut. 9:21). Moses showed the utter uselessness of the idol and humiliated the idolaters.

### THE EXCUSES OF AARON

Moses' question, "What did this people unto thee?," was not designed to get information, but to reprove and convict Aaron of the great sin that he had brought on the people. Moses holds Aaron responsible for what happened.

Instead of admitting his wrong and taking the blame Aaron makes excuses. "Thou



knowest the people, that they are set on evil." They "made me do it" because they said, "make us gods." Furthermore, I really didn't make it but I cast the gold "into the fire, and there came out this calf" (vv. 22,24). How sad!

There is no sense of the terribleness of the sin committed, no sign of repentance; instead, there was the throwing of the blame upon others. Thus it was at the beginning: when the Lord arraigned Adam, he blamed his wife (Gen. 3:12); and when Eve was questioned, she blamed the serpent. How often do we hear the leaders in Christendom saying, "We have to make these concessions because the people demand it."<sup>12</sup>

Too many merely act as the barometer of public opinion.

### THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE LEVITES

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked" (v. 25) it called for drastic action. "Naked" is translated "broken loose" in the American Standard version. They had broken loose from the regulations of God. The Hebrew word para means "to loosen, to let loose, unbridle, to break out" (as a disorder). What they had done had given their enemies an occasion of derision (literally "a whispering"). David's sin with Bathsheba gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord . . ." (2 Sam. 12:14) to blaspheme.

The issue is clearly defined. This is no time for compromise or concealment of the evil. Moses' call, "Who is on the Lord's side?," demanded an immediate and firm decision. The sons of Levi responded immediately. The Lord commanded the mass execution of the idolaters, but the "word of Moses" proclaimed it (vv. 27-28). There fell in that day three thousand.

Moses then told the Levites to "consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord . . ." (v. 29). "Consecrate" means literally "fill the hand." God's instructions, regarding the consecration of priests, included "consecrate Aaron and his sons" (margin, "fill the hand

⑥

of") (Exod. 29:9). "Consecrate yourselves" ("fill your hand") was probably spoken after the slaughter. Moses was calling upon them to present themselves to the service of the Lord that day and in time to come. They were to give themselves "wholly" to service in the Lord's tabernacle.

### **MOSES' RENEWED INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL**

Even though Moses' first intercession for Israel had turned God's wrath from them (vv. 11-14), he realized that an atonement for their "great sin" had to be made, but he wasn't sure what to do. The use of the word "peradventure" (meaning "perhaps") suggests that Moses was not sure that his efforts would be successful. The word sometimes expresses hope (Jer. 20:10), but it also expresses fear and doubt (Gen. 27:12).

Even though God's rod of chastisement had fallen heavily upon them (the slaughter of the 3,000), and God had repented of the evil with which he threatened them, there is not one recorded word of Israel's repentance. They had not bowed the heart to God.

Now Moses confesses their sin and asked God to forgive it. This intercession and confession of Moses presents "one of the sublimest pictures found anywhere in the Bible of a man's devotion to the interest of God's people."<sup>13</sup> Moses' vehement zeal for God's glory and love for his people were so great "that he rather wished, if it were possible, that God would accept of him as a sacrifice in their stead, and by his destruction prevent so great a mischief."<sup>14</sup>

What is "the book which thou hast written?" In other passages we read of "the book of the living" (Psa. 69:28; Isa. 4:3), "the book of remembrance" (Mal. 3:16), and "the book of life" (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 20:15; 13:8; 17:8). Fields says that "it probably

was the same book that we know as the book of life, because the names of those to be saved by God have been written in the book of life 'from the foundation of the world'" (Rev. 17:8).<sup>15</sup> Pink, on the other hand, thinks that it refers to "the Divine register in which are recorded the names of those living on earth, whose names are 'blotted out' at the death of each one."<sup>16</sup> It probably refers to the book of life.

God refused Moses' offer. Moses could not be a substitute for Israel. Sin cannot be overlooked. It can't be ignored. It must be dealt with in the proper order. Justice must often be administered, even when it is painful. Moses was unable to provide what he most desired, but he must continue to obey. "Go, lead the people unto the place . . . behold, mine Angel shall go before thee" (v. 34).

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM EXODUS 32

First, weak leadership always leads to sin. When Moses ascended the mount he left Aaron and Hur in charge. When the people rebelled and demanded a "god" Aaron was now put to the test. He failed miserably! Instead of trusting the Lord he allowed the fear of man to bring him a snare. There is no evidence that Aaron offered the least resistance against the people. Leslie Thomas wrote:

Aaron, was a weak character, lacking in faith, loyalty and steadfastness. He was easily influenced by the people to do wrong. He seems to have offered no resistance at all when the people requested him to make an image for them to worship. And when Moses charged him with the sin, he laid the blame on the people.<sup>17</sup>

Moses, on the other hand, had the characteristics of a great leader. First, he could make decisions and stay with them. Second, his faith in God never wavered except on one occasion (Num. 20:12). Third, he was never inclined to forsake God for other gods. Fourth, he was humble. He had no ambition to become the head of a great nation.

Fifth, he hated sin with a passion. It shows his likeness to God.

Great leadership is needed today. Every institution is but the lengthened shadow of its leadership. First, elders must be men that "hold fast the faithful word" (Tit. 1:9) against all the false doctrines that threaten the church today. Second, elders must be men that feed the flock of God properly (Acts 20:28). Many elders take this responsibility seriously, while others seem unconcerned about what is taught in the classroom and in the pulpit. Unless each generation is taught the word of God in its purity and simplicity there will arise a generation that knows not the Lord (Cf. Jud. 2:6-10).

Exodus 32 clearly shows what happens when leaders fail to be leaders. First, it brings sin on the people. "And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" (v. 21). Second, it brings God's anger upon the leaders. "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him . . ." (Dt. 9:20). Only Moses' intercession saved Aaron from God's anger and displeasure (Dt. 9:19). Third, it leads to the shifting of blame. Aaron blames the people. "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief" (v. 22). Then Aaron states that it is one of those things that just happened (v. 24).

Second, the evils of idolatry are clearly seen. Man must have an object of worship and when he forgets God he seeks a false god. First, idolatry means that one has broken a solemn vow to God. Israel had vowed "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do . . ." (Ex. 19:8). Today, when we love something or someone more than we love God, we have broken our agreement with him that we will put him first in our hearts and in our lives.

Second, idolatry is debasing and degrading in its effect upon humanity. People

tend to become like that which they worship. "People who worship licentious gods become licentious in their lives; people who worship Jehovah sincerely tend to be holy...."<sup>18</sup>

Third, idolatry robs God of the glory that belongs to him. The Psalmist said, concerning Israel: "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Psa. 106:19-20).

Paul wrote concerning some people that had forgotten God.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things, which are not convenient (Rom. 1:22,23,25-28).

Fourth, the consequences of idolatry are terrible in their nature. One faces the anger of God (vv. 7-10). Leaders who care are angry at such conduct (v. 19).

Punishment is sure to follow (vv. 20,35). It gives the enemies of God an occasion to blaspheme his name (v. 25).

Third, we learn that people soon forget God and his blessings. Israel, who just a short while before has pledged solemn faithfulness to God, has now forgotten him. God said, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them . . ." (v. 8). "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image . . . They forgot God their Saviour . . ." (Psa. 106:19,21). How quickly man forgets God and his blessings is seen all the way from Adam to the present time. Paul said to the Galatians, "I marvel

that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). Peter states that those who fail to add the Christian graces have forgotten that they were purged from their sins (2 Pet. 1:5-9). The stony ground hearer is pictured as soon leaving the way of truth (Mt. 13:20-21). How soon some Christians leave their first love (Rev. 2:4) and lose the joy of their salvation (Psa. 51:12).

Fourth, sin in the camp always grieves God and condemns people. What happens when sin enters the camp of God's people?

First, it brings defeat. Israel was defeated at Ai because "Israel hath sinned" (Josh. 7:11). Achan had taken a Babylonian garment, silver and gold (Josh. 7:21) which God had commanded them not to take (Josh. 7:11). Israel "fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty-six men; for they chased them from before the gate unto Shebarim . . ." (Josh. 7:4-5).

Second, it drives God from the midst of his people. The children of Israel could not stand before their enemies at Ai because God was no longer with them (Josh. 7:12). After Israel made the golden calf God told them that ". . . I will not go up in the midst of thee . . ." (Ex. 33:3). The fact that Moses set up the tabernacle ". . . without the camp, afar off from the camp . . ." (Ex. 33:7) shows that God was no longer in the camp. Lukewarmness drove God from the church at Laodicea. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Third, it gives the enemies of God an occasion to blaspheme. Sin in the camp at mount Sinai had left God's people "naked unto their shame among their enemies" (v. 25). David's sin with Bathsheba gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to

blaspheme . . ." (2 Sam. 12:14). The Jews, in Paul's day, were not keeping the law and it gave the Gentiles an occasion to blaspheme God's name (Rom. 2:24). Paul advised the younger women to ". . . marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Tim. 5:14).

Fourth, it influences others to commit sin. There was sin (fornication) in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5:1-2). They were puffed up and had done nothing about it. Paul wrote them and said: "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:5). By leaven the Hebrew metaphorically understood whatever had the power of corrupting, whether doctrine, or example. It is a type of evil. It has a figurative use in Jewish speech, signifying the working of evil affection in the soul. Just as a small quantity of leaven will diffuse itself through the whole lump of dough, so a little sin indulged and allowed in one's life, or in the church, will spread. The toleration of this conduct by the church at Corinth implies concurrence (Rom. 1:32) and debases the standard of moral judgment and instinct.

Fifth, what must be done about sin in the camp? First, it must be removed. God told Israel when sin was found in the camp at Ai to ". . . destroy the accursed thing from among you . . . thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you" (Josh. 7:12,14). Paul told the church at Corinth to "deliver such a one unto Satan" (1 Cor. 5:5); "purge out therefore the old leaven" (1 Cor. 5:7); and "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13).

Second, there is the need of repentance. The Lord told the church at Ephesus, a church that had left her "first love" (there was sin in the camp), to repent and do the first works (Rev. 2:4-5). The church at Pergamas, a church that had those who held "the

doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes," to repent (Rev. 2:14-16). The dead church at Sardis was told to repent (Rev. 3:1-3). The lukewarm church at Laodicea was told to "be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19).

Sixth, why must sin be removed from the camp? First, it must be done in order to save the soul of the individual. The man at Corinth was to be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (works and deeds of the flesh; Gal. 5:19-21) that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

Second, sin must be removed in order to save the other members of the church. Failure to purge out sin leads to a toleration of sin and blinds those that tolerate it to its true nature. The Corinthians were "puffed up" (1 Cor. 5:1-2). The church will not be delivered from the condemnation that is sure to come, if she refuses to purge the disorderly. The church at Pergamas tolerated false teachers. God said to them, "I have a few things against thee" and called on them to "repent" (Rev. 2:12-16). There were many commendable characteristics about the church at Thyatira, but she suffered "that woman Jezebel . . . to teach and seduce my servants." The Lord said to the church, "I have a few things against thee" (Rev. 2:18-20).

Third, removing sin will exalt and magnify the Lord and his church in the eyes of the world. Every church and every individual has the responsibility to be a light in the world (Mt. 5:14-16). Church discipline, if exercised properly, will increase respect for the church. The community will know that the practice of sin will not be tolerated by God's people.

## CONCLUSION

God chose Israel to be a special people unto him.



For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto him, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you. . . (Deut. 7:6-8).

Israel was to be a nation that brought glory to God's name by their righteous living before other nations. When they sinned, as they did in building the molten image at Mount Sinai, God's name was blasphemed, his people left naked before their enemies, and his cause hindered.

Christians are to be salt and light today (Matt. 5:13-16). They are to bring glory to God's name by living for him each day.

#### ENDNOTES

1. All quotes are from the King James Version.
2. Joseph Benson, Genesis to the Second Book of Samuel (New York: George Love and Levi Scott, 1850), Vol. I, p. 265.
3. Wilbur Fields, Exploring Exodus (Joplin: College Press, 1976), p. 714.
4. The Living Bible Paraphrased (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers), 1976.
5. George A. Buttrick, Edit. The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), p. 1067.
6. Fields, p. 717.
7. E. M. Zerr, Genesis To Ruth (University City: Missouri Mission Messenger, 1947), Vol. I, p. 166.
8. Arthur W. Pink, Gleanings in Exodus (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 321.
9. Fields, p. 718.
10. Fields, p. 722.
11. Buttrick, p. 1067.
12. Pink, p. 327.

16

13. Carl F. H. Henry, The Biblical Expositor (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1960), Vol. I, pp. 114-115.
14. Benson, p. 269.
15. Fields, p. 729.
16. Pink, p. 33.
17. Leslie G. Thomas, Annual Lesson Commentary (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1952), p. 281
18. Thomas, p. 382.

Introduction

The thoughtful observer will admit that we live in a rapidly changing world, yet man has not changed. He still has the same wants, desires and needs--food, clothing and shelter. He still commits the same sins--lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).

Principles are necessary constituents of all moral decisions. The most rudimentary types and degrees of consistency would be eliminated by the repudiation of principles. A man could regard the same action one day as evil and the next day as good, and be open to no logical criticism. Principles are central to consistency, criticism, and classification. We cannot escape from the need of moral principles.

Our study will be greatly enhanced by a definition of the terms we are using. A principle is "a general or fundamental truth: a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption on which others are based or from which others are derived . . . A governing law of conduct."<sup>1</sup> Moral, as "opposed to immoral, may designate conformity to established sanctioned codes or accepted notions of right or wrong."<sup>2</sup> Decision means "the act of deciding; specif: the act of settling or terminating (as a contest or controversy) by giving judgment . . . A determination arrived at after consideration."<sup>3</sup>

Some Principles or Philosophies That Cannot Be Followed

First, Atheism is not an accepted standard. "Atheism makes morality impossible by defining moral as simply that which men happen to believe is moral. A thing is good or evil only because people believe that it is good or evil. In others words, it is not good or evil in its nature, but men in their own minds think that it is good or evil; however, the thinking does not make it so."<sup>4</sup> It is easy to see that there is no real good or evil, but man needs only to change his mind in order to change good to evil and evil to good.

1st Para  
2nd Para

Second, Communism has no real standard of morality. Their doctrine "of morality means that there is no moral law to which all men ought to be in subjection. Instead, each class is justified in acting in harmony with its own selfish class interest . . . Anything is right if it justifies, protects, enlarges, or perpetuates the interest of a class."<sup>5</sup>

Third, philosophy gives no definite rules for conduct. Bertrand Russell, a noted philosopher, wrote: "I do not believe that we can decide what sort of conduct is right or wrong except by reference to its probable consequence. Given an end to be achieved, it is a question for science to discover how to achieve. All moral rules must be tested by examining whether they tend to realize ends that we desire. I say ends that we desire, not ends that/<sup>we</sup>ought to desire. What we 'ought' to desire is merely what someone else wishes us to desire."<sup>6</sup> Will this principle not justify all means that one may use just as long as one achieves the ends that one desires?

Fourth, Utilitarianism gives no rules for moral-decision making. It means "the ethical theory, that the conduct, under any given circumstances, <sup>that</sup> is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole; that is, taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct."<sup>7</sup>

Fifth, Pragmatism offers no solution to moral-decision making. Pragmatism is "a method of solving or evaluating intellectual problems. Pragmatism holds that our 'intellectual activity, our philosophizing, has as its purpose the attempt to resolve difficulties that arise in the course of our attempts to deal with experience.' Pragmatism judges a theory on the basis of whether or not it serves as a successful way of dealing with the problem at hand. The pragmatist holds that the theory is true if it works--it has been found to deal successfully with experience. The pragmatists contend . . . that the only reason people have for calling one view true and another false, is in relation

to some absolute standards independent of all human experience. William James maintained: 'The only reason we have for asserting that anything is true is whether it works.' Pragmatism holds; that before one discovers whether an idea or theory works, it is neither true nor false. For example: prior to the discovery of America, the idea that 'there is a large land mass located between Europe and Asia' was neither true or false. With the work of Columbus, the theory became true. According to pragmatism; therefore, an idea might work for a while, and thus be true. Later, it might cease to work and would thus become false. "Truth, then, is not something static and unchangable; instead it grows and develops with time. At various times in human history, certain theories and ideas may be satisfactory for the problems then current. However, with further experience and difficulties, that which is true expands and grows to meet newer conditions. Presumably, at no time will we ever reach a completion or culmination of this process.'

What about pragmatism and moral conduct? The same basic concept would apply. That which works, that which satisfies, that which succeeds is true. That which does not work, which does not satisfy, which does not succeed--is false. What is true today might be false tomorrow. If the problem is one of meeting certain financial obligations, the pragmatist would ask: what way will work? The pragmatist would decide that under the present circumstances (and culture) robbing a bank would be 'wrong.' It would be 'wrong'--not because of some outside, absolute moral standard, but because the evidence is that this method will not work!

'Truth' in pragmatism is that which happens to satisfy you, to meet your personal needs. If you happen to believe that the moon is made of green cheese--if this meets your personal needs--then it is true that the moon is made of green cheese. If, later, you learn that the moon is made of blue cheese, then the green cheese view is no longer true."<sup>8</sup>

Such a philosophy teaches that there are no clear distinctions between right and wrong; that there are no eternal verities, no absolute truths; that environment determines truth, and, since environment constantly changes, everything is relative.

Sixth, Humanism offers no solution. A "humanist" could be defined as "all who, in the basic deliberations and action decisions of their lives, have set aside faith in revelation and dogmatic authority (if they ever had it), and have settled for human experience and reason as grounds for belief and action, putting human good--the good of self and others, in their life on earth--as ultimate criterion of right and wrong, with due concern for other living creatures . . ." <sup>9</sup> Since human experience and reason vary with each individual then right and wrong would do the same.

Seventh, Materialism gives no concrete rules for moral-decision making.

Materialism, in its extreme form, "is a system of philosophy, predicated upon the theory that everything which exists in nature, whatever is true, can be derived and explained in accordance with the laws of material phenomena. Extreme materialism contends that nothing exists but physical objects and physical processes . . . there is no place for faith in the supreme, Infinite God who exists entirely separate from material substance." <sup>10</sup> "Materialism merges God in matter; for, according to it, nothing exists but matter,--there is no such thing as a separate spiritual substance." <sup>11</sup>

First, there is nothing in this philosophy to emphasize the dignity, worth, or immortality of man, but it gives him a "Materialistic view" of himself. "The effects of such a view, regarding man's nature and ultimate worth, is to downgrade man in his own eyes, and to upgrade his estimate of immediate comforts and pleasures. A real materialist has nothing to live for except the things of this world. If he is just an animal, and

6

nothing more, comforts and pleasures are the best that life holds."<sup>12</sup>

Second, materialism would destroy all the moral faculties of our life. "Who does not perceive the moral danger involved in Materialism, according to which all human action, even that of the mind and spirit, is subordinate to the law of nature, and man no longer does what he ought to do, but what he must do,--according to which, therefore, all the great and noble acts of the world's history are nothing but the necessary products of certain bodily impulses and conditions."<sup>13</sup> One materialist wrote, "It is indeed true, Freewill does not exist, neither does any amenability or responsibility, such as moral and penal justice, and Heaven knows what else it would impose upon us. At no moment are we our own masters anymore than we can decree as to the secretions of our kidneys. The organism cannot govern itself; it is governed by the law of its material combination. It is impossible to demonstrate the admissibility of punishment, or to prove that there is any such thing as amenability or responsibility."<sup>14</sup> Such a philosophy means that (a) since there is no responsibility, punishment is completely out of order, (b) a murderer, robber, etc., is no worse than a falling stone that kills a man--both are involuntary slaves of nature, (c) prisons are out of order because criminals must be sent to hospitals and asylums instead. Does all this sound familiar?

Third, such a philosophy forces one to reject the scriptures as the all-sufficient unchangeable word of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:3; Jude 3). Materialists believe that as man changes, so must laws and definitions. "As man's knowledge takes on new dimension, hardly any human concept or value will remain sacrosanct. Health and disease, youth and age, male and female, good and evil--all these will take on transformed meaning. Life and death will have to be redefined. Family relationships will be quite different. Even individual identities may be hard to ascertain."<sup>15</sup>

Fourth, materialism causes one to elevate secondary things to primary importance. When one begins to love things and use people instead of loving people and using things, his sense of value changes. "There is a shift of major interest from ethics to success; from principles to pleasures; from ideals to possessions; and from character to comfort."

Eighth, the new morality and situation ethics have no definite principles for decision making. The new morality suggest that there is only one moral imperative or absolute and that is love. Love "confronted with a given moral situation knows how to 'home in' on the right act. What is "right" may differ in any given situation depending on what the "loving" response is."<sup>16</sup> In each situation, if each person must make up his own mind, then any concept of universal principle, eternal moral truth, or abiding norms, must fall. "If ethical situations are as unique as Fletcher makes them out to be, then nobody knows what to do in a given situation, not even Fletcher. Intelligent decision making is based on experience, precedent, and analogy. But if the ethical situation is unique, all these criteria fall and love does not know how to home in on the right decision."<sup>17</sup>

Ninth, Existentialism cannot be a guide in moral-decision making. It holds the view that "all guidelines are irrevelent. Authentic decisions arise spontaneously from man's inner sense of what the moment demands." The nearest thing to a guideline in this philosophy is freedom. There is no correct decision for freedom to make in any circumstance.

#### Principles For Moral-Decision Making

Nobody has ever discovered a way of having real 'morals' without a moral absolute. "Without absolutes, morals as morals cease to exist, and Humanistic man starting from himself has failed to find the absolute. But because the God of the Bible is there, real morals exist. Within this framework, I can say one action is right and another wrong without talking non-sense."<sup>19</sup>



Absolute authority is basic to any successful activity of life. The federal government has established a Bureau of Standards to guarantee a uniformity of weights and measures. In athletic contests there are absolute rules by which the games are played. In like manner if men would be accurate and united in religion, and live right, there must be an absolute, final and totally trustworthy standard.

First, men must accept the Bible as the standard of right and wrong. The Bible has absolute authority over the lives of men and constitutes an absolute standard of morality. Right and wrong are determined in relation to the will of God. Those things which are condemned in the scriptures as sin are always wrong at all times and under all circumstances. Jesus Christ is the author of this flawless system (Hebrews 1:1-2;4; 5:8,9; 12:1-3). It has all the authority of heaven <sup>AND</sup> ~~on~~ earth behind it (Matthew 28:18; John 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Galatians 1:11,12; 2 Peter 1:20,21). It is complete (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3,4; Jude 3). Are there explicit commands in the Bible which show that some things are always right and some things are always wrong?

There is such a thing as sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (1 John 5:17a). The Corinthians were guilty of some practices, before conversion, that would have kept them from inheriting the kingdom of heaven, had they continued. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations,

wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

God's word contains some very definite teachings against immorality. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:13-20). Paul gives five reasons why fornication is sinful and why the body must not be used in the practice of such. First, the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. Second, the body will be raised to eternal glory. Third, our body is a member of Christ and must not be joined in the act of fornication. Fourth, one who commits fornication sins against his own body. Fifth, our body has been bought with a price and must be used to glorify God.

Christians are admonished to put off the old man and to put on the new, and in that admonition, Paul specifically mentions some things that are always wrong and some things that are always right. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness

and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath; Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 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. And grieve not the holy spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:22-32).

There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22,23).

Man always becomes morally corrupt when he leaves God and his standard. The book of Judges well illustrates this truth as it states that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Look at the Gentile world without God and his guidance. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:28-32).

Second, right and wrong, in some cases, must be determined by the application of general principles to that situation. God has not given detailed commands as to what we can or cannot do in all situations, but he has given general principles that will enable us to decide what is good and what is evil. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 4:14-16). First, milk (the simpler truths belong to babes). Second, strong meat (more difficult truth) belongs to the mature. Third, this maturity comes through use of the senses in applying principles of God's truth and learning good and evil.

How does this principle work: First, look at some general principles stated in God's word. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). ". . . Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Corinthians 14:26). "And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). Second, one is faced with a decision as to what is right and what is wrong. There is no explicit command of God either way. What does one do? Third, one must take the senses that God gave, apply the principles to that particular situation, and discern good and evil. Can it be done to God's glory? Will it edify me? Can it be done with the Lord's approval?

Third, the right or wrong of some things must be decided on the basis of expediency. The word expedient is found in John 11:50; 16:7; 18:14; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23; 2 Corinthians 8:10; 12:1. It is also translated "good, profit, profitable. It means "apt and suitable to the end in view."

There are some guide lines that cannot be used in deciding matters of expediency. First, it cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not it has been done that way before. Second, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is different from the way it has been done before. Third, liking the preacher and congregation that is practicing it cannot be a basis. Fourth, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is getting tremendous results. Fifth, it cannot be decided by our likes and dislikes. Some of us judge people and actions, many times, on the basis of our personal like and dislikes. Sixth, it cannot be decided on the basis of what the brotherhood as a whole thinks, although the advice and wisdom of well-grounded brethren ought not be ignored.

Paul said: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient . . ." (1 Corinthians 6:12). Matters of expediency may vary from generation to generation and from congregation to congregation, but matters of faith do not vary. Matters of expediency have to do with methods in expediting a general command and may vary, else we would still be bound by methods of the first century. The Bible does not regulate matters of expediency. If it did then we would find details of the methods of carrying out a command. "Since the Bible does not bind upon the church today methods of expediting general commands, it must follow that the Bible does not regulate matters of expediency." (Franklin Camp) A matter of expediency, or method, cannot change, or alter, an authorized act. One cannot scripturally expedite an unauthorized act. Common sense regulates matters of expediency. It involves human judgment (what hour to meet on the Lord's day). Common sense enables one to know some things (a congregation without children would not need classes and teachers for children). Even though the Christian has the right to practice anything that is not sinful, the Christian will refrain from some practices because they are not expedient.

Fourth, in matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves, one's conscience will be a determining factor in deciding

right and wrong. Romans 14 discusses matters that are in the realm of indifference. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (Romans 14:1-3). But even in those matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves, one will commit sin by doing that which he believes to be wrong. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:22,23). An individual who doubts that something is right (even thought it may be perfectly right within itself) but, for some reason, goes ahead and does it anyway commits sin. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" does not refer to "the faith" (the system of truth--Acts 6:7; Galatians 1:23; Jude 3) but to one's belief in what he or she is doing.

Fifth, in matters that are not wrong within themselves, the influence it has on others must be considered in deciding the right or wrong of the act. There are many things that I, as a Christian, have the personal liberty to practice, but that personal liberty must be controlled by certain principles or I'll influence others to commit sin. The act of influencing others to commit sin is sin (1 Corinthians 8:12).

Liberty must be regulated by love. "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him . . . Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat,

or we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:1-3, 7-11). Some Christians at Corinth knew that eating meat offered to idols was nothing, while others did not possess such knowledge. What should they do? Love must regulate liberty. One must not use his liberty at the expense of others. One's own personal whims and desires must be secondary to saving souls. Where liberty and love cannot walk together, then love must have the preeminence. One must be careful that he not think another ungodly because he does things differently in matters of indifference.

Liberty must be regulated by its effect on preaching the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:1-16). Paul used this liberty to reject support for preaching at Corinth (even though he had the right to expect it), but he did not question the right of others to receive support.

Liberty must be regulated by its effect on others. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth . . . Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:24-33).

#### Conclusion

People without some principles for deciding right and wrong always become morally corrupt.

Without God there is no motivating factor for choosing a good life.

over a bad. Wayne Jackson wrote: "What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive! If there is no God, why should men not live lives that are devoted strictly to their own selfish interests? In his parable of the unjust judge the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and so, have no regard for man (Luke 18:2,4). Moreover, after describing the wickedness of the ancient world, Paul focuses upon the real problem when he writes: 'There is no fear of God before their eyes' (Romans 3:18). If there is no God, and so no ultimate reckoning to the Judge for human conduct, then there is no final value for choosing a good life over a bad one!"<sup>20</sup>



FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Webster's Third New International Dictionary, (G. & C. Merriam Company, Pub., Springfield, 1961), p. 1803.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 1468.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 585.
- <sup>4</sup> Bales, James D., Man On All Fours (Searcy: Harding College, 1973), p. 60.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 59, 60.
- <sup>6</sup> Russell, Bertrand, What I Believe, p. 37.
- <sup>7</sup> Brady, Baruck A., Edit. Moral Rules and Particular Circumstances (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.).
- <sup>8</sup> Deaver, Roy, Gospel Advocate: "Liberalism And Two Basic Philosophies" (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., Feb. 10, 1973), p. 91.
- <sup>9</sup> Storer, Morris B., Humanist Ethics (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1980), p. 2.
- <sup>10</sup> Mitchell, T. J., Gospel Advocate: "Materialism, Atheism, Foolishness" (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., Jan. 8, 1953), p. 9.
- <sup>11</sup> Christlieb, Theodore, Modern Doubt and Christian Belief (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874), pp. 145-161.
- <sup>12</sup> Ijams, C. H., Power To Survive And Surpass (New York: Pageant Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 56-57.
- <sup>13</sup> Christlieb, op. cit., p. 151.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 157.
- <sup>15</sup> Life, The New Man, What Will He Be Like, Oct. 1, 1965, Vol. 59, No. 14, p. 94-98.
- <sup>16</sup> Fletcher, Joseph, Situation Ethics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), pp. 26, 27.
- <sup>17</sup> Ramn, Bernard L., The Right, The Good, And The Happy (Waco: World Books, Pub., 1971), p. 62.
- <sup>18</sup> Sartre, Jean Paul, "Christianity Today," Nov. 24, 1967, p. 172.
- <sup>19</sup> Schaeffer, Francis A., The God Who Is There (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), p. 106-7.
- <sup>20</sup> Jackson, Wayne, "Words of Truth", August 17, 1984, p. 3.

Causes of Our Moral Collapse

Introduction

1. It is my responsibilities in this lesson to do three things:
  - a. Define what we mean by moral collapse.
  - b. Give some causes for the moral collapse.
  - c. What are some essential principles for moral decision making?
2. In this study let's consider:

Discussion

1. Definition of Terms

A. Moral, as "opposed to immoral, may designate conformity to established sanctioned codes or accepted notions of right or wrong" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary [G. & C. Merriam Co., Pub., Springfield, 1961, p. 1803].

B. Collapse means:

1. To fall or cave in; crumble suddenly.
2. To break down; come to nothing.
3. A sudden, complete failure; breakdown.

II. What Are Some Causes For Our Moral Collapse?

A. <sup>They</sup> We need to recognize that principles are necessary constituents of all moral decisions.

1. The most rudimentary types and degrees of consistency would be eliminated by the reputation of principles.
  - a. A man could regard the same action as evil one day and good the next day.
  - b. By rejecting principles he would be open to no logical criticism.
2. Principles are central to consistency, criticism, and classification.
3. There is no escape from the need of moral principles.

B. <sup>Recently</sup> First, some philosophies of our time have contributed to our moral collapse.

1. Atheism makes morality impossible by defining moral as simply that which men happen to believe is moral. In other words a man could change good to evil and evil to good by simply changing his mind.
2. Communism's doctrine "of morality means there is no moral law to which all men ought to be in subjection....Anything is right if it justifies, protects, enlarges, or perpetuates the interest of a class" (James D. Bales, Man on All Fours (Searcy: Harding College, 1973, p. 59-60).
3. Bertrand Russell, a noted philosopher, said: "I do not believe we can decide what sort of conduct is right or wrong except by reference to its probable consequences....All moral rules must be tested by examining

whether they tend to realize the ends that we desire." (Bertrand Russell, What I Believe, p. 37).

4. Utilitarianism is "the ethical theory, that the conduct, under any given circumstances, that is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole" (Baruck A. Brady, Edit, Moral Rules and Particular Circumstances, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.).

5. Pragmatism "holds that the theory is true if it works.... That which works, that which satisfies, that which succeeds is true. That which does not work, which does not satisfy, which does not succeed — is false" (Roy Deaver, Gospel Advocate: "Liberalism and Two Basic Philosophies" (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., Feb. 10, 1973, p. 91).

6. Humanism "believes that human experience and reason are the grounds for belief and action, putting human good — the good of self and others in their life on earth — as ultimate criterion of right and wrong...." (Morris B. Stares, Gospel Advocate, "Materialism, Atheism, Foolishness, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., January 8, 1953, p. 9).

Humanistic Education:

- 1. Is based on naturalism, not supernaturalism.
- 2. Systematically destroys confidence in absolutes.
- 3. Denies that there is any unified body of knowledge which must be passed on from generation to generation (exceptions: mathematics and scientific method).

- 4. Focuses upon "problem-solving skills" rather than upon academics.
- 5. Focuses upon "need gratification," needs being identified as whatever the individual feels is best for him!
- 6. Uses words like "love," "concern," "needs," "self-acceptance," but in a way that is totally divorced from God or scripture. Thus, like the devil's half-truth, it is subtle!

7. Materialism rejects God, the unchangeable word of God and accepts only what is good for man. *more said about this later.*

- 8. The new morality and situation ethics suggest there is only one moral imperative or absolute and that is love, but one must decide the loving thing to do in each situation.
- 9. Existentialism holds the view that all guidelines are irrelevant. All decisions must arise from man's inner sense of what the moment demands.

C. Second, the bottom line is a lack of respect for the authority of God's word. 1. The children of Israel rejected God's word (Judges 2:10,17; 17:6; 21:25).

- 2. Consider what happened in the day of Hosea (Hos. 4:1-3, 6).
- 3. Rejection of God and his word led the Gentiles into all kinds of immorality (Rom. 1:18-32).

a. "I am confident that the chief root of our reckless, sinful society is a lack of God-consciousness." (Basil Overton, The World Evangelist, Oct. 1997, p. 2).

b. Paul gives a list of heinous sins in Romans 3 and states the cause of

*Fourth* them: "There is no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:18).  
D. Third, never before in the history of this nation has there been what must be called the best of times and the worst of times.

1. In 1775 Charles Dickens wrote: "It is the best of times, and the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

a. Our society is characterized by unparalleled prosperity.  
b. Never before in the annals of history has a nation had so many enlightened people and so many avenues of enlightenment.  
c. Never before in the history of this nation have the masses of society been so free of drudgery.

d. Yet, in the midst of all this, "...our nation is moving by the day more and more recklessly away from God. America, as a nation, is plunging headstrong on the road to hell through its depraved morality and unbelief, and the church is compromising with immorality and unbelief at every step of the way" (Rex Turner, Sr., Part of a speech delivered at Fort Worth Christian College, March 11, 1970).  
*3. Report Page - What have we*

E. Fourth, what the most people want or public preference has become the standard.  
1. "With all of secular life determined in this way, it is only natural that the same attitudes would carry over into church activities, and that which the most people want becomes the standard determining what is done" (Jack Lewis, Chandler Street Church Bulletin, Kilgore, Texas, July, 1997).  
2. Israel's worship was not determined by popular vote, but God gave them a pattern (Exod. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Heb. 8:5; 9:32f).  
3. Our worship and service to God is not to be decided by what the most people want, but by what God's word teaches (John 4:23-24; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

III. What are Some Essential Principles for Moral-Decision Making?

A. Nobody has even discovered a way of having real "moral" without a moral absolute. Without absolutes, morals as morals cease to exist.

B. Absolute authority is basic to any successful activity of life.

C. First, man must accept the Bible as the standard of right and wrong.  
1. The Word of God can be lost even by God's people.

a. Second Kings 22:8 reveals that God's book was found in the days of Josiah.  
b. In July, 1997, the Christian Chronicle printed a survey taken by Abilene Christian University Center for Church Enrichment in Abilene, Texas. They polled 348 pulpit preachers of the church of

*of the 9-9-97*  
*of the 9-9-97*

- 1. The Bible does not regulate matters of expediency.
- 2. Common sense regulates matters of expediency.
- a. What hour to meet on the Lord's day.
- b. A congregation without children would not need Bible classes.
- 3. There are some guidelines that cannot be used in deciding matters of expediency.
- a. First, it cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not it has been

~~E. Third, the right or wrong of some things must be decided on the basis of expediency (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23).~~

~~D. Second, right and wrong sometimes be decided by the application of Bible principles to that situation (Heb. 5:12-14).~~

- e. Christians must put off the old man and put on the new—some things are always right and some wrong (Eph. 4:22-32).
- (1) First, the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord.
- (2) Second, the body will be raised to eternal glory.
- (3) Third, our body is a member of Christ and must not be joined in the act of fornication.
- (4) Fourth, one who commits fornication sins against his own body.
- (5) Fifth, our body has been bought with a price and must be used to glorify God.
- d. God's word contains some very definite teaching against immorality (1 Cor. 6:13-20). Five reasons why fornication is sinful.
- c. Those that practice the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).
- b. The Corinthians were guilty of some things that would have caused them to be lost (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- a. John defines sin (1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17).

- 5. The Bible makes it very clear that there is such a thing as sin.
- 4. It is complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Jude 3).
- 4. It is the truth given unto the apostles by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:18; Jn. 16:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Gal. 1:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- 3. Jesus Christ is the author of this flawless system (Heb. 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 5:8-9).
- 2. Right and wrong are determined in relation to God's will.

- (1) Little over 6% did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ.
- (2) Little over 5% did not believe the resurrection is a historical fact.
- (3) Over 21% do not believe the scriptures prohibit women preachers.
- (4) Seventy percent (70%) did not believe churches need common doctrine.
- (5) And the most startling—1% do not believe the scriptures are inerrant.

- b. Second, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is different from the way it has been done before.
- c. Third, liking the preacher and congregation that is practicing it cannot be a basis.
- d. Fourth, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is getting tremendous results.
- e. Fifth, it cannot be decided by our likes and dislikes. Some of us judge people and actions, many times, on the basis of our personal likes and dislikes.
- f. Sixth, it cannot be decided on the basis of what the brotherhood as a whole thinks, although the advice and wisdom of well-grounded brethren ought not be ignored.

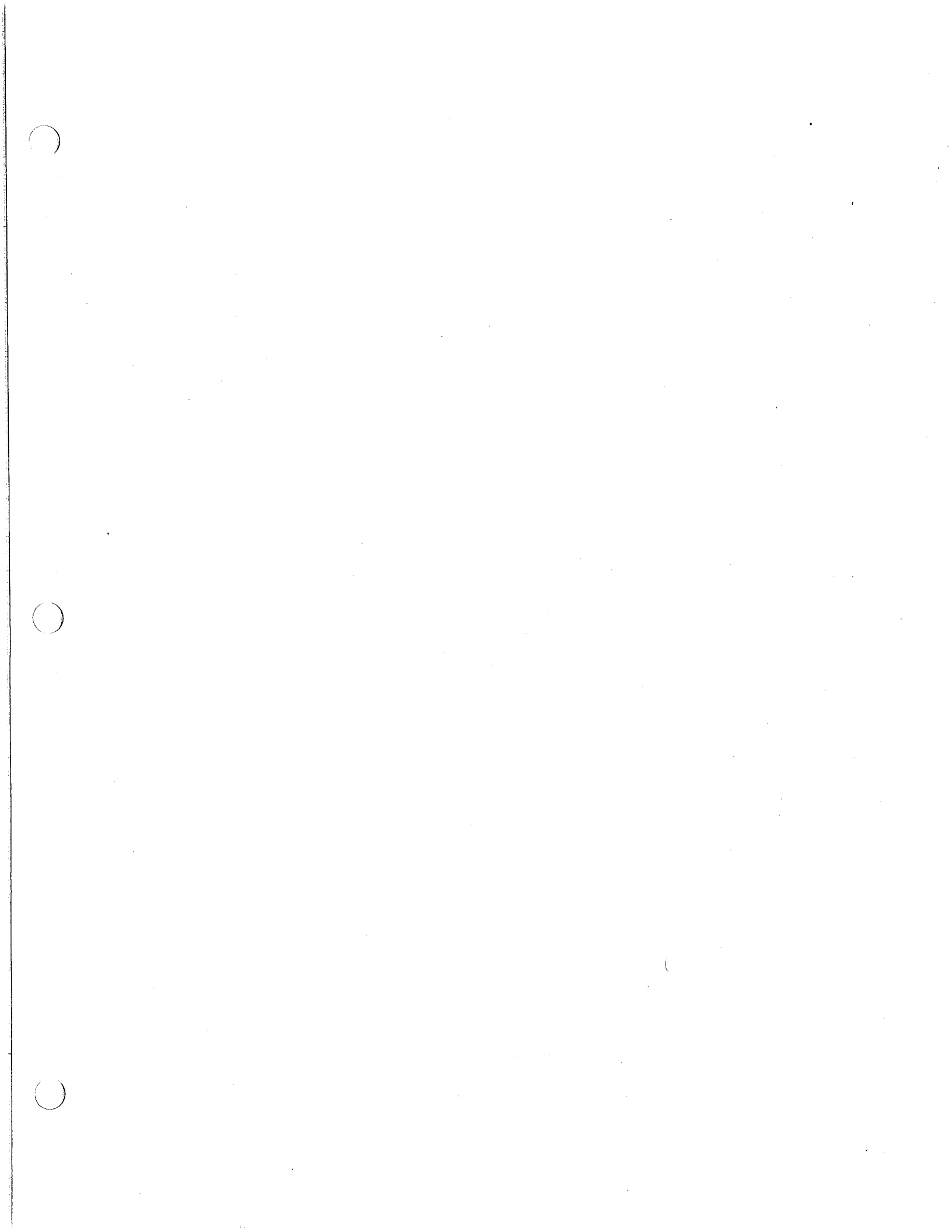
F. ~~Fourth, in matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves one's conscience will be a determining factor in deciding right and wrong (Rom. 14:22-23).~~

G. ~~Fifth, in matters that are not wrong within themselves, the influence it has on others must be considered.~~

- 1. There are many things that I have the personal liberty to practice, but my personal liberty must be regulated by principles.
- 2. Liberty must be regulated by love (1 Cor. 8:1-3; 7-11).
- 3. Liberty must be regulated by its effect on preaching the gospel (1 Cor. 9:1-16).
- 4. Liberty must be regulated by its effect on others (1 Cor. 10:24-33).

Conclusion

- 1. Most of the factors that have caused the moral collapse in our society are still here.
- 2. ~~The motivating factor for moral conduct is God. There is no rational nature if there is no God.~~



## PRINCIPLES FOR MORAL-DECISION MAKING

Nobody has ever discovered a way of having real 'morals' without a moral absolute. "Without absolutes, morals as morals cease to exist, and Humanistic man starting from himself has failed to find the absolute. But because the God of the Bible is there, real morals exist. Within this framework, I can say one action is right and another wrong without talking non-sense."<sup>1</sup>

Absolute authority is basic to any successful activity of life. The federal government has established a Bureau of Standards to guarantee a uniformity of weights and measures. In athletic contests there are absolute rules by which the games are played. In like manner if men would be accurate and united in religion, and live right, there must be an absolute, final and totally trustworthy standard.

First, men must accept the Bible as the standard of right and wrong. The Bible has absolute authority over the lives of men and constitutes an absolute standard of morality. Right and wrong are determined in relation to the will of God. Those things which are condemned in the scriptures as sin are always wrong at all times and under all circumstances. Jesus Christ is the author of this flawless system (Heb. 1:1-2; 4; 5:8,9; 12:1-3). It has all the authority of heaven and earth behind it (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 16:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Gal. 1:11,12; 2 Pet. 1:20,21). It is complete (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Jude 3). Are there explicit commands in the Bible which show that some things are always right and some things are always wrong?

There is such a thing as sin.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (I Jn. 3:4). "All unrighteousness is sin..." (I Jn. 5:17a). The Corinthians were guilty of some practices, before conversion, that would have kept them from inheriting the kingdom of heaven, had they continued. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9, 10). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

God's word contains some very definite teachings against immorality.

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be



one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:13-20). Paul gives five reasons why fornication is sinful and why the body must not be used in the practice of such. First, the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord. Second, the body will be raised to eternal glory. Third, our body is a member of Christ and must not be joined in the act of fornication. Fourth, one who commits fornication sins against his own body. Fifth, our body has been bought with a price and must be used to glorify God.

Christians are admonished to put off the old man and to put on the new and, in that admonition, Paul specifically mentions some things that are always wrong and some things that are always right. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath; Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 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. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:22-32).

There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is not law" (Gal. 5:22,23).

Man always becomes morally corrupt when he leaves God and his standard. The book of Judges well illustrates this truth as it states that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25). Look at the Gentile world without God and his guidance. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:28-32).

Second, right and wrong, in some cases, must be determined by the application of general principles to that situation. God has not given detailed commands as to what we can or cannot do in all situations, but he has given general principles that will enable us to decide what is good and what is evil. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who be reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 4:14-16). First, milk (the simpler truths belong to babes). Second, strong meat (more difficult truth) belongs to the mature. Third, this maturity comes through use of the senses in applying principles of God's truth and learning good and evil.

How does this principle work: First, look at some general principles stated in God's word. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). "...Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26). "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Second, one is faced with a decision as to what is right and what is wrong. There is not an explicit command of God either way. What does one do? Third, one must take the senses that God gave, apply the principles to that particular situation, and discern good and evil. Can it be done to God's glory? Will it edify me? Can it be done with the Lord's approval?

Third, the right or wrong of some things must be decided on the basis of expediency. The word expedient is found in Jn. 11:50; 16:7; 18:14; I Cor. 6:12, 10:23; 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1. It is also translated "good, profit, profitable. It means "apt and suitable to the end in view."

There are some guidelines that cannot be used in deciding matters of expediency. First, it cannot be decided on the basis of whether or not it has been done that way before. Second, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is different from the way it has been done before. Third, liking the preacher and congregation that is practicing it cannot be a basis. Fourth, it cannot be decided on the basis that it is getting tremendous results. Fifth, it cannot be decided by our likes and dislikes. Some of us judge people and actions, many times, on the basis of our personal like and dislikes. Sixth, it cannot be decided on the basis of what the brotherhood as a whole thinks, although the advice and wisdom of well-grounded brethren ought not be ignored.

Paul said: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient..." (I Cor. 6:12). Matters of expediency may vary from generation to generation and from congregation to congregation, but matters of faith do not vary. Matters of expediency have to do with methods in expediting a general command and may vary, else we would still be bound by methods of the first century. The Bible does not regulate matters of expediency. If it did then we would find details of the methods of carrying out a command. "Since the Bible does not bind upon the church today methods of expediting general commands, it must follow that

the Bible does not regulate matters of expediency.” (Franklin Camp) A matter of expediency, or method, cannot change, or alter an authorized act. One cannot scripturally expedite an unauthorized act. Common sense regulates matters of expediency. It involves human judgment (what hour to meet on the Lord’s day). Common sense enables one to know some things (a congregation without children would not need classes and teachers for children). Even though the Christian has the right to practice anything that is not sinful, the Christian will refrain from some practices because they are not expedient.

Fourth, in matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves, one’s conscience will be a determining factor in deciding right and wrong. Romans 14 discusses matters that are in the realm of indifference. “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him” (Rom. 14:1-3). But even in those matters that are neither right nor wrong within themselves, one will commit sin by doing that which he believes to be wrong. “Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:22, 23). An individual who doubts that something is right (even though it may be perfectly right within itself) but, for some reason, goes ahead and does it anyway commits sin. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” does

not refer to “the faith” (the system of truth-Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3) but to one’s belief in what he or she is doing.

Fifth, in matters that are not wrong within themselves, the influence it has on others must be considered in deciding the right or wrong of the act. There are many things that I, as a Christian, have the personal liberty to practice, but that personal liberty must be controlled by certain principles or I’ll influence others to commit sin. The act of influencing others to commit sin is sin (I Cor. 8:12).

Liberty must be regulated by love. “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him... Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish. For whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ” (I Cor. 8:1-3, 7-11). Some Christians at Corinth knew that eating meat offered to idols

was nothing, while others did not possess such knowledge. What should they do? Love must regulate liberty. One must not use his liberty at the expense of others. One's own personal whims, and desires must be secondary to saving souls. Where liberty and love cannot walk together, then love must have the preeminence. One must be careful that he not think another ungodly because he does things differently in matters of indifference.

Liberty must be regulated by its effect on others. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth... Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of man, that they may be saved" (I Cor. 10:24-33).

### Conclusion

People without some principles for deciding right and wrong always become morally corrupt.

Without God there is no motivating factor for choosing a good life over a bad. Wayne Jackson wrote: "What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive: If there is no God, why should men not live lives that are devoted strictly to their own selfish interests? In his parable of the unjust judge the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and so, have no regard for man (Lu. 18:2, 4). Moreover, after describing the wickedness of the ancient world, Paul focuses upon the real problem when he

writes: 'There is no fear of God before their eyes' (Rom. 3:18). If there is no God, and so no ultimate reckoning to the Judge for human conduct, then there is no final value for choosing a good life over a bad one."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Schaeffer, Francis A., The God Who Is There (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), p. 106-7.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson, Wayne, "Words of Truth", August 17, 1984, p. 3.

INTRODUCTION:

1. "This writer unhesitatingly affirms that, for the 'Christian soldier' to be faithful to God, he must (1) recognize Humanism for what it really is and (2) oppose it (Humanism) with all expeditious, righteous means (i.e., in making known the gospel of Christ)." (Thomas Warren, Spiritual Sword, January, 1982, p. 1.)
2. The most subtle danger threatening our society today is Secular Humanism. (P. P. Wilmeth, Voice of Freedom, July-August, 1981, p. 99.)
3. "Humanism is not only the world's greatest evil but, until recently the most deceptive of all religious philosophies." (Tim LaHaye, The Battle For the Mind, p. 5.)
4. Ray I. Powell, Superintendent of Schools in South St. Paul, Minnesota wrote in his book "The Battle Against Humanism," A nationally prominent lawyer has stated, 'The major political confrontation in the 1980's will not be between the liberals and the conservatives or between the socialists and the antisocialists, but between Christianity and Humanism . . . The battle lines have been drawn. Humanism has crept into a position of virtual prominence in this country and in our hearts and in the church! It is subtle and deceptive, like the devil himself.' (Voice of Freedom, p. 109.)
5. "Our country is filled with confusion and turmoil. Humanistic philosophy has made man his own God. The textbooks of our public schools are filled with humanistic teaching. College professors blatantly spout out their humanistic doctrines supported by our tax money. We are educating our children away from God. Nations do not reject God without having to reap the consequences of the seeds of their humanistic doctrine." (Franklin Camp.)
6. All of these statements emphasize that we are dealing with a subject that demands our close attention and a militant stand against.
7. In these studies we purpose to notice (1) the meaning of humanism, (2) a brief history of humanism, (3) the beliefs of humanists, (4) the fruits or consequences of humanism, (5) the Bible vs. humanism, (6) some things we can do.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF HUMANISM?

- A. Humanism means different things to different people and it has been expressed in a host of ways.
  1. There are those who call themselves "Christian humanists." The late Pope Paul VI called Roman Catholicism "Christian Humanism."
  2. Some consider themselves humanists who simply have a concern for human happiness and for a just and humane society.
  3. There is scientific humanism, religious humanism, ethical humanism, marxist humanism, renaissance humanism, sexual humanism, etc.
- B. The Oxford English Dictionary's shortest definition of secular humanism is "the religion of humanity."
- C. Webster defines it as: "A doctrine, set of attitudes, or way of life centered on human interests or values; a philosophy that rejects supernaturalism, regards man as a natural object and asserts the essential dignity and worth of a man and his capacity to achieve self-realization through the use of reason and the scientific method;--a religion subscribing to these beliefs."
- D. "The center of reference became man rather than God. This new attitude is properly defined as humanism." (Worldbook Encyclopedia)
- E. "A twentieth century philosophy . . . that rejects belief in all forms of the supernatural; that considers the greater good of all humanity on this earth as the supreme ethical goal; and that relies on the methods of reason, science and democracy for the salvation of human problems." (Dictionary of Philosophy)
- F. Auguste Comte taught that ". . . humanity is le grand etre, that is the Supreme Being, God." ("Humanism," Introduction To Religious Philosophy (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company), p. 62.)
- G. "Humanism is a philosophy which suggests that man must look to human experience for moral and spiritual guidance, without believing that there is a supernatural God or divine power to support him." (Edward L. Ericson, "The Unchurched Americans: What Do They Believe?" Religions of America, Leo Rosten, Ed., Simon & Schuster, 1975, p. 257.)
- H. James Curry, president of the American Humanist Association, said in 1969, "Humanism is a polite term for atheism . . .," (Warren T. Brookes, "Worshipping the Welfare

State, "Boston Herald American). Bro. Guy N. Woods calls it "the sophisticated form of atheism today."

I. "Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics . . . that considers all forms of supernaturalism a myth. Humanism is the viewpoint that men have but one life to live and that human happiness is its own justification and needs no sanction or support from supernatural sources: that in any case: the supernatural does not exist."

J. Humanism is a religion. "The U. S. Supreme Court cited Secular Humanism as a religion (Corliss Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism.)

In the 1961 case of Torcaso v. Watkins (367 U. S. 488) . . . We repeat and again reaffirm that neither a State nor the Federal Government can constitutionally force a person to "profess a belief or disbelief in any religion; Neither can constitutionally pass law or impose requirements which aid all religions as against non-believers, and neither can aid those religions based on a belief in the existence of God as against those religions founded on different beliefs. . . . Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others." (Secular Humanism and the Schools: Onalee McGraw, p. 23, 24.)

K. "For our purpose I will define a 'humanist' as all who, in the basic deliberations and action decisions of their lives, have set aside faith in revelation and dogmatic authority (if they ever had it), and have settled for human experience and reason as grounds for belief and action, putting human good--the good of self and others, in their life on earth--as ultimate criterion of right and wrong, with due concern for other living creatures. It has been estimated that as many as thirty million Americans--around one out of every seven--are of this mind, but the number is probably much larger." (Morris B. Storer, ed., Humanist Ethics (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1980), p. 2.)

L. Corliss Lamont states that the watchword of humanism is: "happiness for all humanity in this existence as contrasted with salvation for the individual soul in a future existence and the glorification of a supernatural supreme being." (Corliss Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 24.)

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF HUMANISM.

A. "Humanism, in its most fundamental form, has existed since the first human completely turned his back upon God and decided henceforth to manage his own destiny." (Wayne Jackson, "Humanism: A Brief History," Voice of Freedom, July-August, 1981, p. 102). B. In a more systematic mode Humanism originated among the Sophists, Greek philosophers, about 500 B.C. 1. Protagoras, 485-415 B.C. taught that "man is the measure of all things, and that contradictory assertions are true." This is a basic component in humanism's creed. 2. Socrates, 470 B.C.-399 B.C. "set a standard for making moral decisions, but did not actually decide what was moral himself--all answers came from the person he was talking to."

C. The second great wave of humanism came with the 14th Century movement called the Renaissance (a French word for 'rebirth') -- a revival of interest in the Greek and Latin classics. 1. "Those who became avid students of the classics, and who molded their lives around these studies, became known as humanists." (Wayne Jackson) 2. "Although Renaissance humanists read non-Christian authors, such as Cicero and Plato, they were not necessarily opposed to Christianity; in fact, most of the early humanists professed faith in Christ. Only later, in the heyday of the classical revival, did many Renaissance thinkers reject or ignore Christianity to admire pagan virtues and practice pagan vices. For example, anyone reading The Prince by Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)--written four years before Luther's protest--might be tempted to suppose that Christianity had never existed."

D. By the 18th and 19th centuries, humanism was decidedly more secular in its emphases. (Handbook to the History of Christianity, Tim Dowley, Ed., Erdmans, 1977, p. 348). 1. "First, there was an increasing confidence in man's ability to direct his own affairs, coupled with a belief that mere 'education' possessed the power to elevate humanity; in other words, accumulated 'human knowledge' was the key to solving all problems.

## FALSE DOCTRINES ABOUT SIN

"Righteousness exulteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

(Prov. 14:34) The cost of sin is enormous. Diseases, death, millions of dollars spent each year because of sin, broken homes, filled prisons, etc., all testify to the terrible nature of sin.

### I. What Is Sin?

(1) Sin means to veer - deviate - away from that which is right; to miss the mark; to violate the divine law by actual transgression or by neglect. Negatively sin is defined as unrighteousness. "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." (I John 5:17) Positively "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4) One may sin in thought (Isa. 55:7; Matt. 5:28; Acts 8:22); in word (Matt. 12:36,37); and in deed (Gal. 5:19-21).

(2) Sin is deceitful (Heb. 3:13); enticing (Jas. 1:12-15); pleasant (Heb. 11:23-25); and grows worse and worse. (2 Tim. 3:13) Sin separates man from God in this life (Eph. 2:1; Isa. 59:1,2); in hades (Luke 16:26); and in eternity (Matt. 25:46). Sin enslaves (Rom. 6:16); contaminates (Jas. 1:27; Jude 23; Psa. 51:2); and scars (Matt. 26:69-75).

(3) There are sins of ignorance (Psa. 19:12; Lev. 4:2; Acts 3:17-19; I Tim. 1:13); weakness (Rom. 8:3; Matt. 26:69-75; Gal. 2:9-14); and presumptuous sins (Ex. 21:13,14; Num. 15:30,31; Deut. 18:20-22; Psa. 19:13).

(4) There is a right way and a wrong way to cover sins. Some try to cover their sins by hiding and shifting blame (Gen. 3:10; Job 31:33; Gen. 3:12; Ex. 32:21,22; Josh. 7:19-21); some by appearing righteous before others (Matt. 23:5,14,15,25,27,28); some by the passing of time; and some by persecuting the one that points out their sins (Matt. 14:1-9; Acts 7:51-58). The Psalmist said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Psa. 32:1; cf. Prov. 28:13). The blood of Christ covers the sins of those who believe and obey (John 20:30,31; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; Mark 16:16; Heb. 9:14-14).

There are many false views held and taught about sin. It shall be the purpose

of this lecture to discuss some of these false views in the light of God's word.

## II. The Doctrine of Adamic Sin And Total Depravity Are False Views About Sin.

(1) The Adamic sin or original sin means "that Adam's first sin has been transmitted to all his descendants, and that in consequence thereof, they are all guilty and corrupt in the sight of God."<sup>1</sup> "In the first place Adam's sin is imputed to all of us, his children, that is, judicially set to our account so that we are held responsible for it and suffer the consequences of it. This is known as the doctrine of original sin."<sup>2</sup> "The sinfulness of that estate status, or condition whereunto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature: which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgression which proceed from it."<sup>3</sup> ". . . according to the Scriptures, man sinned in Adam and is, therefore guilty before he commits personal sin . . ."<sup>4</sup>

(2) John Calvin taught that man is ". . . born wicked and depraved . . . corruption of our nature . . . the whole of man is corrupted--'mind and heart'--and to contend that only a part of the soul is corrupted is opposed to supernatural grace . . . Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature . . ."<sup>5</sup> Augustine "taught, that, because of the fall of Adam, all, even infants were so depraved as to destroy the human and leave them the helpless servants of sin."<sup>6</sup>

(3) Most of the religious groups of our day believe and teach the doctrine of total depravity. ". . . being by nature utterly devoid of that holiness . . . positively inclined to evil . . ."<sup>7</sup> ". . . but it is the corruption of the nature of every man . . ."<sup>8</sup> "that Adam wilfully transgressed the law of God and therefore plunged himself and his posterity into a state of guilt and corruption (Rom. 5:12-19)."<sup>9</sup>

### Proofs That Original Sin And Depravity Doctrines Are False

(1) The dogma of original sin is purely of theological origin. The term itself is theological lingo. No such idea as that of inherited guilt is taught in the scriptures. Moreover, the dogma of original sin misrepresents God, and has driven thousands into infidelity.



(2) Moses E. Lard wrote that "until it can be demonstrated that the spirit of man is created with the body, and so organically united to it as to become as verily transmissible as any feature, form, or idiosyncrasy of the animal organism, the spirit must be regarded as a separate and distinct creation, but united with the body as long as the body lives. Created distinctly and separately, and living after the body has perished, and being again invested with a body--then immortal and imperishable--its virtues and vices can not, in the very nature of the case, be reproduced as can those of the body, and transmitted with it. These things being true, the moral depravity of the father, admitting it to exist, cannot be transmitted to his offspring."<sup>10</sup>

(3) The theory assumes the depravity of Adam for which there is no more reason than the assumption. Did anyone ever know a man to become depraved by one act of disobedience? "The thing is simply impossible; and hence the assumption, that Adam's moral nature was so degraded by the one act of disobedience as to be characterized as depraved, is without reason, and contrary to what is observed by the influence of one sin (and that not of the moral class), on the moral nature of an innocent and guileless person."

(4) The theory contradicts the fact which is a matter of history. "The first is the character of Christ. He was without sin. But if the doctrine of the transmissibility of constitutional depravity be true, and it also be true that one sin depraved the moral nature of Adam to such a degree that his depravity was constitutional, or organic, and, therefore, transmissible, then the statement that Christ was without sin cannot be true. Hence, if Christ was without sin, the theory must be false."<sup>11</sup>

#### Proof Texts For Total Depravity Are Misapplied

(1) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) This verse teaches that "death passed upon all men" but it does not say that Adam plunged his "posterity into a state of guilt and corruption." All agree that men still suffer death as a consequence of Adam's sin, which the verse affirms, but that we are guilty of Adam's sin and depraved because he sinned, is not found in the verse.

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Some argue that this implies that man is born this way. Death is a separation whether physical or spiritual (Gen. 35:18; Jas. 2:26). Sin is a violation of God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I Jn. 3:4). One cannot be separated from God by sin until one is old enough to commit sin.

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). "And were by nature the children of wrath" is often used to prove that we were born with a corrupt nature. It does not say we were born children of wrath. By nature means by custom and practice. Paul said that nature teaches it is a shame for a man to wear long hair (I Cor. 11:14). Nature did not teach them this before birth, but rather custom taught them later. The Ephesians were by nature or practice children of wrath before their conversion. By trespasses and sins they became children of wrath--not born under the wrath of God.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). This verse teaches the doctrine of original, or transmitted and inherited, sin, it is often argued. David does not say he was born a sinner. The sin was at his conception, not at his birth. David may be referring to sin on the part of his mother, which is unlikely, or he may mean nothing more than that he was born into a world of iniquity and sin.

"Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psa. 53:3). Instead of teaching that men are born in sin, this passage denies it because it says "every one of them is gone back," not born that way. They are become filthy not born filthy.

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psa. 58:3). This verse teaches that men go astray, not that they are born astray. Furthermore, their going astray was long enough after their birth that they were speaking lies. As soon as they be born does not mean the day of their birth because they already had teeth in their mouth (Psa. 58:6).

"For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 9:7). Paul does not say he was born spiritually dead. He was alive and later died. He was not born dead but he died when he transgressed God's law.

### III. Situation Ethics And The New Morality Are False Doctrines About Sin.

(1) In situation ethics Joseph Fletcher says there are three approaches a person may take to moral decision making. First, legalism, by which he means law is supreme and obeying the letter of the law is most preeminent. Second, antinamianism, which means there is no moral law but each person is free to do whatever his impulse dictates at the time. Third, situationism, "is the moderate approach between the two extremes of legalism and antinamianism. It contends that the only 'law' (i.e. a universal and permanently binding ethical law) is love (agape) and it is the law that must be applied in every situation."<sup>12</sup>

(2) Frederic C. Wood, Jr. says "the new morality is neither a new moral code nor a more liberal revision of an old code. Indeed, the morality is not a code at all. It is instead what might best be called an ethical attitude. It is an approach toward the way in which to make decisions most responsibly. It is an attitude toward moral codes and how they are to be applied and related to. It is that moral attitude which searches out the rationale or spirit of a code, and then calls for loyalty to this spirit above loyalty to the letter of particular prescriptions. As such, the new morality encourages (literally, "gives the courage for") both moral freedom and moral responsibility. It encourages moral freedom because it reminds the individual that he finally makes his own decisions . . . The new morality, on the other hand, reminds us that moral responsibility implies moral freedom. I am not really responsible for my own life unless I am genuinely free in the decisions I make. I must determine what is right and wrong according to my own ultimate commitments."<sup>13</sup>

(3) The new morality teaches that one is guilty of sexual immorality only when one misuses the body. "But what is the criterion by which one determines what is and what is not the misuse of the body? . . . the criterion (Love) by which the individual determines what is and is not the misuse of the body and the bodies of others. This

is because the ethical attitude assumed through this work is thoroughly contextual. That means that what is misuse of the body and the exploitation of sexuality for one man is not for another. Prostitution, for example, for a New York call girl and for the joyful and self-giving heroine of the Movie Never On Sunday, may mean quite different things."<sup>14</sup> The Bible teaches that all sexual relations outside of the marriage relationship is sin (Rom. 1:22-32; I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; I Cor. 7:1-5).

(4) Situation ethics and the new morality are false doctrines about sin because they grow out of existentialism,<sup>15</sup> which emphasizes humanism, and pragmatism,<sup>16</sup> which teaches that something is true if it works and false if it doesn't work. The agnostic pragmatists who call themselves 'liberals' have taught a generation of children that there is no clear distinctions between right and wrong; that there are no eternal verities, no absolute truths; that environment determines truth, and, since environment constantly changes, everything is relative. Freud taught that 'man is a product of his heredity and his environment, and you cannot expect him to rise above it;' that 'life adjustments,' not inculcation of principles and disciplines, is the aim of education; that patriotism is out of date.

(5) The new morality and situation ethics are false because they teach "that it is not possible for me to grasp infinite truth, it is equally impossible for me to define the limits of my comprehension. In other words, I cannot know what of the truth I have is absolute and what is being altered and colored by my own subjectivity. Hence, the knowledge of truth which I possess is always relative." (Roy Osborne) Some of the devastating implications of the above statement are: (a) "If one cannot know what of truth he has is absolute and what of it is being altered by his own subjectivity, then it follows that he cannot know that there is a definite body of absolute (objective) truth. (b) And--if one cannot know there is a definite body of absolute (objective) truth, then he cannot know that the Bible is the word of God. (c) And--if one cannot know that the Bible is the word of God, then he cannot know that any of the Bible has any binding force on anyone. (d) And--if one cannot know that the Bible teaching has any binding force in the lives of men and women living today, then no one can know that Christianity is any more acceptable to than say, Buddhism or even Atheism."<sup>17</sup> The Bible clearly declares that there is such a thing

### Footnotes

1. Moses E. Lard, Lard's Quarterly, (Lexington, Ky.: Old Paths Book Club, 1866), p. 138.
2. Loraine Boettner, Studies In Theology, (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975), p. 312.
3. Westminster Shorter Catechism, p. 18.
4. Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 261.
5. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Edited by John T. McNeill, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), Vol. 1, pp. 251, 262).
6. M. M. Davis, How To Be Saved, "Conversion," Restoration Reprint Library, pp. 126ff.
7. J. M. Pendleton, Baptist Church Manuel, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1966) p. 46.
8. Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Church, (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1952), p. 27.
9. Elder Lasserre Bradley, Jr., Baptist Bible Hour, Tract, p. 6.
10. Moses E. Lard, Lard's Quarterly, (Lexington: Old Paths Book Club, 1950), p.148-49.
11. Ibid, p. 150.
12. Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 27.
13. Frederic C. Wood, Jr., Sex And The New Morality, (New York: Association Press, 1968, p. 12, 13, 78.
14. Ibid, p. 63.
15. Roy Deaver, "Liberalism and Two Basic Philosophies," Gospel Advocate (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., Feb. 10, 1972), p. 91.
16. Charles J. Aebi, The Church Today: Current Issues, Problems, And Challenges, Freed-Hardeman College Lectures, 1975, p. 96.
17. Garland Elkin, The Getwell Reminder, Editor, Oct. 3, 1974, Vol. 15, No. 40.
18. Frederic Wood, op. cit., p. 93.
19. Rubel Shelly, Young People Make Moral Decisions, (University of Alabama: Youth In Action, Inc., 1972), pp. 7,8.
20. John McClintock and James Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature (Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Book House, 1968), Vol. IX. p. 333.

21. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, "The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church" (1784), Article VII, p. 56.
22. Ibid, p. 62.
23. W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Westwood; Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), p. 317.
24. Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 6.

Jacob and Joseph  
Hebrews 11:21-22

Introduction

1. Read or quote the text.
2. A study of Old Testament characters is one of the most rewarding studies in which one can engage.
3. Paul declares that the things written before time are for our learning (Rom. 15:4) and they are our examples (1 Cor. 10:1-12).
4. In this study I propose to study:
  - a. Background setting and context for the study of Jacob and Joseph.
  - b. Jacob's life and lessons learned.
  - c. Joseph's life and lessons learned.
  - d. Conclusion

Discussion

- I. Background Setting and Context for the Study of Jacob and Joseph
  - A. The book of Genesis can be divided and easily remembered in the following way:
    1. Adam — Gen. 1-5.
    2. Noah — Gen. 6-11.
    3. Abraham — Gen. 12-25
    4. Isaac — Gen. 26-27.
    5. Jacob — Gen. 28-36.
    6. Joseph — Gen. 37-50.
  - B. Understanding the promise that God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, etc., is essential to understanding the faith that Jacob and Joseph had.
    1. God made a promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:5-8, 19; 22:15-18).
    2. God repeated that promise to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4).
    3. God repeated the promise to Jacob (Gen. 28:3-4; 13-14; 35:10-12; 46:3-4).
    4. God made a promise to Judah (Gen. 49:10).
    5. Joseph understood this promise and understood that Israel would one day return to Palestine (Gen. 50:24).
      - a. Jacob told Joseph about God's appearance to him in the land of Canaan (Gen. 48:4).
      - b. He also told Joseph that "God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers" (Gen. 48:21).
- II. Jacob's Life and Lessons Learned.
  - A. Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, a twin with Esau (Gen. 25:24-27).
    1. Esau was Isaac's favorite, but Jacob was Rebekah's favorite (Gen. 25:28).
    2. Early in life, Jacob bought Esau's birthright (Gen. 25:29-34).
  - B. Jacob had to flee into the land of Haran (Gen. 27:1-43).

- C. Jacob worked 20 years for Laban—14 for his wives and six for cattle (Gen. 28-31).
- D. Jacob wrestles with the angel of God and his name is changed (Gen. 32).
- E. "By faith Jacob..."
  - 1. "blessed both the sons of Joseph" (Gen. 48:1-22).
  - 2. He told Joseph God would bring them into the land of Canaan (Gen. 48:21).
  - 3. He charged them to bury him in the land of his fathers (Gen. 49:28-50:13).

### III. Joseph's Life and Lessons Learned.

- A. He was the son of Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 30:22-24).
- B. Joseph's brothers were envious of him—provoked by at least two reasons.
  - 1. His father gave him a coat of many colors (Gen. 37:3).
  - 2. He dreamed dreams that predicted his brothers would bow down to him (Gen. 37:5-11).
- C. Joseph was sold into Egypt and through the providence of God he was in a position to save his people (Gen. 37-41).
  - 1. Joseph was seventeen when sold into Egypt (Gen. 37:2).
  - 2. He was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams (Gen. 41:46).
  - 3. There was the seven years of plenty and some two or three years into the famine Joseph met his brothers (Gen. 41:53-57; 46:6).
  - 4. Joseph was about 39 years of age (22 years since sold into Egypt) when he saw his father again.
- D. Joseph died when he was 110, but the years had not dimmed his faith in God's promise. "By faith...."
  - 1. He made mention of Israel returning to Palestine (Gen. 50:24; Heb. 11:22).
  - 2. By faith he asked them to carry his bones back and bury in Canaan (Gen. 50:25-26).
  - 3. He was carried back to Palestine.
    - a. Moses carried his coffin out of Egypt (Exod. 13:17-19).
    - b. Joshua buried him in Canaan (Josh. 24:32).
- E. Lessons Learned:
  - 1. Joseph shows us how to escape fornication (Gen. 39:7-9; 1 Cor. 6:18-20).
  - 2. One's feelings will be the same when he believes falsehood as when he believes truth, if he believes the falsehood is truth (Gen. 37:31-36; 45:25-28).



## "SET FOR THE DEFENSE" - "STAND FAST"

### Introduction

Paul's relationship with the Philippians was close-knit from the beginning. He went to Philippi on his second missionary journey where he converted Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15), cast the spirit of divination out of the maiden (Acts 16:16-24), and converted the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:25-34). From that first day Paul and the Philippians had enjoyed "fellowship in the gospel" (Phil. 1:5). Part of that fellowship was being partakers with him "in the defense and confirmation of the gospel" (Phil. 1:7).

The methodology planned in this study is as follows: (1) What does "set for the defense" mean? (2) Is there really such a thing as gospel (truth, sound doctrine) that needs defending? (3) Why is there a need for defending the Gospel? (4) What are some ways in which false doctrines and false teachers are being encouraged by Christians? (5) What are some truths that must be recognized in defending the truth and dealing with false teachers? (6) Stand fast in the Lord, and (7) Conclusion.

### WHAT DOES "SET FOR THE DEFENSE" MEAN?

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.... But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:7,17).<sup>1</sup>

The word 'defense' is a Greek judicial term referring to an attorney talking his client off from a charge, thus presenting a verbal defense. Paul was defending the Faith before the tribunal of the world, Nero's throne. A successful defense would result in the gospel being confirmed, that is, made stable in the sense that its claims would be shown to be true."<sup>2</sup>

Paul speaks of the "defense" and "confirmation" of the gospel in which the Philippians were having fellowship with him.

This obligation implies sufficient acquaintance with the word of God to substantiate one's hope therewith, and godliness of life consistent with its teaching... The defense is to be made with "meekness and fear." When called upon to justify their position, Christians are to do so with reason and logic; but not with bold defiance nor arrogance and pride; the "answer" is to be made with "meekness," i.e., an attitude free of scorn, haughtiness and bitterness; and "in fear," fear of God and the judgment.<sup>6</sup>

Jude likewise recognized that Christians must "contend for the faith" for false teachers are around.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

This is the battle cry of the church. The great truths set forth in this text are demanding and challenging to our nature. It eliminates the idea of us contending for anything that is not "the faith." It demands that we allow nothing to cause us to give less than all diligence in contending for the faith. It summons every member of the church for loyalty to the conflict between truth and error.

The need of upholding the truth cannot be over-emphasized since our land is filled with so many different teachings, each claiming to be upheld and supported by the word of God. This poses a number of problems for a sincere seeker after God. He sees good, sincere people in all religions. He sees each one "proving" his doctrine by the Bible. He sees each of the doctrines contradicting one another. He wonders which one to accept because (1) if they are all right which one is best for him? and (2) if they are all wrong how does one determine what is truth? Such a state of affairs is sad indeed when one realizes the Lord prayed for unity (John 17:20-21), the early church was of "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) and Paul begged the Corinthians to be of the same mind (1 Cor. 1:10).

of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:6-13).

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

Peter claimed inspiration for the Bible writers (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

There is such a thing as sound doctrine and we can know it. There are those today who contend "there is such a thing as absolute truth, but we can never know it, thus we must ever view it as a goal which demands unflagging effort to attain it." Brother Thomas Warren asked the question: "If we cannot learn the truth, then the Bible is not even a meaningful revelation from God to man. What difference would it make (if the Bible is not God's truth) if none of us can possibly learn the truth."<sup>7</sup>

The late James Bales raised the question:

How long can New Testament Christianity survive in an atmosphere where its teachers question everything, are tentative in all things, are non-militant in all their positions, who must view all as in the same tentative quest, and to whom it is said that a healthy respect for the tentative finds of others would become mandatory.<sup>8</sup>

But for one who believes the Bible the following facts clearly show that one can know the truth (if not then these things are impossible): (1) one can know the doctrine (Jn. 7:17);

Tim. 4:1); (10) man can believe a lie (which means some were lying) (2 Thess. 2:8-12); (11) after the first and second admonition factious men (heretics, false teachers) are to be refused (Tit. 3:10-11); (12) There shall be false teachers among you (2 Pet. 2:1); false teachers are to be tested by the word of God (1 Jn. 4:1).

False teachers constitute a constant menace to the church and many warnings, as we've noted, appear in the New Testament. Peter said false teachers "privily" bring us their false doctrines. "Privily (Pareisago) means to slip in by the side of, and indicates these false teachers had artfully and slyly introduced their false doctrines by the side of truth in such a fashion as to deceive those who had accepted them."<sup>9</sup>

#### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH FALSE DOCTRINES AND FALSE TEACHERS CAN BE ENCOURAGED BY CHRISTIANS?

Let us consider some general ways in which Christians encourage false teachers. First, when false teachers teach that truth is neither absolute nor attainable, and they are not opposed, it is a serious matter. Second, when false, liberalistic teachers are brought into local training series and congregations and Christians, who talk about liberalism, do not oppose them. Third, when colleges use known false teachers and thus galvanize them and their false doctrines into "respectability." Fourth, when New Testament discipline is not being practiced against such it displeases God.

Garland Elkins lists some specific ways in which Christians encourage false teachers. First, elders who fail to insist that the gospel be fully preached from the pulpit. This allows and encourages the idea that the gospel is not really relevant. Second, elders who are not willing to stand behind solid preaching and teaching. Third, brethren who ignore doctrinal

5. They are hidden dangers, making progress by false promises (vv. 12-13).

6. They use others for their advantage (v. 16).<sup>10</sup>

Third, we must recognize the danger and disaster of false doctrine both within and without the church. Every accountable being on the face of the earth is lost (Rom. 3:23). God's way of making men righteous is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), but it must not be changed (Gal. 1:6-10).

Fourth, we must not try to force the truth upon those that don't want it.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you (Matt. 7:6).

Fifth, we must always speak the truth in love.

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Eph. 4:15).

Sixth, we must be gentle, meek, and patient in teaching those that oppose themselves.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Seventh, we must not in any way encourage false teachers.

Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not the doctrine, receive him not unto your house, neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 Jn. 9-11).

Eighth, we must, when they refuse to change their course that is contrary to sound doctrine, mark them and refuse fellowship with them.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offenses

faith" (1 Cor. 16:13); "stand fast, therefore" (Gal. 5:1); "stand fast in one spirit" (Phil. 1:27); "stand fast in the Lord" (1 Thess. 3:8); stand fast, and hold the traditions" (2 Thess. 2:15); and "stand fast in the Lord" (Phil. 4:1). "Stand" means to "stand firm." "Fast" means "firmly fixed; stable."

"In the Lord," is the source of man's stability. "In the Lord or "in Christ" (or its equivalent) is used about 200 times in Paul's epistles, several times in this epistle: "I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly" (2:24); "rejoice in the Lord" (4:4); "stand fast in the Lord" (4:1); "be of the same mind in the Lord" (4:2). To be "in the Lord" is to be in his church and the same process that puts one "in the Lord" puts one in his church.

### CONCLUSION

The challenge is clearly before us. Will we accept the challenge?

It is my firm conviction that we are sinning away our 'days of grace' by the divided condition of our people and the watering-down of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have let this permissive age that has captivated the world, especially our precious and lovely young people, make coward of too many of us. There is entirely too much compromising with this permissive element, both in the world and in the church.<sup>13</sup>

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). Error is crouched in countless forms concealed. Christ calls for vigilance—"watch ye." But when error has been flushed out of the hiding, and forms into advancing columns against the church, Christ calls for courage—"stand fast in the faith." Then when the lines are drawn tight, surging issues of truth and error are locked in the grim struggle for mastery—Christ calls for valour—"quit ye like men." Perform like a Christian soldier, worthy of the name. Finally, when the crisis has come in the conflict of the faith, heroism, the heroism of faith—"be strong," "hold the line."<sup>14</sup>

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>All quotes are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

VALUES

---

A term paper  
presented to Dr. Ralph Gilmore

---

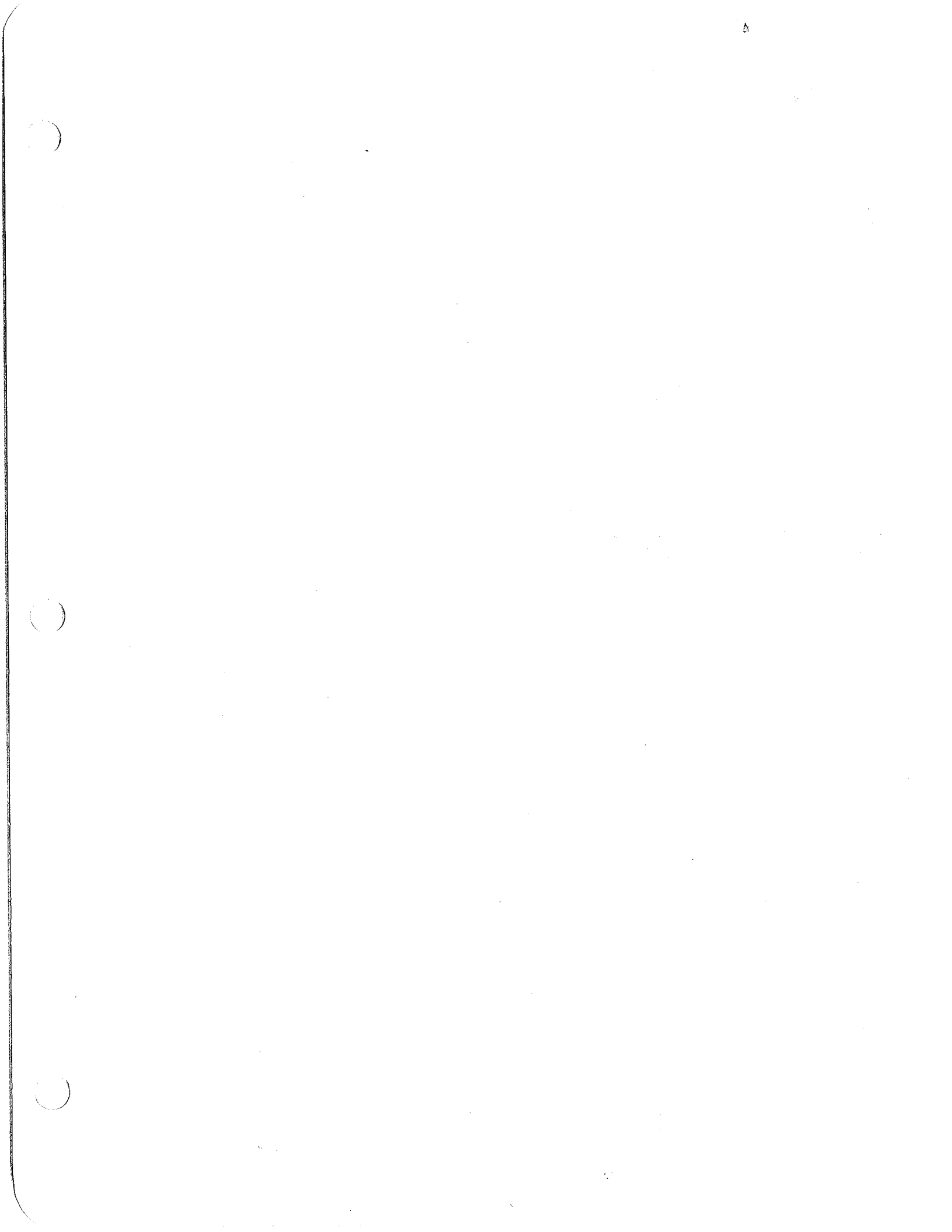
In  
partial fulfillment of requirements for  
Interdisciplinary Studies 495

---

By  
James Meadows

---

October 8, 1987





## VALUES

Man as a religious ethical person finds himself in "the midst of a world of values, without the estimation and possession of which he cannot live and the assent to which affords him grasp and support."<sup>1</sup> Our scale of values determines our interest, and our interest determines our attention. It is true that each one may have different values, but

in whatever direction we look, we find that it is the scale of values that determines the interest of man, and sets him to work for its realization. Values--artistic, scientific, ethical, spiritual--are the dominating interest of human life, and these are the ends which all men seek to realize.<sup>2</sup>

~~The thesis of this paper will be to study some values of preaching as clearly set forth in the Bible. The methodology purposed is: (1) definition; (2) the importance of having a good value system; (3) the values of preaching or why I preach; and (4) conclusion.~~

## DEFINITION

"Values", as used in this study means the "worth of a thing" as placed upon it by the individual that holds it. It is used to refer to what is valued, judged to have value, thought to be good, or desired. The expressions "his value", "her value system", "the American values" refer to what a man, a woman, and Americans value or think to be good.<sup>3</sup>

Gilmore says "values may describe anything to which a person attaches worth, significance, or importance. The study of values is called Axiology."<sup>4</sup>

Raths, Harmin, and Simon describe a value as something "a particular person prizes and cherishes, is committed to publicly, chooses freely from the alternatives after considering the consequences of these alternatives, and acts upon."<sup>5</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD VALUE SYSTEM

Everyone (since we are moral agents) will have a value system of some kind. No one can escape making decision<sup>5</sup> "One generally makes choices",

Gilmore states, "according to the value system which he/she accepts whether consciously or unconsciously."<sup>6</sup>

Ramsay wrote:

Unless we have a proper value system based upon the basic principles of Christianity we will go through life with unbalanced allegiance to those things that really count. Jesus made this very clear in Matthew 6:21, "For, where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."<sup>7</sup>

One must learn Jesus' valuation of things and his scale of computing values. Boles wrote:

We never see things aright until we see them as God sees them, never place the correct valuation of them until we do it according to the scale of Jesus, never properly classify things until we do it as Jesus did . . . It is important that we do this, for so many times we overestimate the valuation of things (or underestimate them) and are confused in our classification of them.<sup>8</sup>

Failure to use the Lord's scale of values will cause man to esteem highly that which is of little value or an abomination in God's eyes. Some men place great value on the ability to cheat one's neighbor, but such is an abomination to God (Prov. 11:1; 20:23). Others esteem any sacrifice valuable, but the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God (Prov. 21:27). Still others place great value on outward acts (and they have their place) but Jesus said to the Pharisees: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Wealth, social prestige, and power are greatly sought by men, but those rich in faith (James 2:5), of good standing in the kingdom (Rom. 14:17,18), and a servant to all (Matt. 20:27) are of greater value to God.

Failure to use the Lord's scale of values will truly blind one to that <sup>which</sup> God esteems most valuable. Man's inward condition God esteems most valuable, but too often men look on the outward (1 Sam. 16:7; Rom. 2:19; 2 Cor. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:3,4). God esteems the soul of man more valuable than all earth's treasures (Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36,37), but man shows how little value he places on his soul by the little time spent in its interest and the things for which he sells it. The Lord esteems sitting at his feet

and learning his word of great value (Luke 10:38-42), but too many show far less value toward it in habitually absenting themselves from opportunities to study it.

Using the Lord's scale of values means we will recognize the most valuable which is essential. First, God expects it of us (1 Cor. 12:31; Phil. 1:9,10; 1 Pet. 3:4). Second, by failing to recognize the most valuable we may sell it for that which is of inferior value. Esau, because he "disesteemed" or "underestimated" the value of his birthright sold it for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:29-34; Heb. 12:16,17). Third, it is only by recognizing the most valuable that we are willing to give up less valuable possessions to obtain the most valuable. The man who found the buried treasure was willing to sell all that he had and buy it because he recognized its value (Matt. 13:44). The pearl merchant was willing to sell all of his pearls to buy the one because he recognized its value (Matt. 13:45,46). Paul was willing to give up "his own righteousness" because he recognized that the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ was more valuable (Phil. 3:4-10). Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than all the riches of Egypt (Heb. 11:24-26). Failure to recognize the most valuable will not change its value, but it will rob us of the many blessings that can be ours.

#### WHAT ARE THE VALUES OF PREACHING OR WHY I PREACH

"Brother Meadows, you have been preaching for thirty-four years. Surely there must be some good reasons why you began to preach and some real values in the field of preaching. Since I am thinking about entering the field of preaching as my life work, please share some of them with me." Such a request from a sincere individual deserves one's heart-felt feelings in answer.

First, there are several values (which some prize highly) that did

ENDNOTES

1. Martin Rade, "Truth, Truthfulness," in Vol. XII of The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. by Lamuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964), p. 31.

2. James Iverach, "Attention" in Vol. II of Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 217.

3. William K. Frankena, "Value and Valuation," in Vol. VIII of The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. by Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967), p. 230.

4. Ralph Gilmore, Classnotes, August 27, 1987.

5. L. Raths, M. Harmin, and S.B. Simon, Values and Teaching (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1960), p. 67.

6. Gilmore, op. cit.

7. Johnny Ramsey, "Excelling in Things that Count", Gospel Advocate, CXXVI (November 1, 1984): 21, p. 677.

8. H. Leo Boles, "Jesus's Scale of Values," Gospel Advocate, LXXVIII (October 22, 1936): 43, p. 1017.

9. Frank Pack and Prentice Meador, Jr., Preaching to Modern Man (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1969), p. 78.

10. Ibid., p. 81.

11. Ibid., p. 82.

12. H. Leo Boles, "Spiritual Values," Gospel Advocate, LXXXV (December 2, 1943): 48, p. 1092.

13. Ibid., p. 1093.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, H. H. "Wires Badly Crossed," Gospel Advocate, LXXVIII (October 22, 1936): 43.
- Beehler, Rodger. Moral Life. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1978.
- Boles, H. Leo. "Spiritual Values," Gospel Advocate, LXXXV (December 2, 1943): 48.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jesus' Scale of Values," Gospel Advocate, LXXVIII (October 22, 1936): 43.
- Fulkerson, Gerald. "Ethical Dimensions of Interpersonal Communication Theory: Rhetorical Sensitivity' and Christian Values," An unpublished paper presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, July 22-24, 1987.
- Frankena, William K. "Value and Valuation," in Vol. VIII of The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Ed. by Paul Edwards. New York: The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, 1967.
- Gilmore, Ralph. Classnotes, August, 1987.
- Griffin, David Ray. "Values, Evil and Liberation Theology," Encounter, 40 (Winter, 1979): 1.
- Iverach, James. "Attention," in Vol. II of Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Ed. by James Hastings. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.
- Jeffcoat, W.D. "How Paul Valued Christianity," Gospel Advocate, CXXVII (August 15, 1985): 16.
- Pack, Frank and Meador, Jr. Prentice. Preaching to Modern Man. Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1969.
- P., J. T. "Values of Men," Gospel Advocate, XXI (January 2, 1879): 1.
- Raines, G.F. "The Value of Life," Gospel Advocate, CVI (April 23, 1964): 17.
- Pigg, Sandra Borden. "F-HC Balances Trends With Values," The Jackson Sun (May 17, 1987).
- Rath, L. Harrison, M. and Simon, S.B. Values and Teaching. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1960.
- Ross, Stephen David. Moral Decision. San Francisco, California: Freeman, Cooper & Co., 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. In Pursuit of Moral Value. San Francisco, California: Freeman, Cooper & Co., 1973.
- Ramsey, Johnny. "Excelling in Things That Count," Gospel Advocate, CXXVI (November 1, 1984): 21.

Rade, Martin. "Truth, Truthfulness," in Vol. XII of The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Ed. by Lamuel Macauley Jackson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1964.

Schaeffer, Francis A. and Koop, C. Everett. Whatever Happened to the Human Race. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1978.

Schiller, F.C.S. "Value" in Vol. XII of Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. Ed. by James Hastings. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922.

## The Walk Required To Receive The Prize

### Introduction

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me (Philippians 1:27-30).<sup>1</sup>

The goal of every Christian should be to so live as to receive the "prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:14). All that we endure is working for us "...a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). We are striving for "...an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

It is my responsibility in this lesson to emphasize the walk required to receive the prize. The following plan will be followed in explaining and emphasizing this theme: First, what is the meaning of walk; second, what is the walk required; third, our walk or manner of life is in heaven; fourth, true contentment is in Christ; and fifth the conclusion.

### What Is The Meaning of Walk?

The word "walk" sometimes refers to one's physical activities (always so used in the Synoptic Gospels, except Mark 7:5). Figuratively, "signifying the whole round of the activities of the individual life..."<sup>2</sup> It sometimes describes the walk of the unconverted. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind (Eph. 4:17). It sometimes describes the walk of the Christian. "As ye therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6).

"Only let your conversation ("manner of life," ASV) be as it becometh ("be worthy," ASV) the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). "Let your conversation be" is all one word in the Greek, politeuesthe. This verb occurs (in NT) only here and Acts 23:1, where it is correctly translated 'I have lived.'<sup>3</sup> Thayer says the word means "to behave as a citizen; to avail one's self or recognize the laws." "Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (NSSB, NIV). "Conversation" is "derived from the Latin word conversari, which means to conduct oneself or to behave oneself... Let your whole behavior be worthy of those who are pledged to Christ."<sup>4</sup>

#### What Is The Walk Required?

In this immediate context Paul names at least four things that "becometh" the gospel of Christ (or the walk required). The word "becometh" means "having the same weight of (weighing as much as) another thing." It means of "like value, worth as much as." It also means "befitting, congruous, corresponding."

The saints are to see to it that their manner of life weighs as much as the gospel they profess to believe, or their words will not have weight. That which gives weight to a Christian's words is the fact that his manner of life befits, is congruous to, corresponds with the gospel he preaches.<sup>5</sup>

First, the Christian is to be steadfast. "...that ye stand fast in one spirit...." The idea of a good foothold is conspicuous. It means to stand firm and hold one's ground in the face of all opposition. Emphasis on steadfastness rings throughout Paul's writings. "...that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand" (Eph. 6:13). "...so stand fast in the Lord" (Phil. 4:1).

Second, there must be unity and cooperation. "...with one mind striving together for



the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27). The verb synathleō is found only in this epistle (cf. 4:3). "It is a compound of syn ("with" or "together") and athleō ("to be an athlete, contend in games").<sup>6</sup> It means Christians are "to strive at the same time with another" (Thayer). They are to be "joined in conflict for the faith of the Gospel" (Berkeley). They are "contending as one man for the faith of the gospel" (NIV).

Third, Christians are to be courageous. "And in nothing terrified ("affrighted," ASV) by your adversaries..." (Phil. 1:28a).

The origin of the word translated affrighted suggests the behavior of a horse when it becomes scared, springs aside or dashes off wildly. It is an expression of panic and dismay; as if one should say, "It is vain to resist, the enemy is too strong."<sup>7</sup>

Courage is defined as: "The attitude or response of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult, or painful, instead of withdrawing from it: the quality of being fearless or brave; valor, pluck." Courage becometh the child of God. David faced Goliath without fear because God was with him (1 Sam. 17:45-47). Courage showed in the faces of Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego when they told Nebuchadnezzar "we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:16-18). It inflamed the apostles who told the Sanhedrin, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). We must meet our "opponents without so much as a tremor" (NEB). Such courage is an evident "token of perdition" to the adversaries, but a token of salvation to the Christian and "that of God."

Fourth, suffering for Christ is a part of the life of a Christian. "For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). Christians are not provided with some special immunity from pain and problems. The biblical

doctrine of pain and suffering "clashes with much superficial sentiments of our day...of the gospel of health and wealth."<sup>8</sup> "Clearly many professed Christians need to experience that 'shift of attitude from assuming that wherever the Lord is, there is no suffering, to believing that wherever there is suffering, then the Lord is."<sup>9</sup>

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matt. 5:10-12).

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. (Acts 5:41).

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb. 12:5-11).

Christians are to "...walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). In repentance we died to the love and practice of sin. In baptism we became dead to the guilt of sin. We have put off the old man and we have put on the new man, therefore we are to walk as a new man

(Eph. 4:17-32).

Christians are to "walk honestly" ("becomingly," ASV) (Rom. 13:13). "Becomingly" means "pleasing, decent, becoming, of high standing and influence." Christians are walking toward the heavenly city and must guard their influence.

Christians must walk "worthy."

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1).

"That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10).

That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2:12).

Christians are to "walk in the light" in order to please God and have the assurance needed to sustain one through life.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7-10).

John reveals two results that follow from "walking in the light" (literally "If we keep on walking in the light..."): (1) we have fellowship with each other; (2) the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin.

"Cleanseth" is from the verb *katharizei*, in the present tense, thus revealing that it is a constant process, conditioned on our walking in the light. As we thus walk the blood operates to keep us constantly cleansed from the defilement of sin and the condemnation which attends it."<sup>10</sup>

Christians must not walk "disorderly" as some were doing in Thessalonica.

Now we commend you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not

after the tradition which he received of us.... For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies (2 Thess. 3:6,11).

The Bible clearly teaches that those who "walk disorderly" (a manner of life) are to have fellowship withdrawn from them. God's word clearly outlines the steps to be followed in this effort (Cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:15-18; 2 Thess. 3:6-15).

### Our Manner of Life is in Heaven

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:20-21).

In Philippians 3:17-19 Paul warns against the "enemies of the cross of Christ." Clearly seeing the contrast between the "enemies of the cross" (the counterfeit) and the true circumcision will help us to realize what privileged citizens we are.

"(1) The true circumcision worships "by the Spirit of God" (3:3), but their (i.e., the Judaizers) "god is the belly" (3:19).

(2) The authentic Israel of God glories "in Christ Jesus" (3:3), but their "glory" is "in their shame" (3:19).

(3) The true, spiritual Israel has "no confidence in the flesh" (3:3), but they "mind earthly things" (3:19)."<sup>11</sup>

What a contrast: "For our citizenship is in heaven...." "We are a colony of heaven"

(Moffatt):

Here was a picture the Philippians could understand. Philippi was a Roman colony. These Roman colonies were amazing places. Here and there at strategic military centres the Romans set down their colonies. They were not like modern colonies out in the unexplored wilds; they commanded great road centres, and passes across the hilly routes by which the armies must march. In such places the Romans set down colonies, whose citizens were mostly soldiers who had served their time — twenty-one years — and who had been rewarded

with full citizenship. Now the great characteristics of these Roman colonies was that, wherever they were, they remained fragments of Rome. No matter where they were, Roman dress was worn; Roman magistrates governed them; the Latin tongue was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. Even in the ends of the earth these colonies remained unshakably and unalterably Roman. So Paul says to the Philippians, "Just as the Roman colonists never forget that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship." Wherever the Christian is, his conduct must prove he is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>12</sup>

As citizens of heaven our conduct is regulated by the rules of heaven and people sometimes think we are "mad" (Acts 26:24) or, at least, "strange" (1 Pet. 4:4).

Philippians 3:20-21 has been "helpfully outlined as follows: (1) The sure return; (2) the splendid redemption and (3) the sufficient resource."<sup>13</sup>

First, let's look at the sure return. At Jesus' ascension the angels said: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Jesus himself had announced "I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3). Peter emphatically asserts "...the day of the Lord will come..." (2 Pet. 3:10) in answer to scoffers who asked "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3:3-6).

The Aramaic term Maranatha (meaning "The Lord come") was used as a word of greeting or parting by early Christians (Cf. 1 Cor. 16:22). It was not spoken with a sense of dread or apprehension. It was uttered exultingly in a spirit of joyful expectation. Christ's sure return undergirds the Christian's confidences. It causes his heart to beat high with joy. It gives him an unwavering serenity in the midst of life's changes.<sup>14</sup>

Second, he will fashion anew our "vile body" ("the body of our humiliation") — what splendid redemption. The body is included in the total redemptive process (1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:50-57). Paul speaks of the "redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). This

body will be raised and changed so as to be suited for heaven itself.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:35-44).

A body locked by limitations, fettered by frailty, pursued by pain, and doomed to die will be raised to glory and immortality. In this way 'the splendid redemption' will come to consummation.<sup>15</sup>

Third, our text reveals "the sufficient resource." "...according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Energein is the word for "working" here. It is related to our English word "energy." It is the inspired word for the divine activity and power. Moule says "The 'working' is the positive putting forth of the already present 'ability.'"<sup>16</sup> Christ who created all things (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:13-16), and who is able to call all from the grave (Jn. 5:28-29), is also able to change our bodies. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Eph. 1:19).

#### True Contentment Is In Christ

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,

therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:10-13).

The Greek word autarkēs (found only here in the New Testament) "means sufficient in oneself (autos, self, arkeo,...), self-sufficient, adequate, needing no assistance."<sup>17</sup> Vincent writes:

A stoic word, expressing the favorite of the sect, that man should be sufficient to himself for all things; able, by the power of his own will, to resist the shock of circumstances. Paul is self-sufficient through the power of the new self: not he, but Christ in him.<sup>18</sup>

Paul was self-sufficient because "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). It literally means "infuses strength in me."<sup>19</sup> Paul says he was "God-sufficient." Paul does not say that he is content under all circumstances because of his strength or wisdom, but he can endure all things because of the strength Christ gives. Paul was in prison at Rome and all men had forsaken him, but he wrote Timothy:

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me..." (2 Tim. 4:17).

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song I will praise him. The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed" (Psa. 28:7-8).

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:16-17).

Paul said, "I have learned...to be content." Paul, like all of us, was in changing circumstance, but he was not at the mercy of circumstances. Circumstances were not conducive to singing and praying at midnight in jail (Acts 16:25), but he was not at the

mercy of circumstances. Paul told Timothy: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

In order to be content amidst changing circumstances one must learn three lessons. First, one must put his trust in him who changes not (Heb. 13:8). Those who put their trust in the things of the world will be dissatisfied when they change. Second, one must learn to value the things that are unseen and eternal above the things that are seen and temporal. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). The individual who places his values in temporal things will be highly upset when these things are removed.

But the individual who values most highly the things which are spiritual and unseen, the things that are eternal, will not lose the things he so highly values, and consequently can be content at all times because he has his abiding values at all times.<sup>20</sup>

Third, one must learn that life does not consist in abundance of the temporal things we possess. If that is life to an individual then he is not content until he has them and will become increasingly irritable if he loses them.

But the individual who learns that life consists of union with God in Christ can have this union and the joys that come from it at all times regardless of the circumstances and environment in which he finds himself.<sup>21</sup>

### Conclusion

The Christian looks forward to the day he will enjoy the immediate presence of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. This motivates the Christian to walk daily according to God's will,



to experience the joy of such a walk, and to look upward to that heavenly home. The Christian knows that his citizenship is in heaven which never changes. What contentment comes to the heart of one grounded in these great truths.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>All quotes are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1962), p. 195.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph Earle, Word Meanings In The New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994), p. 333.

<sup>4</sup>William Barclay, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, Philippians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 51.

<sup>6</sup>Earle, op. cit., p. 334.

<sup>7</sup>F. B. Meyer, The Epistle To The Philippians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1952), p. 51.

<sup>8</sup>Avon Malone, Press To The Prize (Nashville: 20th Century Christian, 1991), pp. 45, 47.

<sup>9</sup>Fred B. Craddock, Philippians, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), p. 25.

<sup>10</sup>Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on The New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954), p. 217.

<sup>11</sup>Malone, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>12</sup>Barclay, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

<sup>13</sup>Paul Rees, The Epistle to the Colossians, Philippians and Philemon, Proclaiming The New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964), p. 44.

<sup>14</sup>Malone, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>16</sup>H. G. Moule, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians (Cambridge: University Press, 1903), p. 107.

<sup>17</sup>Vine, op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>18</sup>Marvin Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, "The Epistles of Paul" (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965), Vol. III, pp. 459-600.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 460.

<sup>20</sup>Annual Lesson Commentary (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1955), p. 134.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

## THE WALK REQUIRED TO RECEIVE THE PRIZE

Phil. 1:27-30; 3:20-21; 4:13

James Meadows

### Introduction

1. Read or quote the text.
2. The goal of every Christian should be to receive the prize (Phil. 3:14; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Pet. 1:4).
3. In this study let's observe:
  - a. What is the meaning of walk?
  - b. What is the walk required?
  - c. Our walk or manner of life in heaven.
  - d. True contentment in Christ.
  - e. Conclusion.

### Discussion

#### I. What is the Meaning of Walk?

- A. Walk sometimes refers to one's physical activities.
- B. It sometimes describes the life of the unconverted (Eph. 4:17); 2:1-2
- C. It sometimes describes the life of a Christian (Col. 2:6).
- D. In our text, "only let your conversation" (manner of life, ASV) means to behave as a citizen or conduct yourself right, becoming.

#### II. What is the Walk Required? (four things in this text)

- A. It is to be a walk that "becometh" the gospel of Christ.
- B. Second, it is to be steadfast (Eph. 6:13; Phil. 4:1).
- C. Third, there must be unity and cooperation (Phil. 1:27; 4:3).
- D. Fourth, it is to be a courageous walk (Phil. 1:28).
  1. Courage is the ability to face and deal with whatever happens--fearless, brave, valor.
  2. Courage becometh the child of God.
    - a. David faced Goliath with courage (1 Sam. 17:45-47).
    - b. Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego faced Nebachadnezzar with courage (Dan. 3:16-18).
    - c. The apostle had courage before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:29).
- E. Fifth, suffering for Christ is a part of the walk (Phil. 1:29).
  1. Christians are not provided with some special immunity from suffering.
  2. There will be suffering (Matt. 5:10-12; Acts 5:41; 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 12:5-11).
- F. Sixth, Christians are to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:17-32).
- G. Seventh, Christians are to walk worthy (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12).
- H. Eighth, Christians are to walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:7-10).

I. Ninth, Christians must not walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6; cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13).

III. Our Manner of Life is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20-21).

- A. Just as the city of Philippi was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12) so we are a colony on earth.
- B. Our manner of life is determined by the rules of heaven and people sometimes think we are "mad" (Acts 26:24), at least "strange" (1 Pet. 4:4).
- C. These verses present the "sure return" (Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 2 Pet. 3:3-10).
- D. These verses present the "splendid redemption"--renewing of our body.
  - 1. The body is included in the redemption process (1 Thess. 5:23; 15:50-57).
  - 2. Paul speaks of the "redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).
  - 3. This body will be raised and changed (1 Cor. 15:35-44).
- E. These verses reveal "the sufficient resource." Christ is able to change our bodies.

IV. True Contentment is in Christ (Phil. 4:10-13).

- A. The word used here means self-sufficient, adequate.
- B. Paul was self-sufficient because Christ infused strength in him (Phil. 4:13; cf. Psa. 28:7-8; Eph. 3:16-17; 2 Tim. 4:17).
- C. Paul said, "I have learned...to be content."
  - 1. He was not at the mercy of circumstance (cf. Acts 16:25).
  - 2. He had learned to trust in him who changes not (Heb. 13:8).
  - 3. He had learned to value the unseen and eternal above the seen and temporal (2 Cor. 4:18).
  - 4. He had learned that real life does not consist in the abundance of temporal things one possesses.

Conclusion

- 1. The Christian looks forward to the day he will enjoy the immediate presence of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- 2. This motivates the Christian to walk in joy and look forward to the heavenly home.
- 3. True contentment comes to a heart grounded in these truths.

SITUATION ETHICS

---

A term paper  
presented to Dr. Ralph Gilmore

---

In  
partial fulfillment of requirements for  
Philosophy 245

---

By  
James Meadows

---

April 24, 1987



nature from "thou shalt not covet" or "thou shalt not worship idols." The fact the Sabbath was made shows it was not eternal like moral principles. Moral principles were not made—but they were eternal. A speed law is not an eternal moral principle but was made by man. It is not the same as lying.

- c. It becomes "right to exceed the speed limit and possibly wrong." Your "human wisdom" would have to decide which would be best under the circumstances—drive fast because a few minutes might be the difference between life and death or just drive the normal speed and hope everything will be alright. If it's a young person one might decide it would be best to break the speed limit because such a one has so much to offer, but if it is an old person one might decide—"well, he's going to die soon anyway, so why hurry."
2. "Under normal conditions" it would be right to tell the truth (Eph. 4:25) but, when "an exceptional moral principle is introduced," like in Rahab's case it would be right to lie.
    - a. First, lying is not parallel with breaking the speed law. One is an eternal moral principle and the other is not.
    - b. Second, the statement that she was catalogued among the "heroes of the faith" (Heb. 11:31) for doing so (i.e., for lying) is not true. Why not say:
      - (1) Noah was included because he got drunk (Gen. 9:21).
      - (2) Abraham was included because he lied (Gen. 20).
      - (3) Jacob was included because he cheated his brother (Gen. 25:29-34) and deceived his father (Gen. 27).
      - (4) David was included because he committed adultery and murdered Uriah (2 Sam. 11).
    - c. Third, such approval of what Rahab did is not an application of the moral principle but deliberately ignoring it or doing the very opposite of what it says. But, after all, it's "not the letter of the command, but the spirit behind it," according to "situation ethics."
    - d. "Rahab, the harlot, is inscribed in inspiration's hall of fame, not because she lied, but because she believed in the ultimate triumph of God's plan, and ran grave personal risks in supporting it."<sup>51</sup>
  3. "Under normal conditions" it would be right to "give to the one who asks you, and to borrow from you" (Matt. 5:42), but "when an exceptional moral principle is introduced," it would be right to ignore what Jesus said and do what seems best in a given situation.
    - a. Under normal circumstances Paul did what the Lord commanded, but "for a special situation" Paul ignored what the Lord said and told the Thessalonians not to give to the lazy man (2 Thess. 3:10-12). In other words, the Lord actually said to give to this type man, according to "situation ethics," but some situations will demand you not do it.
    - b. Such an interpretation makes the Lord contradict his own teaching that "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Lk. 10:7). The man that

## SITUATION ETHICS

### INTRODUCTION

The thoughtful observer will admit that we live in a rapidly changing world, yet man has not changed. He still has the same wants, desires and needs--food, clothing and shelter. He still commits the same sins--lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).

Principles are necessary constituents of all moral decisions. The most rudimentary types and degrees of consistency would be eliminated by the repudiation of principles. A man could regard the same action one day as evil and the next day as good, and be open to no logical criticism. Principles are central to consistency, criticism, and classification. We cannot escape the need of moral principles.

This paper is primarily concerned with one of the many ethical systems devised by man, namely situation ethics, popularly known as the "new morality." The basic purpose of the paper is to "show that situation ethics does not provide an ethical system which is in harmony with the will of God."<sup>1</sup> The methodology used in this study is fourfold: first, to emphasize that man needs an absolute moral standard, but there are certain philosophies that cannot be accepted; second, an attempt will be made to briefly set forth the basic features of situation ethics as believed by non-believers and believers (especially Joseph Fletcher and Frederick C. Wood, Jr.). This paper realizes that the situation may determine right and wrong in some cases (regarding matters that are neither right or wrong within themselves), but this is outside the scope of this study. (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:14ff; Romans 14); third, a critique will be made of some of the basic features of situation ethics;



fourth, a critique will be given of an article by Steve Parsons in which he implies that situation ethics and Christian ethics are the same.

### MAN NEEDS AN ABSOLUTE STANDARD OF MORALITY

No body has ever discovered a way of having real "morals" without a moral absolute. Deaver wrote:

Without absolutes, morals as morals cease to exist, and Humanistic man starting from himself has failed to find the absolute. But because the God of the Bible is there, real miracles exist. Within this framework, I can say one action is right and another wrong without talking non-sense.<sup>2</sup>

First, Atheism leaves man without a moral standard. It makes "morality impossible by defining 'moral' as simply that which men happens to believe is moral. A thing is good or evil only because people believe that it is good or evil."<sup>3</sup> Man, in other words, can change good to evil and evil to good by merely changing his mind.

Second, Communism has no real standard of morality. According to their doctrine of morality "there is no moral law to which all men ought to be in subjection. Instead each class is justified in acting in harmony with its own selfish class interest."<sup>4</sup>

Third, consequentialist philosophy gives no definite rules for conduct. Bertrand Russell, a noted philosopher, wrote: "I do not believe that we can decide what sort of conduct is right or wrong except by reference to its probable consequences. All moral rules must be tested by whether or not they tend to realize ends that we desire."<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, pragmatism offers no solution to moral decision-making. It means "the ethical theory, that the conduct, under any given circumstance, that is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole."<sup>6</sup>

Fifth, situation ethics have no definite principles for decision making. What is meant by situation ethics?

*these are all philosophes*

SITUATION ETHICS AS SET FORTH BY BELIEVERS AND NON-BELIEVERS

Joseph Fletcher, the leading spokesman (among those who profess a belief in God) for situation ethics, says there are three approaches that a person may take to moral decision making. The first approach is legalism, by which he means law is supreme and obeying the letter of the law is the most preeminent. Antinomianism, the second approach, means there is no moral law, but each person is free to do whatever his impulse dictates at the time.

Situationism

is the moderate approach between the two extremes of legalism and antinomianism. It contends that the only 'law' (i.e., a universal and permanent binding ethical law) is love (agape) and it is the law that must be applied in every situation."<sup>7</sup>

Fletcher thinks that life is so complicated that it is impossible to follow simple ethical rules or codes. He says that the Christian who thinks that he has all the basic rules in the New Testament, and can readily apply them, is not living in the 20th Century. He tries to restructure Christian ethics so that "it can be relevant to our complex civilization."<sup>8</sup>

Fletcher suggests that there is only one moral imperative or absolute and that is love. Love "confronted with a given moral situation knows how to 'home in' on the right act."<sup>9</sup> He believes that

the situationist enters into every decision-making situation fully armed with the ethical maxims of his community and its heritage, and he treats them with respect as illuminators of his problems. Just the same he is prepared in any situation to compromise them or set them aside in the situation if love seems better served by doing so.<sup>10</sup>

Fletcher believes that everything is relative to the situation.<sup>11</sup> He sums it all up when he says: "For the situationist there are no rules--none at all."<sup>12</sup>

Frederick Wood, Jr. (another professed believer in God) contends that the new morality (situation ethics) is

neither a new moral code nor a moral liberal revision of an old code... but that moral attitude which searches out the rationale or spirit of any code, and then calls for loyalty to this spirit above loyalty to the letter of particular prescriptions.<sup>13</sup>

*Sounds like what many of our preachers are saying today.*

He believes that strict adherence to the letter of the law, in some situations "may be immoral and dehumanizing because it makes principles more important than persons."<sup>14</sup> The final moral responsibility of any individual, according to the new morality, is to "adjust his behavior to the spirit or rationale behind the commandments as he sees it in his own unique context."<sup>15</sup> An individual is responsible for his own life only if he is free to make decisions and determine "right and wrong according to his own ultimate commitments," and "in accordance with what he sees as his own highest value."<sup>16</sup>

Bishop John Robinson defends situation ethics when he says: "Love alone...has a built-in moral compass, enabling it to 'home' intuitively upon the deepest need of the other, can allow itself to be directed completely by the situation."<sup>17</sup> Carl Barth was a "situation ethicist" in that he justified his actions on the basis that he was not guided by eternal principles, but by concrete situations.<sup>18</sup> Dietrick Bonhoeffer speaks of there being "ethical situations" more than "ethical principles," as the deciding factor of morality.<sup>19</sup>

Humanist Manifestos I and II, written in 1933 and 1973 respectively, and signed by such notables as John Dewey, Dr. Antony Flew, Sir Julian Huxley, and others, "contains what many feel is the clearest expression of the situation ethics philosophy currently advocated by non-believers in God."<sup>20</sup> Consider the following assertion: "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stem from human need and interest."<sup>21</sup>

Situation ethics is a natural product of "the basic philosophies of existentialism and pragmatism."<sup>22</sup> Jean Paul Sarte, the best known exponent of Existentialism, <sup>(atheistic, at least)</sup> said: "All guidelines are irrelevant. Authentic decisions arise spontaneously from man's inner sense of what the moment demands."<sup>23</sup>

A LOGICAL AND BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF SITUATIONISM

First, the situation ethics of the non-believers contains out-and-out contradictions. The humanist states with clarity that "ethics is autonomous and situational."<sup>24</sup> Wayne Jackson's comments on this point are clearly and concisely stated:

A more contradictory and absurd position would be difficult to conceive! Let us briefly analyze the statement. If one argues that ethics is situational, he is suggesting that an act cannot be judged by an absolute standard and that its righteousness and wrongness is dependent upon the situation. For example, it would be wrong to lie if that falsehood was hurtful to others; however, if the lie would be helpful, it is said, then it would be right. Further, as previously indicated, morality is alleged to be autonomous. That word means "self law." It means that every man is his own law! Well, if that is the case, how could there ever be a situation in which a person could do wrong? Human ethical autonomy and situational morality are mutually exclusive propositions!<sup>25</sup>

Second, if "every man is a law to himself, we have anarchy, not ethics."<sup>26</sup> If man is just a piece of matter, and if one piece of matter is "worth no more than any other piece of matter as the evolutionist asserts, then why should a person do any more than what he wants to do?"<sup>27</sup>

Third, since evolutionist<sup>e</sup>/humanist<sup>ic</sup> ethics are based on non-absolutes and is subject to evolution itself, then it "must continually change in the evolutionary scheme of things so that what is 'right' one moment may well turn out to be 'wrong' the very next."<sup>28</sup>

Fourth, Fletcher's "situation ethics" are too individualistic. In each situation, if each person must make up his own mind, then any concept of universal principle, eternal moral truth, or abiding ethical norms must fail. Ramm wrote that,

if ethical situations are as unique as Fletcher makes them out to be then nobody knows what to do in a given situation, not even Fletcher. Intelligent decision making is based on experience, precedent, and analogy. But if the ethical situation is unique all these criteria fail and love does not know how to home in on the right decision.<sup>29</sup>

Fifth, Fletcher divorces love from specifics or rules. A sinner can exercise love, but a sinner can be terribly confused about what love really is

unless something is added so that one knows how love concretely expresses itself. Ramm wrote:

that when love and love alone is the moral guide it becomes so general, so inflated, or so flexible that it either becomes useless or wretchedly difficult to apply. When specifics are given as Paul and Jesus gave them, we have some idea of which direction love takes.<sup>30</sup>

David Lipe pursues the same line of thinking when he remarks:

For Fletcher, it is either law or love; but, for the Christian it is both law and love. Fletcher even misunderstands the nature of love. Love is preceded by faith and followed by obedience. In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Fletcher says, "If ye love me, set aside my commandments." Thus, according to the Bible, love is defined by acting in harmony with the will of God.<sup>31</sup>

Sixth, Fletcher's type of situation ethics completely reduces to antinomissiveness (there is no moral law, but each person is free to do whatever his impulse dictates at the moment). Situationists often deny this by saying that they do believe in one single absolute--love. Dr. Geisler has correctly observed that "a single but contentless absolute is the same as no absolute at all. Commanding "love" in every situation without being able to define what "love" means is like commanding one to do X in every situation, when X is unknown."<sup>32</sup> Fletcher goes to great lengths to avoid the appearance of being "against law," but ends up in the "midst of antinomianism anyway."<sup>33</sup> It was Fletcher who said "for the situationist there are no rules--none at all."<sup>34</sup> Wayne Jackson observed:

The theory is fraught with inseparable logical difficulties. First, it affirms, 'There are absolutely no absolutes.' Are you sure? 'Absolutely!' It claims there are no rules save the rule of love, yet by their own rules the situationist would define love.<sup>35</sup>

Seventh, Fletcher cites unusual cases and then gives his interpretation of them, which he presumes to be correct, based on situation ethics as the correct solution. He gives the case of Mrs. Bergmeier who was imprisoned during World War II, but would be released and returned to her family if she was pregnant. She enticed a friendly guard to impregnate her. Fletcher calls her act of "sacrificial adultery" a good and right thing. Was it really a good example of Christian love and ethics? William Banowsky points

*good.  
I was  
waiting  
for this.*

(B)

out that despite the fact that Mrs. Bergmeier's purpose may have been noble in her own eyes, she

cunningly exploited a fellow human being to serve her purposes. Would situation ethics really believe that she treated the guard as a person-- or a thing? Was the guard a married man? Did he have a family? In her concern for her own family, Mrs. Bergmeier lost sight of love's interest for his family.<sup>36</sup>

*ethics  
respect  
for persons*

A CRITIQUE OF "SITUATION ETHICS AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS: A COMPARISON"

In the Firm Foundation, June 18, 1974, Steve Parsons wrote an article entitled "Situation Ethics and Christian Ethics: A Comparison." The article clearly shows that he has accepted the principle of "the new morality" and "situation ethics." The next few paragraphs will contain statement from the article and a critique of them.

First, Parsons states that:

the fact is colored and changed by the personality of the receiver. In this sense, then, truth, as man has it, is always relative. Relative to man's ability to grasp the infinite...relative to man's fallibility and prejudices...relative to limited knowledge which plagues every man. If it is not possible for me to grasp infinite truth, it is equally impossible for me to define the limits of my comprehension. In other words, I cannot know what of the truth I have is absolute and what is being altered and colored by my own subjectivity. Hence, the knowledge of truth which I possess is always relative.<sup>37 45</sup>

*I don't think  
there is preaching  
anymore. He had  
personal family  
problems when he  
wrote this.  
Excuse  
Harland Elaine NO wrote.  
Bible  
Spence*

The devastating implications of this statement are unbelievable. (If one cannot know what of truth one has is absolute, and what is being altered by one's own subjectivity, then it follows that one cannot know that there is a body of absolute (objective) truth. And if one cannot know that there is a definite body of absolute (objective) truth, then one cannot know that the Bible is the word of God. And if one cannot know that the Bible is the word of God, then one cannot know that the Bible has any binding force on anyone. And if one cannot know that the Bible teaching has any binding force in the lives of men and women living today, then no one can know that Christianity is any more acceptable to God than Buddhism or even Atheism.)

Second, Parsons again writes: ~~that~~

the highest moral principle is indeed agape love. It is at once the intent of all law and the summation or fulfillment of all revealed commands...Love is to be the guiding and motivating force behind all Christian thought, speech and behavior...It is precisely because the Christian is led and motivated by agape love of God and his fellowman that he turns to the moral commands and principles set out in the scriptures<sup>38 46</sup>

These statements sound good but, in their whole context, they are emphasizing the "spirit" of Christianity as love, without the "letters of the law." It is true that we are nothing without love (1 Corinthians 13), but "love without law is a shifting sentiment without any sense of direction."<sup>39 47</sup> How can one distinguish between love and lust if there is no so-called "letter of the law?" How is "love to avoid evil and do good if there is no standard in the light of which to measure conduct?"<sup>40 48</sup> Even though the word of God clearly states "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15, cf. Eph. 4:28), the new moralist would contend it is alright to steal if someone you love was starving and you could meet the need in no other way. It would be the loving thing to do. But as Ruble Shelly concisely states:

What of the person from whom the money or material was stolen? Does he not qualify as a human being who deserves to be loved? And what if someone who did love that person saw the thief in his act and pulled a gun on him? Would he because of the circumstances and on the basis of love have the right to shoot the thief? What if the thief has a gun? Would he, on the basis of the original justification for stealing, have the right to shoot first? The new morality is unrealistic! When human beings are left to decide the right or wrong of an action in moments of panic, excitement or passion, decisions will be made which are altogether selfish and unloving.<sup>41</sup>

Third, Parsons believes that this searching for the "spirit" behind the "letter" "is not a legalistic approach to moral decision making but, on the contrary, it is the way of freedom."<sup>42 49</sup> Parsons' statement sounds like a quote of Frederick C. Wood, Jr.'s definition of the new morality!

It is that moral code which searches out the rationale or spirit of any code, and then calls for loyalty to this spirit above loyalty to the letter...the new morality makes it his moral responsibility to adjust his behavior to the spirit or rationale behind the commandments as he sees it in his own unique context.<sup>43 50</sup>

In other words, if one makes a decision according to law, in a given situation,

then one is not free (it would mean the decision is being made by some external force in advance of the situation and will not really be your decision), but if one decides what is the "spirit" behind the command and applies it to the situation, then freedom comes. The "letter" of the law may say in a given situation, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). But, if one went behind the "letter," in a given situation, and determined that committing adultery would not be a "misuse of the body and the exploiting of sexuality," but a conducting of one's "sex life lovingly," then it would be all right. Who can believe it?

*I think you are right about this.*

Fourth, Parson<sup>s</sup> writes that "situations do arise in which more than one moral alternative must be considered. In each situation the exceptional moral principle may negate what would normally be "right" exchanging it for a situationally higher principle."<sup>44-51</sup> He then tries to prove this point by saying that under "normal conditions" one obeys the speed law, but when a life is at stake it is right to exceed the law. He fails to recognize that the speed law was made by man and is not an eternal moral principle. It is like the Sabbath law which was made (it was not an eternal moral principle like the other nine commandments), which is the only reason priests could profane it.

*see p. 12*

He further argues that "under normal conditions" it would be right to tell the truth (Ephesians 4:25), but when "an exceptional moral principle is introduced, "like in Rahab's case, it would be right to lie."<sup>45</sup> First, lying is not parallel to breaking the speed law. One is an eternal moral principle and the other is not. Second, the statement that she was "catalogued among the heroes of faith" (Hebrews 11:31) "for doing so" (i.e. for lying) is not true. Why not say that Noah was catalogued because he got drunk (Genesis 9:21), Abraham because he lied (Genesis 20), and David because he committed adultery (2 Samuel 11)? Third, such approval of what Rahab did is not an application of the moral principle, but deliberately ignoring it or doing the opposite of what it says. But, after all, it is "not the letter of the command, but the spirit



behind it," according to "situation ethics." "Rahab the harlot is inscribed in inspiration's hall of fame, not because she lied, but because she believed in the ultimate triumph of God's plan and ran personal risks in supporting it.<sup>46-53</sup>

In further support of "alternative situation", Parsons writes that admittedly, the need to choose between ethical alternatives raises the possibility of moral license. The individual must determine in the light of God's word and with his help whether he is exercising agape love or selfish ambition.<sup>47-54</sup>

First, the "need to choose between ethical alternatives" not only raises the possibility of "moral license," it gives "moral license." Second, how can one determine, "in the light of God's word," whether one is "exercising agape love or selfish ambition" when one is not guided by the letter of the law, but by "the spirit of the law" which one decides for himself in his own unique situation.

#### CONCLUSION

Yes, man needs an absolute moral standard, but situation ethics does not meet that need. It leaves man without any guidance at all, if the meaning of love is dependent on the circumstances, then the significance of love is really relative to the situation and therefore not absolute. One of the great objections to

situation ethics is that it calls for more critical intelligence, more factual information, and more self-stating commitment to righteousness than most people can bring to bear. Situationism ignores the reality of human or egocentricity, and fails to appreciate the finitude of human reason. Situation ethics presumes more ability to know the facts and weigh them than most people can muster.<sup>48</sup>

People without some principles for deciding right and wrong always become morally corrupt. Without God there is no motivating factor for choosing a good life over a bad. Wayne Jackson wrote:

What is the motivating factor for moral conduct in those who know not God? There is no rational motive: if there is no God, why should men not live lives that are devoted strictly to their own selfish interests? In his parable of the unjust judge the Lord noted the connection between those who have no fear of God, and so, have no regard for man (Luke 18:2,4). Moreover, after describing the wickedness of the ancient world,

Paul focuses upon the real problem when he writes: 'There is no fear of God before their eyes' (Romans 3:18). If there is no God, and so no ultimate reckoning to the Judge for human conduct, then there is no final value for choosing a good life over a bad one.<sup>49</sup>

I do appreciate your explicit thesis statement and statement of methodology. I wish everyone would do this. You have given one good way of answering the "Sabbath dilemma" (on p.10). Geisler uses his "hierarchy of laws" approach. Others say that Matthew was only using an "ad hominem" approach and that God never really approved of the original "shewbread" incident, just that the Jews had accepted it. Research, writing, thought progression and critique are all very fine.

99

## ENDNOTES

1. David Lipe, "Situation Ethics," The Spiritual Sword, 9 (July, 1978):4, p. 4.
2. Roy Deaver, "Liberalism and Two Philosophies," Gospel Advocate CXIV (February 10, 1972):6, p. 91.
3. James D. Bales, Man on all Fours (Searcy, Arkansas: Harding College, 1973), p. 60.
4. Ibid., p. 59.
5. Bertrand Russell, What I Believe, p. 37.
6. Baruch A. Brady, Moral Rules and Particular Circumstances (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 55.
7. Joseph Fletcher, Situation Ethics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 26.
8. Ibid., p. 26.
9. Ibid., p. 26.
10. Ibid., p. 26.
11. Ibid., p. 43,44.
12. Ibid., p. 55.
13. Frederick C. Wood, Jr., Sex and the New Morality (New York: Association Press, 1968), p. 12, 13.
14. Ibid., p. 68.
15. Ibid., p. 68.
16. Ibid., p. 78,89,91.
17. John A. T. Robinson, Honest To God, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 115.
18. Bernard L. Ramm, The Right, The Good, and The Happy (Waco, Texas: World Books, 1971), p. 62.
19. Dietrick Bonhoeffer, Ethics, Translated by Neville Horton Smith (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), p. 267.
20. Bert Thompson, "The Effect of Situation Ethics on Moral Values," Fort Worth Lectures: Morals in an Immoral Age, ed. by Eddie Whitten (Mesquite, Texas: Precision Graphics, 1985), p. 197.
21. Humanist Manifesto I and II (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Press, 1973), p. 17.
22. Deaver, op. cit., p. 91.

23. Jean Paul Sarte, Existentialism and Human Emotions (New York: Panthenon Books, 1974), pp. 22, 23.

24. Humanist Manifesto, op. cit., p. 17.

25. Wayne Jackson, "False Doctrines About Human Conduct," Doctrines and Commandments of Men: A Handbook on Religious Errors (Knoxville, Tennessee: East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 1984), p. 329.

26. Edward John Carnell, An Introduction to Christian Apologetics (Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 1948), p. 325.

27. Thompson, op. cit., p. 203.

28. Ibid., p. 204.

29. Ramm, op. cit., p. 62.

30. Ibid., p. 63.

31. Lipe, op. cit., p. 4.

32. Norman Geisler, Options In Contemporary Christian Ethics (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 21.

33. Thompson, op. cit., p. 205.

34. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 55.

35. Jackson, op. cit., p. 330.

36. William Banowsky, "The New Morality: A Christian Perspective," Campus Evangelism (July, 1968), p. 19.

37. Steve Parsons, "Situation Ethics and Christian Ethics: A Comparison," Firm Foundation (June 18, 1974), p. 6 (390)

38. Ibid., p. 6.

39. James D. Bales, Modernism: Trojan Horse in the Church (Searcy, Arkansas: Harding College, 1971), p. 114.

40. Ibid., p. 115.

41. Rubel Shelly, Young People Make Moral Decisions (Montgomery, Alabama: Youth In Action, Inc., 1972), p. 78.

42. Parsons, op. cit., p. 6.

43. Wood, op. cit., p. 12, 13.

44. Parsons, op. cit., p. 13.

45. Ibid., p. 13.

46. Guy N. Woods, Questions and Answers: Open Forum, Freed-Hardeman College Lectures (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Publishing Co., 1976), p. 297.

47. Parsons, op. cit., p. 6.

48. Batsell Barrett Baxter, I Believe Because. . . (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 248.

49. Wayne Jackson, "Standard of Morality," Words of Truth (August 17, 1984), p. 3.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aebi, Charles J. "The Church Today: Current Issues, Problems, & Challenges," Freed-Hardeman Lectures. Edited by William Woodson. Nashville, Tenn: Gospel Advocate Co., 1975.
- Anderson, Tom. Southern Farm Publications (Oct., 1971).
- Bales, James D. Man on all Fours. Searcy, Arkansas: Harding College, 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Modernism: Trojan Horse in the Church. Searcy, Arkansas: Harding College, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Heresay of Legalism," The Gospel Advocate (November, 1953).
- Baowsky, William. "The New Morality: A Christian Perspective," Campus Evangelism (July, 1968).
- Baxter, Batsell Barrett. I Believe Because. . .. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.
- Brady, Baruch A. Moral Rules and Particular Circumstances. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.
- Brown, I. N. Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. New York: Stein & Co., 1854.
- Brunner, Emil. The Divine Imperative. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947.
- Carnell, Edward John. An Introduction to Christian Apologetics. Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 1948.
- Clarke, Henry. "Institutionism and Situationism," Soundings, LVIII (Winter, 1975).
- Cox, Harvey. The Situation Ethics Debate. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968.
- Danto, Arthur C. Jean-Paul Sarte. New York: The Viking Press, 1975.
- Deaver, Roy. "Liberalism and Two Philosophies," Gospel Advocate, CXIV (February 10, 1972):6.
- Doimia, J. Christian Morals and Ethics. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Premier Publishing, 1983.
- Edwards, Paul. "Ethics and Critique of Religions as Taught by Bertrand Arthur William Russell," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Edited by Paul Edwards, Vol. 7. New York: The MacMillian Company & The Free Press, 1967.
- Elkins, Garland. "Situation Ethics," The Gatewell Reminder, 15 (October 3, 1974):40.

- Erickson, Millard J. Relativism in Contemporary Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974.
- Fletcher, Joseph. Situation Ethics. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976.
- Freed-Hardeman Lectures--The Bible Versus Liberalism. Edited by William Woodson. Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Co., 1972.
- Ganus, Clifton. "The New Morality," Abilene Christian College Lectures. Abilene, Texas: Abilene Press, 1966.
- Geisler, Norman. Options in Contemporary Christian Ethics. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981.
- Grant, Betty. "Mind-Manipulation in Public School," Voice of Freedom, XXVI (January, 1978):1.
- Hardeman, Pat. "More Fruits of Modernism," The Preceptor (October, 1953).
- Humanist Manifesto I & II. Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Press, 1973.
- Jackson, Wayne. "False Doctrines About Human Conduct," Doctrines and Commandments of Men: A Handbook on Religious Error. Knoxville, Tennessee: East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions, 1984.
- Kearley, F. Furman. "Matthew 23:23," Firm Foundation, 95 (May, 1978).
- Lipe, David. "Situation Ethics," The Spiritual Sword, 9 (July, 1978):4.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. Moral Man and Immoral Society. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.
- Parsons, Steve. "Situation Ethics and Christian Ethics: A Comparison," Firm Foundation (June 18, 1974).
- Ramm, Bernard L. The Right the Good and the Happy. Waco, Texas: World Books, 1971.
- Robinson, John A. T. Honest to God. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963.
- Ross, Stephen David. In Pursuit of Moral Value. San Francisco: Freeman, Cooper & Co., 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Moral Decision--An Introduction to Ethics. San Francisco: Freeman, Cooper & Co., 1972.
- Russell, Bertrand. What I Believe.
- Sarte, Jean Paul. Existentialism and Human Emotion. New York: Panthenon Books, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Life/Situations. New York: Panthenon Books. Translated by Paul Auster and Lydia Davis, 1977.

- Schaeffer, Francis A. The God Who is There. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-  
Varsity Press, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Death in the City. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-  
Varsity Press, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Escape From Reason. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press,  
1968.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. and Everett C. Koop. Whatever Happened to the Human  
Race? Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979.
- Shelly, Rubel. Liberalism's Threat to the Faith. Memphis, Tennessee: Simple  
Studies Publication Co., 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Young People Make Moral Decisions. Montgomery, Alabama: Youth  
In Action, Inc., 1972.
- Storen, Morris B. Humanist Ethics. Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books,  
1980.
- Taylor, Robert R. Jr. "God's Word--The Christians Standard for Morality,"  
Living Soberly, Righteously, and Godly. Thomas F. Eaves, editor.  
Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1977.
- Thompson, Bert. "The Effect of Situation Ethics on Moral Values," Fort Worth  
Lectures: Morals in an Immoral Age, ed. by Eddie Whitten. Mesquite,  
Texas: Precision Graphics, 1985.
- Wood, Frederick C. Jr. Sex and the New Morality. New York: Association  
Press, 1968.
- Woods, Guy N. Questions and Answers: Open Forum, Freed-Hardeman College  
Lectures. Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Publishing Co., 1976.



# THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

James Meadows

## INTRODUCTION

It was about the sixth hour of the day and a bloodthirsty mob milled about the cross. They were particularly crying out against the lonely figure on the center cross. On either side of the Christ hanged two malefactors, receiving the just recompense of their deeds. The accounts of Matthew and Mark show that both railed on Christ at first (Matt. 27:44; Mark 15:32). Luke's account reveals that one of the thieves later changed.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deed: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:39-43).

All Bible subjects need our careful consideration, but a study of the thief on the cross is necessitated particularly by the false doctrines based on it. The argument usually goes like this: If the thief was saved without obeying the gospel, especially without being baptized, why cannot men be saved that way today? And if the thief was saved the last moment of his life by simply calling on the Lord, men can be saved the same way today. It matters not how wicked they may have been or how much of their lifetime they have wasted in service of Satan, if they have time and presence of mind just before they died to say, Lord, Lord, save me, they will be saved.

The methodology used in this study will be to observe (1) some facts about the thief (2) some further enlightening truths (3) some valuable lessons learned, and (4) conclusion.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE THIEF

First, he was a thief (Matt. 27:38). Luke refers to him as a "malefactor" (Luke 23:33). He was a "common criminal."

Second, he admitted that he was receiving the due reward of his deeds (Luke 23:41). He knew that justice was being carried out. He had taken from men and now he must pay the penalty.

Third, he railed on Christ at first (Matt. 27:44). He joined the soldiers, rulers and common people in heaping a steady stream of mockery and cruelty on the Lord.

Fourth, he repented and he rebuked the other thief. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation (Luke 23:40)?" He acknowledged God as supreme and the one with the right to punish.

Fifth, he stated that ". . . this man hath done nothing amiss (Luke 23:41)." How did he know that Jesus had done nothing amiss? McGarvey wrote:

He could not have learned it as Pilate did, by the course of his trial, for this the robber had not heard; neither had he heard a full account of it. He could not have learned it from the demeanor of Jesus, since the three had been led out together; for this, remarkable as it was, could not prove that his past life was blameless. He could not have learned it easily after his arrest and imprisonment; for it is not likely that any friend of Jesus had interviewed him. The only probable explanation is that he had learned it before his imprisonment.<sup>1</sup>

Sixth, the thief asked Jesus to ". . . remember me when thou comest in- to thy kingdom (Luke 23:42)." What was the thief asking? He was evidently using "remember" in the sense a wife does when her husband goes on a journey. "Hus- band, remember me; don't forget me." A condemned criminal might appeal to the governor by saying: When you exercise your pardoning power, remember me. The thief wanted to be remembered in mercy. He wanted "to be remembered as one who though~~h~~ he had spoken unkind words in anger, had soon repented of them, and rebuked the continuous reviling of his companion."<sup>2</sup> It was a despairing appeal, yet a slightly hopeful one.

What did the thief mean by the kingdom? Did he have an understanding that the apostles didn't have even after the Lord's resurrection (Acts 1:5-8)? Leslie G. Thomas wrote: "is it reasonable to suppose that the dying robber had a better understanding of the nature of Christ's kingdom than the apostles themselves had?"<sup>3</sup> Guy N. Woods said: "This could mean nothing more than, Lord, when you have saved yourself and have come down from the cross and have taken your seat on your throne and have begun your reign over the Jews, save me, Lord-take me down from the cross."<sup>4</sup> McGarvey argued:

The thief knew that the chief burden of the great Teacher's preaching was the kingdom of heaven which he was to set up. Being free from the prepossessions which biased the minds of Pharisees and Scribes as to the nature of the kingdom, he believed that as such a man as Jesus could not lie or be deceived; the kingdom in some shape or form, and at some time, and in some place, would certainly be established.<sup>5</sup>

It is the judgment of this writer that the thief's words (even though he did not understand the spiritual nature of the kingdom) show a subline faith in the pledged word of Jesus that he would establish a kingdom, a faith that neither life nor death could unsettle.

What a rebuke this ~~was~~ to the faith many thousands who now stagger at little obstacles, falter in the presence of obscure texts of Scripture, turn pale at the "opposition of science falsely so called" and deny the Lord rather than suffer with him.<sup>6</sup>

Seventh, the thief received the Lord's words: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43)." What does paradise mean? Where is paradise? In answering these questions, as well as others, one must understand the meaning of some terms. Sheol (translated grave in the King James Version) appears in the following places: Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,31; I Sam. 2:6; I Kings 2:6,9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psalms 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14; 88:3; 89:48; Prov. 1:12; 30:16; Eccle. 9:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isa. 14:11; 38:10,18; Ezek. 31:14; Hosea 13:14. The American Standard always translates it sheol. The Septuagint translators met with the word sheol sixty five times. They never translated it Gehenna, the lake of fire. They never translated it the grave

(geber, Hebrew-mnema, Greek). Sixty one times they translated it hades. The word sheol is singular. There is only one sheol (one hades), but there may be many graves.

~~sheol~~<sup>hades</sup> in the Old testament and ~~sheol~~<sup>Paradis</sup> in the New Testament refer to the same place. The Psalmist said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol (Psalms 16:10)." Peter quotes the Psalmist on the day of Pentecost and says, "Because thou will not leave my soul in hades (Acts 2:27)." "Here is positive proof that the word 'Sheol' in the Hebrew has the same meaning as the Greek word 'Hades' in the New Testament."<sup>7</sup> The word hades appears in the following verses in the New Testament: Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14; I Cor. 15:55.

What does hades mean? Where is it? It is the "unseen world into which men pass at death" (James Hastings); "the unseen realm of the dead" (Guy N. Woods); "the place of disembodied spirits" (J.W. McGarvey); "the unseen or the invisible world" (Thayer); "the unseen" (Liddell and Scott); "the invisible abode or mansion of the dead" (T.S. Green); "the place of departed spirits" (W.J. Hickie); "the abode of the dead" (A.T. Robinson); "the world of departed spirits" (Sophodes).

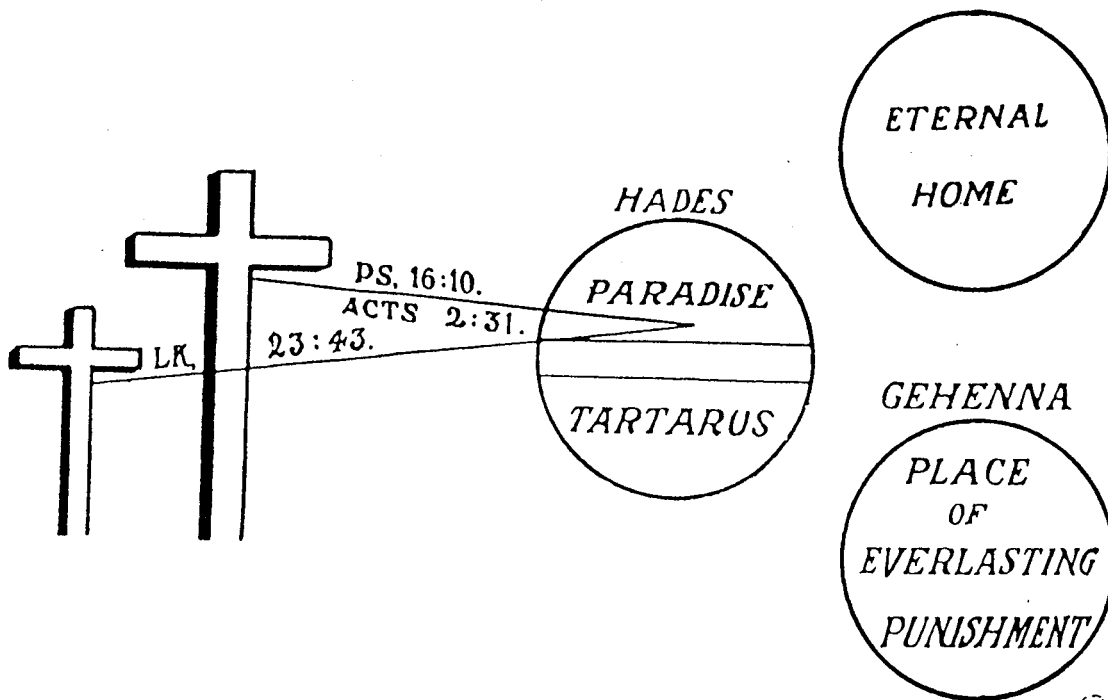
Paradise is a transliteration of the Greek word paradeisos. The word paradise appears in Luke 23:43, II Corinthians 12:3,4, and Revelation 2:7. The word paradise originally meant a Persian garden, but came figuratively to denote a place of great blessing. Such is its significance in Jesus' statement to the thief.

Guy N. Woods makes the following strong argument regarding the Lord's statement to the thief:

Jesus, on the day of his death, journeyed with the penitent thief to Paradise. But notwithstanding the fact that he went to Paradise that day he did not ascend to the Father. (John 20:17: "I am not yet ascended to my Father.") His Father was in Heaven. Jesus, therefore, did not go to heaven during the interval of his death. Paradise, as it contemplates the state of the blessed dead, is thus not heaven.

(That it will eventually be, we strongly believe; that Paradise in this does not designate heaven, we stoutly affirm). During the period of his death, the Lord was in Hades (Acts 2:27,31). But he was in Paradise during this time. Therefore Paradise is in Hades. But though in Paradise, in Hades, he was not in Heaven. Therefore, Paradise, in Hades, is not heaven.

Note the following chart:



#### SOME FURTHER ENLIGHTENING TRUTHS

First, it is grievous error to say that all things not required of the thief on the cross are things not required of us. Syllogistically the argument takes the following form:

Major Premise: All things not required of the thief on the cross are things not required of us.

Minor Premise: Baptism was not required of the thief on the cross.

Conclusion: Baptism is not required of us.<sup>9</sup>

The conclusion follows from the premises stated. It is also true that the minor premise is evident to most people. Careful examination shows the major premise to be false. If the major premise were true then we would not be required to believe the gospel preached by the apostles (I Cor. 15:1-4). It would read like this:

Major Premise: All things not required of the thief on the cross are things not required of us.

Minor Premise: Belief of the gospel as preached by the apostles was not required of the thief on the cross.

Conclusion: Belief of the gospel as preached by the apostles is not required of us.<sup>10</sup>

There are obviously some things required of us that were not required of the thief on the cross.

Second, it is eternally fatal to fail to recognize under which testament the thief lived and died. The Old Testament, which did not require baptism, was still in effect while the thief lived. Christ nailed the old law to the cross. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14)."

Third, one must recognize that a man's will cannot be in effect before he dies. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth (Heb. 9:16,17)."

What does making a will require? It requires a testator, the man who makes it. There must be a gift or something to bestow. It requires conditions upon which the will is to be administered. There must be the death of the one who made the will. It requires probaton. This takes place after the death

of the maker and means the approval of or by the court. It requires (after probation it passes to administrators). It requires heirs or ficiaries.

The Hebrew writer presents the gospel as a will or testament is the testator. Salvation is the gift (Eph. 2:8,9). The commands gospel are the conditions. The death of Christ was necessary to put effect. The will was probated when Christ ascended to heaven to app the throne of God for us. In the courts of heaven the will was app sealed with heaven's authority. The twelve apostles were the execut ceiving power from on high to qualify them for their work (Acts. 1:8 who obey the conditions of the new will become heirs of salvation an estate.

The thief lived and died before the New Testament, requiring came into effect. The Hebrew writer has most forcibly asserted that law of salvation could not have been in force during the life of the tor. The New Testament requires the alien sinner to hear the word 10:17; John 6:44,45), believe (John 8:24; Acts 18:8; Heb. 11: 6), r 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30,31), confess Christ (Acts 8:36,37; Rom. 10 and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38 I Peter 3:20,21). Christ is not going to change the terms of his w became effective after his death. No man on earth has the right to salvation for more or less than the conditions stipulated in the Lo

Fourth, Christ could use his power as he chose during his l

Before the Savior died he dispensed his blessing solely in harm with his sovereign will without regard to any uniform law of pa Being superior to the prevailing law of the mosaic dispensation could and did suspend it at will. As the great Testator, he ex his rightful perogative of directing his affairs according to h choosing.

Christ blessed in many ways during his personal ministry. and forgave the sins of a paralytic (Matt. 9:1-8). He brought salv

of the maker and means the approval of or by the court. It requires executors (after probate it passes to administrators). It requires heirs or the beneficiaries.

The Hebrew writer presents the gospel as a will or testament. Christ is the testator. Salvation is the gift (Eph. 2:8,9). The commands of the gospel are the conditions. The death of Christ was necessary to put it into effect. The will was probated when Christ ascended to heaven to appear before the throne of God for us. In the courts of heaven the will was approved and sealed with heaven's authority. The twelve apostles were the executors, receiving power from on high to qualify them for their work (Acts. 1:8). All who obey the conditions of the new will become heirs of salvation and heaven's estate.

The thief lived and died before the New Testament, requiring baptism, came into effect. The Hebrew writer has most forcibly asserted that the uniform law of salvation could not have been in force during the life of the great Testator. The New Testament requires the alien sinner to hear the word of God (Rom. 10:17; John 6:44,45), believe (John 8:24; Acts 18:8; Heb. 11: 6), repent (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 17:30,31), confess Christ (Acts 8:36,37; Rom. 10:9,10), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:20,21). Christ is not going to change the terms of his will which became effective after his death. No man on earth has the right to offer salvation for more or less than the conditions stipulated in the Lord's will.

Fourth, Christ could use his power as he chose during his lifetime.

Before the Savior died he dispensed his blessing solely in harmony with his sovereign will without regard to any uniform law of pardon. Being superior to the prevailing law of the mosaic dispensation, he could and did suspend it at will. As the great Testator, he exercised his rightful prerogative of directing his affairs according to his own choosing.

Christ blessed in many ways during his personal ministry. He healed and forgave the sins of a paralytic (Matt. 9:1-8). He brought salvation to



Zachaeus' house (Luke 19:9). He forgave the woman taken in adultery (John 8: 1-11). Anything therefore which Christ may have done with reference to the forgiveness of sins before his death, does not in anyway modify his law which went into effect after his death on the cross.

Fifth, it is not correct to say, "I believe the thief was baptized" or "I do not believe the thief was baptized." C. R. Nichols once wrote:

No, I do not believe the thief was baptized; nor do I believe that he was not baptized. Not one of you believe the thief was baptized, nor do you believe that he was not baptized. There is not one word in all the Bible that will lead you to believe that the thief was baptized, or that he was not baptized. You understand that one cannot believe in the absence of evidence, and there is not one word relative to the thief in connection with baptism. I do not doubt that you have an opinion regarding the matter. I ~~have~~ an OPINION about it also, but you should remember our opinions are worthless in matters of revelation. Let opinions be relegated while we strive to learn the truth.<sup>12</sup>

#### SOME VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNED

First, who is it that asks, "What about the thief on the cross?" Did the people on Pentecost ask that question when Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-41). Instead of asking, what about the thief on the cross? why not ask, what about Paul (Acts 22:10,16); what about the Philipian jailor (Acts 16:29-34); what about the Corinthians (Acts 18:8)? Who is it that says people are saved without baptism - the Lord or men?

Second, someone may ask, "don't you believe the thief on the cross was saved?" C. R. Nichols wrote:

Suppose I do so believe; will my believing that the thief is saved, or that he is lost, in any way affect the condition of the thief? If I believe that the thief you mention is lost, will my belief cause him to be banished from the father's presence?<sup>13</sup>

If one means the thief was forgiven of his sins and will eventually be in the eternal home with all the redeemed, then one must believe (based on the facts given) the thief was saved. The spirits of the righteous go into paradise at

death. The spirit of the thief was in paradise the day he died. Therefore the thief's spirit must have been righteous.

Third, there is no hope for us in the cross of the thief. The way some talk about the thief on the cross, one wonders which cross on Calvary embodies their hope. The cross of Christ is where one must look. He died for us (I Peter 2:24); the thief died for his crimes. He took away the law and its curse by the cross (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:10,13). He purchased our redemption (I Peter 1: 18,19). The cross made possible the New Testament, the will of Christ (Heb. 9: 16,17).

Fourth, the thief's salvation is a clear illustration of the mercy of God and Christ. This man was a thief. There was nothing he could do to change that fact on the cross. He could not undo the thefts of the past. But God could pardon him and Christ did. We are sinners. There is not anything we can do to make us non-sinners. But God can pardon us (Tit. 3:5) and he does according to the terms of Christ's will (Heb. 5: 8,9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Fifth, the thief had this one opportunity and he took it. This may have been his only encounter with Christ; it was his last in life. You have the opportunity to become a Christian today. Christ beckons you with outstretched arms (Matt. 11:28-30). ". . . behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 4:2). This may not be your first opportunity, but it could well be your last.

#### CONCLUSION

Christ saved the thief in person. While he lived it was right to dispense his blessings as he saw fit. But, remember, the thief lived and died before the commission was given, before Christ said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Even though you might desire to be saved like the thief you cannot - you live since the great commission was given.

Christ will save you now according to his will. After his death, resurrection, and ascension back to the Father, there is no evidence that he will change the covenant so as to do away with a single one of the terms required for obtaining salvation. Bobby Duncan wrote: "Honestly, now, does the thief on the cross really prove that one today, can be saved without baptism?"<sup>14</sup>

ENDNOTES

1. J.W. McGarvey, Short Essays In Biblical Criticism, reprinted from The Christian Standard 1893-1904 (Nashville, Tennessee; Gospel Advocate Co., 1956), 408-409.

2. McGarvey, Criticism, p. 412.

3. Leslie G. Thomas, "What About the Thief on the Cross?," Gospel Advocate, XCVIII (February 23, 1956), p. 171.

4. Guy N. Woods, "The Thief on the Cross," Gospel Advocate, LXXXVII (April 19, 1945), p. 219.

5. McGarvey, Criticism, p. 411.

6. Ibid.

7. V. E. Howard, The Thief on the Cross - Where Are the Dead? (Texachana, Texas: V. E. Howard Publishing, 1965), p. 24.

8. Woods, "The Thief on the Cross," p. 219.

9. C. R. Nichol, "The Thief on the Cross," Sermons (Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Bookstore, 1956), p. 26.

10. Bobby Duncan, "The Thief on the Cross," Gospel Advocate, CXVIII (February 5, 1976), p. 89.

11. Ibid.

12. Woods, "The Thief on the Cross," p. 219.

13. C. R. Nichol, Sermons, p. 26.

14. Ibid., p. 25.

15. Duncan, "The Thief," p. 89.

①

PROBLEMS OF PRAYER

by James Meadows

INTRODUCTION

No subject has greater prominence than prayer in the Bible, yet too many Christians are growing indifferent to its privileges and blessings. Prayer is both a privilege and a command. ". . . continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12c); "Praying always with prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18); "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6); "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1); "Have you ceased to pray, not because you have reached a definite conviction that prayer is futile, but because you have drifted into a prayerless habit by allowing the 'sweet hour of prayer' to be crowded out by duties that seem to be more pressing and more rewarding?"<sup>1</sup>

PRAYER IS POWERFUL

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). James' statement is in a context of several important suggestions about prayer. "Let him pray" suggests individual prayer (James 5:13). United prayer comes to mind in calling for the elders and letting "them pray over him" (James 5:14). "And the prayer of faith" suggests believing prayer. "Pray one for another" suggests intercessory

<sup>1</sup>Delmar Owens, "The Prayers of Paul", Dallas: Christian Publishing Co., 1965, p. 10.

②

prayer (James 5:16). There is to be fervent prayer (James 5:16). Elijah "prayed earnestly that it might not rain" suggests specific prayer (James 5:17). The phrase "effectual fervent" comes from the Greek word Energia, from which we get our English word, energy. Our prayers get their energy from God.

Paul believed very strongly in prayer. He believed that the prayers of Christians would deliver him from the hands of wicked men (Rom. 15:30; ~~II~~ <sup>2</sup> Thes. 3:2); that prayers for rulers would make for more favorable living conditions (<sup>1</sup> Tim. 2:1,2); that prayers would cause his release from prison (Phil. 1:18,19); doors would be opened (Col. 4:2-5); and prayers would give strength and courage (Eph. 6:18-20).

#### PRAYER HAS PROBLEMS

Regardless of how powerfully one believes in prayer one must confess there are perplexing questions and intricate problems. Many never get beyond the infant stage of development because of unwillingness to wrestle with these problems. There are some who think prayer is so simple and they know all the answers. "Those who are convinced that they know all the answers either lack perception or do not see the problems or are remarkably naive."<sup>2</sup>

Problems of prayer do not miraculously vanish into thin air. One may minimize them, avoid them, or just pretend they do not exist, but they are still there. One may give them the silent treatment but silence does not solve all problems. One may try to answer all unanswered questions by asserting that "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28), but "the assumption 'that all things work together for good' was designed by God to prevent questions is without the support of logic or Scripture."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Harold Lindsell, "When You Pray", Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1969, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

①  
SOME CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

First, some problems arise because of a failure to recognize God's laws in the physical and spiritual realms. God has laws in all realms of life and his whole creation is governed by these laws. Early in life man learns these laws of nature and conforms to them in order to avoid unfavorable consequences and make his physical existence liveable.

The spiritual world also operates according to God's spiritual laws. They have been made known by divine revelation and they operate in perfect harmony with one another. God has a spiritual law for the sinner (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4) and no amount of seeking to be righteous by a good life or praying will change it. God's decrees that we give upon the first day of the week as we <sup>have</sup> ~~we~~ been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1,2) and churches will not thrive by substituting dances, bingo, plays and bazaars.

God likewise has spiritual laws that govern prayer. Failure to understand these laws cause some to become disheartened when their prayers are not answered. Ignorance of God's spiritual laws and how they operate in prayer, as well as other parts of the Christian life, can be just as devastating in their consequences as a refusal to hear and obey them.

The laws governing our prayers are clearly stated by God. First, they must be addressed to God, our Father (Matt. 6:9). Second, they must be in the name of Christ (John 14:13,14). Third, a forgiving spirit must be in the heart of one that prays (Matt. 6:14,15). Fourth, prayer must be in harmony with God's will (1 John 5:14,15). Fifth, one must pray in faith (James 1:5-8; Matt. 21:22). Sixth, humbleness is a definite law in prayer (Lk 18:9-14). Seventh, we must abide in Christ as we pray (John 15:7). Eighth, one must practice righteousness (1 Pet. 3:12). Ninth, one must be keeping his commandments (1 John 3:22). Tenth, we must pray fervently and earnestly (James 5:16,17).

Second, some problems arise because of a failure to recognize what

①

prayer is not. First, prayer is not some sort of "stump speech" to God, a kind of vehicle to display one's proficient use of descriptive words. Second, prayer is not an emergency device. Some pray only when they are in need or some disaster threatens. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil 4:6) ✓ Third, some try to substitute prayer for obedience. Prayer without obedience <sup>will not</sup> ~~work~~ work because "he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). On the cross Jesus asked God to forgive his murderers (Lk<sup>ke</sup> 23:34), but it was not without obedience (Acts 2:37-41). God will forgive any sin a brother confesses (✓ Jhn<sup>m</sup> 1:7-10), but we cannot ask God to forgive a brother that refuses to confess (✓ Jhn<sup>m</sup> 5:16). Fourth, some use prayers as a means to inform God and scorn man. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Lk<sup>ke</sup> 18: 11,12) ✓

Third, the many theories advanced by man create problems in prayer for some. Many do not ask "what does the Bible say and promise about prayer," but "is it possible for God to answer prayer?" First, one theory argues that the unchangeableness of God renders our prayer ineffective. God has always been unchangeable (Jhn<sup>es</sup> 1:17; Heb. 13:8), but such did not keep him from answering prayers in the past; why should it now? Second, another theory says miracles have ceased (which is true - ✓ Cor. 13:8-13) and God cannot answer a prayer without a miracle (more about this later) and without violating his natural law. This theory is based on an assumption because one would have to know everything about God's natural laws to prove such. Let us not be so presumptuous as to assume that we have learned all of God's natural laws and how they operate. A third theory argues



that the omniscience of God renders prayer unnecessary. True, God does know all our needs (Matt. 6:24-34) but he still wants us to ask (Matt. 7:7-12; James 4:1-3). Fourth, the reflex theory argues that reflex influence is the only benefit one receives from prayer. But if reflex influence constitutes the sum total of prayer's benefits, then what advantage has a Christian over a heathen? "In the very nature of the case the reflex influence is good only when we sincerely pray to one whom we believe hears us and is willing and able to grant us the desires of our heart." (Gus Nichols) Fifth, Christians often say "some of my religious neighbors make too much of prayer. They have fashioned it into a substitute for many commands of Christ." Beloved, should we begin to go out the window because some use the door? In other words, should we quit praying because some have abused and misused prayer?

Fourth, some problems arise in prayer because of one's failure to recognize and remove hinderances to one's prayer. First, hypocrisy hinders prayer. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:5,6). Hypocrisy (Hypokrisis) "primarily denotes a reply, an answer...then, play acting, as the actors spoke in dialogue; hence, pretence, hypocrisy..." (W.E. Vine). First, the prayer of the hypocrite is deception. He deceives his fellow-man. He prays to be seen of men while pretending piety, but they are deceived. He deceives himself. He gets what he seeks - the praise of men - but it is inconsiderate, fickle and short-lived. He receives nothing from God as he thinks. Second, the hypocrite's prayer is idolatry. He does not pray to the true God, but has made himself his God and men his idols, whose praise he seeks. In seeking the praise of men he puts their approval in competition with the favor and approval of God. The main fault of such

a prayer is that "my interest is in myself rather than the one to whom I am praying." Some of the so-called "beautiful prayers" of today might fall in this category. "When a man thinks more of how he is praying than of what he is praying, his prayer dies upon his lips." (William Barclay)

Second, vain repetitions hinder prayer. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetition, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:7,8) Our Lord does not condemn repetition itself because he used the same words three times in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:44). "Vain repetition" is from battalogein which means "to stammer, stutter, then to babble or prate, to repeat the same formula many times." "Vain repetitions" imply a multitude of words without thought - "they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

Third, sin can be a hindrance to prayer. The Psalmist said "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18; cf. Isa. 59:1,2)

Fourth, selfishness constitutes one of the greatest hindrances to prayer. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:1-3) Sometimes we do not have what we want because we seek it in the wrong way (v. 2a) or we do not ask for it, (v. 2b; cf. Matt. 7:7). At other times our prayers are selfish and God will not grant a request where the purpose is to fulfill selfish desires. To ask amiss "is to be influenced by low, mean, selfish considerations...It is possible for one to pray for ability to serve others when the chief reason for the desire is not the

welfare of man, but lust for power, fame, notoriety, etc."4

Fifth, prayer can be hindered by family trouble. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7) The word "hindered" is the rendering of a word which means literally "to cut in, to interrupt." Strife and discord in a home cuts off and interrupts prayer - "the message to heaven is short-circuited."

PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

First, lack of faith is one of the greatest problems in prayer. James said "but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering..." (James 1:6a) Faith means taking God at his word in the face of impossible odds. God's promise to give Abraham a son, at the time his own body was as good as dead and Sarah's womb was barren (Rom. 4:19), seemed impossible. But "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20,21) God encourages us to come boldly to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16), and to ask and receive the petitions asked according to his will (John 3:22; 5:14,15).

Praying in faith means faith that God is. The Atheist cannot pray because he has no God to which he can pray. The Pantheist cannot pray because his God is an infinite IT. The Agnostic cannot pray because he doesn't know whether there is a God or not. The Christian can pray because he believes that God is "and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6)

~~The problem here, if it arises, is not on God's part but ours. It's~~

Guy N. Woods, "A Commentary On the Epistle of James", Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964, p. 206.

~~of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).~~

The problem here, if it arises, is not on God's part but ours. It's lack of faith in God's power to do things. It's failure to believe that prayer has power. All kinds of reasonings are brought forth by man in this <sup>particular</sup> realm, but why not be honest and say, "I have no faith or little faith, therefore I see nothing in prayer." We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17). God's word says "but let him ask in faith . . ." (Jas. 1:6). This is sufficient for the faithful child of God.

Second, a problem often arises as to how God answers prayer. People often say "but I don't understand how God answers prayer." (Do you understand "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child. . ." (Eccle. 11:5) No! Do you reject such because of a lack of understanding?) Do you understand how your spirit lives and works in your body? No! Do you reject it because of a lack of understanding? Does your lack of understanding keep your spirit from working? →

The acceptableness of our prayers does not depend on our understanding how God does it. God answers our prayers according to his infinite wisdom, not according to our limited foresight and lack of understanding.

God answers our prayers at least three ways. Sometimes he says yes. He grants us that which we request because it is good for us and in harmony with his will. He sometimes grants our request, not because it is good for us, but because we insist on it (cf. 1 Sam. 8:1-9). He sometimes answers yes, but does not give us exactly that for which we ask. Jesus requested that the cup might pass from him. God didn't remove the cup but gave him strength to bear it (Lk. 22:42,43). Paul asked that God remove his thorn in the flesh, but God gave him sufficient strength to live with it (2 Cor. 12:7-9). We sometimes ask for stones, but God gives us bread (Matt. 7:9-11). At other times God's answer to our prayers is no (Jas. 4:1-4). Then God will say wait a while. Paul prayed that he might go to Rome (Rom. 1:10) but it was two years later before the prayer was answered (Acts 27,28).

A third ~~problem~~ is how God answers prayer without a miracle. "But I cannot understand how God can answer prayer without a miracle." "Can you understand how he can answer prayer with a miracle? You can no more understand how God could answer prayer with, or (over)

C, A third problem is how God answers prayer without a miracle. "But I cannot understand how God can answer prayer with <sup>out</sup> a miracle." Can you understand how he can answer prayer with a miracle? You can no more understand how God could answer prayer with, or by, a miracle, than how he would do it without a miracle."<sup>5</sup>

We create this problem because we set limits on God's ability to act without miracles. Is there no special, general, or particular providence of God? Did God create the universe, fold his hands, and leave it to run itself? Are there no benefits from prayer? "If prayer does not bring any benefit or blessing that we cannot obtain ourselves without prayer or that would not come through the natural or mechanical processes of life without prayer to God, without trust in God, or even without a belief in the existence of God, then why should we ever pray?"<sup>6</sup>

There are many examples of God answering prayer, even in the days of miracles, without a miracle being involved. First, James says "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months" (Jas<sup>mes</sup> 5:17). Did God perform a miracle? "How did the rain come? If it had come without the cloud, that would have been a miracle. If it had come from over the desert, that would have been a miracle. How did it come? The clouds came up from the sea, as every rain cloud does. The wind blew it eastward, and when it came in contact with the cooler volumes of air, its vapor was condensed, and the rain fell. It came just as any other rain come<sup>s</sup>" (J.W. McGarvey)

Second, David prayed that God turn the counsel of Ahithophel into

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Franklin, "The Gospel Preacher", Prayer, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954, p. 181.

<sup>6</sup>G. C. Brewer, "Contending for the Faith", Men Ought Always to Pray, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., p. 29.

How did the rain come? If it had come without the cloud, that would have been a miracle. If it had come from over the desert, that would have been a miracle. How did it come? the clouds came up from the sea, as every rain cloud does. The wind blew it eastward, and when it came in contact with the cooler volumes of air, its vapor was condensed, and the rain fell. It came just as any other rain comes (J. W. McGarvey).

Second, David prayed that God would turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. David then did what he could, God overruled and answered the prayer, but there was no supernatural sign. God did it, but we do not know exactly how (2 Sam. 15:31, 32-34; 16:23; 17:7,14). Third, God told the Christians in Jerusalem to "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter neither on the sabbath day..." (Matt. 24:20). God answered that prayer, but there is absolutely no evidence that a miracle was involved.

It is not prayer to prescribe to the Lord how he must do this or that, or to dictate to the Lord how he shall bless us. But is it faith that looks up to him and assures us that he can and will bless us, though we understand not how he will do it; and it is prayer that implores him to do it. We have the faith; the full assurance of faith that the Lord can and will answer the prayers of the saints, who ask according to his will, without their understanding how he will do it.<sup>7</sup>

A fourth problem in prayer is ritualism. Webster defines ritualism as "a conducting of religious worship according to a ritual; the use of ritual." He defines ritual as "any practice done or regularly repeated in a set precise manner so as to satisfy one's sense of fitness...." How many prayers, both public and private, are simply repetitions of what one has heard someone else say? Each one needs to word prayers for himself. Each one needs to express his own feelings and heartfelt desires to God and not merely repeat what one has memorized from other prayers. Solomon prayed, "...I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in...Give therefore thy servant an under-

standing heart..." (1 Kgs. 3:7,9). The prayer of Jabez was an earnest appeal for his own particular needs. "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested" (1 Chron. 4:10). First, it was directed to the right person—"The God of Israel." Second, it was an earnest prayer—"Oh, that thou wouldst." Third, blessings were asked—"bless me indeed." Fourth, he asked for prosperity—"enlarge my coast." Fifth, he realized his need for strength—"that thine hand might be with me." Sixth, he asked to be kept from evil—"keep me from evil." Seventh, he asked to be kept from sorrow, should evil overtake him—"that it might not grieve me." Eighth, "and God granted him that which he requested." A real problem has developed in prayer when ritualism, formalism, vain repetitions, etc., have entered.

### CONCLUSION

There have always been problems in prayer, many of which we have not touched. But enough have been discussed to show that most of the problems, if not all, are manufactured by us.

Let us realize that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of" (Alfred Lord Tennyson). Someone has said that of the six hundred sixty-seven requests in the Bible, six hundred, fifty-four have definite answers. We need to go forward, realizing that men ought always to "pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1); "pray everywhere" (1 Tim. 2:8); "in everything give thanks" (Phil. 4:6); and know that the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16).

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Delman Owens, The Prayers of Paul (Dallas: Christian Publishing Co., 1965), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Harold Lindsell, When You Pray (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1969), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on the Epistle of James (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964), p. 206.

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Franklin, "The Gospel Preacher," Prayer (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954), p. 181.

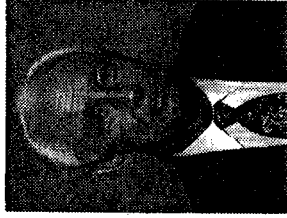
<sup>6</sup>G. C. Brewer, "Contending for the Faith," Men Ought Always to Pray (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co.), p. 29.

<sup>7</sup>Franklin, op. cit., p. 182.

## COUNSELING THE HOMOSEXUAL

### JAMES MEADOWS

James L. Meadows is a native of Kentucky. He attended FHU (A.A.), Union University and Harding Graduate School, and in 1977 was awarded a D.M. from Theological University of America. He has done local work in TN, KY, and SC; has preached in over 600 meetings and lectures; 20 years of radio preaching. He has written 42 books for classroom and private study; articles for numerous brotherhood papers; chapters in approximately 40 books; and wrote Senior Quarterly for GA in 1980-81. He has been honored in: Personalities of the South, Two Thousand Men of Achievement, and Notable Americans. He is married to Beverly and there are three children and three grandchildren.



### INTRODUCTION

This is a grave time in the history of our nation. "Changes are taking place in our way of national character which have lowered, and will continue to lower, the vitality of our people, the quality of our institutions, and our basic values."<sup>1</sup> The inevitable result is that we will undergo a progressive disintegration and possibly the eventual collapse of our democracy.

This appears to be an age where many have decided that the best way to avoid guilt is to change the rules. Some aspects of psychology have contributed to this in sexual and social areas, but the tendency is as old as humanity. It inevitably lies behind idolatry, for in idolatry man makes the rules. For example, recall the antics of the Greek gods who warred, raped, and stole, or the religious activities of the Canaanites, whose worship forms included gluttony, drunkenness, and cult prostitution.

## What the Bible Teaches About Contending for the Faith

*James Meadows*

*"Jude, The servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 1-4.)*

This great test is the battle cry of the church. The great truths set forth in this text are demanding and challenging to our nature. It eliminates the idea of us contending for anything that is not "the faith." It demands that we allow nothing to cause us to give less than all diligence in contending for "the faith." It summons every member of the church for loyalty to the conflict between truth and error.

Jude gave all diligence to write about the "common salvation." Just think how important that subject is. It is the "common salvation" because it is available to all, both Jew and Gentile, who will comply with the conditions thereof. John the Baptist came to turn the hearts of the children of Israel back to God. (Luke 1:16.) The twelve, during our Lord's personal ministry, were to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:6.) But the great commission says "go teach all nations." (Matt 28:19.) The "grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (Tit. 2:11.) It is the "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:1-4), which, if neglected will result in eternal damnation. Paul refers to "the common faith" (Tit. 1:4), and Peter addressed one of his epistles to those "that have obtained like precious faith" (2 Pet. 1:1). But, great as the theme was on which he purposed to write, Jude, upon learning that special dangers threatened "the faith," "suspended his proposed treatise and wrote without delay to exhort his brethren to 'earnestly contend for the faith' once for all delivered to the saints."<sup>1</sup>



The present study purposes to ask and answer several questions about "the faith" in order that each of us may be better prepared to "earnestly contend for the faith."

### I. What is the Faith?

A. Faith is used several ways in the Bible.

1. It is used in the subjective sense which is simply the act of believing a thing. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.)

2. Faith, sometimes means the conviction of the right or wrong of something. Paul clearly pointed out to the Romans that the eating of meats was not wrong in itself, but if one believed it to be wrong, then it would not be "of faith" to go ahead and eat it. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:22, 23.)

3. Faith is used in our text, and in many other verses, to mean that which is believed. "The 'faith' for which Jude's readers were thus earnestly to contend, put objectively here for the gospel, is the sum of all that which Christians are to believe and obey."<sup>2</sup>

B. The faith means the gospel, the doctrine, the truth, the word of God, the whole of Christianity.

1. "...And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7.) The apostles preached the *gospel* on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-40.) The high priest accused them of filling "Jerusalem with your *doctrine*." (Acts 5:28.) "Daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to *teach and preach Jesus Christ*." (Acts 5:42.) They said we will "give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the *word*." (Acts 6:4.) "The *word of God* increased in Jerusalem..." (Acts 6:7a.) The priests were "obedient to the *faith*." Since the apostles were preaching the gospel, doctrine, Jesus Christ, and the word, then the faith must be the same.

2. "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from *the faith*." (Acts 13:8.) When Sergius Paulus called for Barnabas and Saul he "desired to hear the *word of God*," (Acts 13:7) which is what they were preaching (Acts 13:5). In seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith Paul accused Elymas of perverting "*the right ways of the Lord*." (Acts 13:8.) When the deputy saw what happened to Elymas he "believed, being astonished at the *doctrine of the Lord*." (Acts 13:12.) Obviously, "the word of God"; "faith"; "the right ways of the Lord"; and "the doctrine of the Lord" all refer to the same body of truth.

3. On the return part of the first missionary journey, Paul and his company stopped again at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in *the faith*." (Acts 14:22.) When they first came to Antioch they preached "*the word of God*" or "*the word of the Lord*." (Acts 13:44-49.) They preached the gospel at Lystra and Derbe. (Acts 14:6,7.) Surely, in admonishing the disciples to "continue in the faith," Paul was admonishing them to continue in that which they had been taught and believed, namely, the "word of the Lord" or "the gospel."

4. Paul declared that he preached "the faith which once he destroyed." (Gal. 1:23.) What did Paul once destroy? He tried to destroy that which Peter and the other apostles preached in Jerusalem which was "the word" (Acts 4:4) and "the doctrine" (Acts 5:28). Thus "the faith," "the word," and "the doctrine" all refer to the same body of truth.

5. "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ you put on Christ." (Gal. 3:22-27.) "In this instance, the word 'faith' is made to stand for the full Christian system of salvation; and so the affirmation of the apostle is that before the gospel or before the Christian Dispensation came the Jews were under the law...In the context...the word 'faith' occurs five (5) times and in each instance, in the original text, it is preceded by the article 'the' which means that the word 'faith' in all

these passages, is used in a specific and technical sense."<sup>3</sup>

## II. What Does "Once Delivered Unto the Saints" Mean?

A. The words "once delivered" in the King James Version are "which was once for all delivered" in the American Standard Edition. Thayer says "once for all" means "like, Lat, *Semel*, used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never needs repetition, once for all: Hebrews 6:4; 10:2; 1 Peter 3:18; Jude 3, 5." <sup>4</sup>

Observing the use of the word "once" in other verses will help us to more fully grasp its meaning here.

1. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." (Heb. 9:28.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins." (1 Pet. 3:18.) By one sacrifice Christ did everything necessary to the removal of man's sins. Just as his sacrifice was complete, perfect, and never needs to be done again, so "the faith" that has been "once for all delivered" is perfect, complete and never needs to be repeated.

2. Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13.) Jude is affirming that Christ kept his promise.

3. Paul declared that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.)

4. Peter wrote "according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Pet. 1:3.)

5. "The meaning is that the truth is delivered for all time: it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superceded, emended, or modified. As it now stands, it is a perfect, adequate, complete and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine."<sup>5</sup>

This passage clearly refutes all claims to modern revelations. It "refutes the claim of the Catholic Church that the voice of God and that God continues to speak through any such living representative."<sup>6</sup> It also refutes such pretended revelators as Joseph Smith, Mrs. Ellen G. White, or any other person who claims to speak by inspiration or revelation today. One must deny the truthfulness of what Jude states or cease to advocate the idea of a latter-day revelation from God.

B. How was "the faith" delivered?

1. The men of God in the old time spake by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:20, 21.)

2. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. (John 16:13.) They were to remain in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father unto you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49.) They would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) The Holy Spirit came on the apostles on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of our Lord. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.)

3. The apostle Paul claimed that he was guided by the Holy Spirit in his message. "Howbeit we speak wisdom among they that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known

it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:6-13.) Paul make several claims:

- a. He spoke the wisdom of God. (Verse 7.)
- b. He spoke the things which had not been previously revealed unto man. (Verses 8,9.)
- c. He spoke these things as they were revealed unto him by the Spirit. (Verse 10a.)
- d. He declares that just as the spirit in a man is the only one that really knows him (unless he reveals his heart), so the only one that knew the mind of God was the Spirit of God. (Verses 10b, 11.)
- e. Since the apostles received the Spirit of God who knew the mind of God, then the apostles knew the mind of God. (Verse 12.)
- f. He also declared that the Holy Spirit not only revealed *these things* to them, but chose *the words* with which to express them. (Verse 13.)

4. Paul also claimed that the gospel he preached was a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11, 12.)

5. Peter said they (the apostles) "preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." (1 Pet. 1:12.)

6. The apostles "were the inspired and miraculously empowered agents to whom the faith was committed and through whom it has been given once for all to God's children."<sup>7</sup>

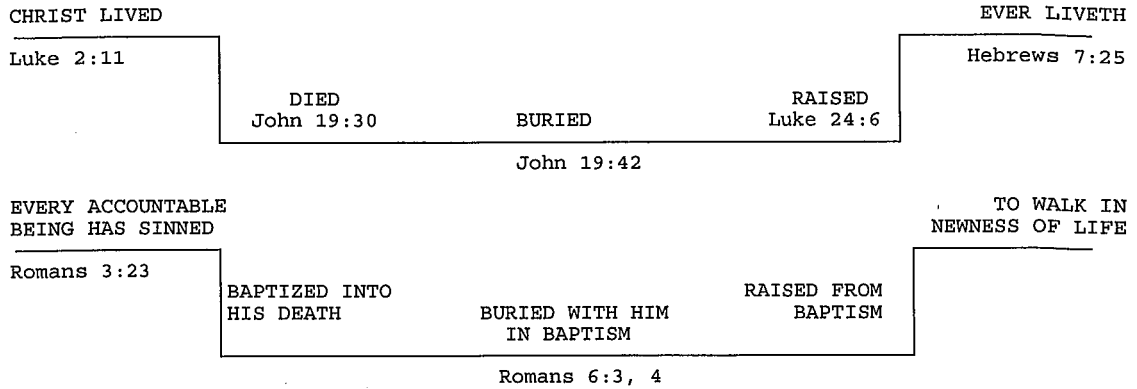
C. "The faith" was "once delivered unto the saints." The word "saints" applies to God's children. It is applied to God's children thirty times in the Old Testament and fifty times in the New Testament. In Colossians 1:26, Paul refers to "the faith" as the "mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made *manifest to the saints.*"

### III. Why Must the Faith Be Proclaimed?

A. "The faith" must be preached if sinners are to believe and be saved. The apostles preached "the faith" in Jerusalem. (Acts 6:7.) Felix heard Paul "concerning the faith in Christ." (Acts 24:25.) Faith comes by hearing "the faith" and it comes in no other way. (Rom. 10:17.)

B. "The faith" must be obeyed if sinners are to be freed from their sins. The Romans were freed from their sins when they obeyed "that form of doctrine." "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17, 18.) "The faith" and "that form of doctrine," as already shown, refer to the same body of truth. That form of doctrine which the Romans obeyed was the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) They had obeyed it through belief and baptism into Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness

of life." (Rom. 6:3, 4.) Notice:



C. "The faith must be proclaimed in order for the church to be edified and to grow. At the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey, Paul and his company went through the cities and "delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:4, 5.) Paul commended the elders from Ephesus "to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:28.) Again, Paul wrote that Christ gave some "apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:11-16.) We are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow. (1 Pet. 2:2.)

D. "The faith" must be proclaimed because only those that "continue in the faith" will be saved eternally. Paul exhorted the Christians at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch to "continue in the faith." (Acts 14:21, 22.) The Corinthians were told to "stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13), and to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5a). Paul told the Colossians that the Lord would be able to present them holy, unblamable, and unproveable "if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Col. 1:22, 23.) Great effort will be needed to continue in the faith because, (1) one can "depart from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1); (2) one can "deny the faith" (1 Tim. 5:8); and, (3) one can "err from the faith" (1 Tim. 6:10). Christians are to resist the devil "steadfast in the faith." (1 Pet. 5:8.)

#### IV. Why Must Christians Contend for the Faith?

A. What does it mean to "earnestly contend"? The original word for "earnestly contend" or "contend earnestly" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and it literally means to fight. It is here figuratively used to denote "the extreme efforts which are to characterize the faithful in their defense of truth, however formidable and numerous its enemies may be."<sup>8</sup> Vine says, "*Epagonizomai*...signifies to contend about a thing as a combatant (*epi*, upon or about, intensive, *agon*, a contest), to contend earnestly. (Jude 3.) The word 'earnestly' is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition."<sup>9</sup> "The word...properly signifies to strive as in the Olympic game; that is, with their whole force."<sup>10</sup> There are several words in the New Testament, as shown by Thomas Warren, which emphasize the meaning and responsibility of every Christian earnestly contending for the faith.

1. "*dialegomai*"

a. In KJV, this word is translated:

- (1) "Preach." (Acts 20:7.)
- (2) "Reason with." (Acts 17:2; 18:19.)
- (3) "Dispute." (Mark 9:34; Acts 17:17; 19:8, 9; 24:12, Jude 9.)

b. Basic meaning: to argue, discourse, debate, discuss, contend.



2. *"Apologia"...*(noun form of *"apologeomai"*)
  - a. In KJV, this word is translated:
    - (1) "Answer." (Acts 25:16; 1 Cor. 9:3; 2 Tim. 4:16; 1 Pet. 3:15.)
    - (2) "Clearing of one's self." (2 Cor. 7:11.)
    - (3) "Defense." (Acts 22:1; Phil. 1:7, 17.)
  - b. Basic meaning: a defense, to make good one's cause, to set forth evidence which defends one's position.
3. *"agonidzomai"*
  - a. In KJV this word is translated:
    - (1) "Strive." (Luke 13:24; 1 Cor. 9:25; Col. 1:29.)
    - (2) "Fight." (John 18:36; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.)
    - (3) "Laboring fervently." (Col. 4:12.)
  - b. Basic meaning: to be a combatant, to fight, strive earnestly, to endeavor with strenuous zeal, to contend with adversaries."<sup>11</sup>

"Everything which he has revealed, we are to defend as true. We are to surrender no part of it whatever, for every part of that system is of value to mankind."<sup>12</sup>

B. Christians must "earnestly contend for the faith" because it is commanded by God and upheld by example.

1. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:10-18.) Why put on the armor if we don't plan to use it?

2. Timothy was told to "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18), and to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). "Fight the good fight of faith." (1 Tim. 6:12.)

3. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Pet. 3:15.) "This obligation implies sufficient acquaintance with the word of God to substantiate one's hope therewith, and godliness of life consistent with its teaching... The defense is to be made with 'meekness and fear.'"<sup>13</sup>

4. Jesus engaged in public debate with the scribes (Mark 9:14ff); the Sadducees about the resurrection (Mark 12:18-28); and with the Pharisees about who they thought Christ was (Matt 22:41-46).

5. Paul told the Philippians "even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the *defense and confirmation of the gospel*, ye all are partakers of my grace... But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel." (Phil. 1:7, 17.) The word "defense" here means "a verbal defense, a speech in defense."<sup>14</sup> "The defense (*apologia*) of the gospel means the defense of the gospel against the attacks which come from outside; it is the defense of the gospel against the arguments and assaults of the enemies of Christianity. The Christian has to be ready to be a defender of the faith, and to give a reason for the hope that is in him."<sup>15</sup>

C. Christians must "earnestly contend for the faith" because "many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1.)

1. There will be false teachers within the church. The appearance of false teachers among the saints was that which caused Jude's chief concern and immediate reason for writing the epistle. He said "there are certain men crept in unawares." (Jude 4.) "They had entered, as it were, by a side door (*pareisedusan*) and without revealing their true motive of seducing the saints."<sup>16</sup> Jude clearly describes the characteristics of these early opponents of the faith, and the qualities displayed by them are the same characteristics of their present day counterparts. They include: (1) They creep in alongside, craftily infiltrating the saints while pretending to be something they are not (verse 4); (2) they are men of impure, unholy motives (verse 4); (3) they are most indignant in the presence of proper authority (verses 8-10); (4) they are destructive and willing to compromise (verse 11); (5) they are hidden dangers, making progress by false

promises (verses 12, 13); (6) they use others for their own advantage (verse 16).<sup>17</sup> Paul warned the elders from Ephesus that "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30.) Paul had to contend for the faith "because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." (Gal. 2:4.) Peter said "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Pet. 2:1,2.)

2. Opponents to the faith will always abound outside the church. Some will "hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Rom. 1:18.) Others will change "the truth of God into a lie." (Rom. 1:25.) There will be those that have a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof...ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth...men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. 3:5, 7, 8), who will "resist the truth." Some will receive "not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:10.)

3. To successfully meet and overcome those in error, Christians must carefully note and follow Jude's instructions. These include: "(1) The saints must be aware of, and dedicated to, their spiritual standing with God (verses 1-2), and they must know how to maintain it (verses 20-21); (2) Christians must recognize the need to stand earnestly for the truth (verse 3); (3) they are to remember that God has dealt with error many times and is competent to deal with it again (verses 5-7); (4) they are to remember the promise of God to be with those who uphold his will (verses 14, 15); (5) they must hold fast the words of Jesus (verses 17-19); (6) they are to assist, if possible, those in error to return to the truth (verses 22-23), and (7) they are to commit themselves in fullness to the care of God (verses 24-25)."<sup>18</sup>

4. Every Christian must be involved in this fight. Preachers must preach the word. "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 shall they 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 Tim. 4:1-5.) Elders must hold fast the faithful word that they may be able to stand against and stop the mouths of false teachers. (Tit. 1:9-14.) The church must mark those that cause division. (Rom. 16:17, 18).

D. In contending for the faith, Christians will:

1. Speak against immorality - "ungodly men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." (Jude 4.) The 'grace' of God is salvation (Eph. 2:8,9), vouchsafed to a man through the gospel; this gospel, these men perverted by interpreting it as actually allowing or supporting the practice of lasciviousness, gross fleshly indulgence.<sup>19</sup> There have always been those, and still are today, who have made the Christian liberty an excuse for ungodly living.

2. Speak against atheism, liberalism, and all other "isms" contrary to the faith. Jude says the false teachers of his day were denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4.) John said, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." (1 John 2:22.)

3. Make doctrine or "the faith" a test of fellowship.

a. In a new book entitled *The Protest of a Troubled Protestant*, by Harold O. J. Brown, the author makes the point: "A characteristic of the church in our day - the whole church and of each individual church is the *avoidance of doctrine*. In churches and in church-related schools (both Sunday schools and the regular schools and colleges maintained by churches) there is a growing reluctance to teach anything specific and definite about the Christian faith...Protestant churches...tend to apologize for their doctrines, to push them into the background." The above is a statement about Protestant churches, but, in too many cases, it is the truth about the church.

b. The apostles and the early church definitely made doctrine a test of fellowship. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If

there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11.)

(1) Some of the Jews of the first century taught that the Gentiles must be circumcised in order to be saved. (Acts 15:1.) Paul plainly declared that he would not, and did not, tolerate such doctrine. (Gal. 2:1-5.)

(2) When Paul came to Ephesus he found certain disciples that had been baptized of John's baptism. (Acts 19:1-3.) After hearing the truth they were baptized." After hearing the truth they were baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 19:4, 5). The apostles did not accept "just any baptism".

(3) Paul made any kind of worship, not according to God's will, a test of fellowship. "...I would not that you should have fellowship with devils...ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." (1 Cor. 10:14-22.)

(4) Paul made the doctrine of the resurrection a test of fellowship. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim. 2:16-18.)

4. Teach there is such a thing as absolute truth and that we can know that truth. There are those who contend "there is such a thing as absolute truth but we can never know it, thus we must ever view it as a goal which demands unflinching efforts to attain it."

a. "How long can New Testament Christianity survive in an atmosphere where its teachers question everything, are tentative in all things, are non-militant in all their positions, who must view all as in the same tentative quest, and to whom it is said that a 'healthy respect' for the tentative findings of others would become mandatory."<sup>20</sup>

b. "If we cannot learn the truth, then the Bible is not even a meaningful revelation from God to man. What difference would it make (if the Bible is not God's truth) if *none* of us can possibly *learn* the truth. But, thanks be to God, the

foregoing is false. And God's people are to study the truth (2 Tim. 2:15), learn the truth (2 Tim. 3:7), live the truth (Phil. 1:27), and preach the truth (Mark 16:15, 16)."<sup>21</sup> Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) The Lord's statement should forever settle the matter for all who believe the Bible.

5. Contend that apart from Christ and his church there is no salvation. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) Jesus declared "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). *There is no other way!* Paul declared that "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23.) The body is the church. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) There is but one body. (1 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:4.)

#### Conclusion

The challenge is clearly before us. Will we accept the challenge? "It is my firm conviction that we are sinning away our 'days of grace' by the divided condition of our people and the watering-down of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is my fear that we're not hearing enough of the 'old-fashioned gospel of Christ,' that beautiful story of salvation that brought us out of denominationalism to restore the true, yes, the true church of the Lord as we were a generation ago. We have let this permissive age that has captivated the world, especially our precious and lovely young people, make cowards of too many of us. There is entirely too much compromising with this permissive element, both in the world and in the church."<sup>22</sup>

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong." (1 Cor. 16:13.) "Error is crouched in countless forms concealed. Christ calls for vigilance - 'watch ye.' But when error has been flushed out of the hiding, and forms into advancing columns against the church, Christ calls for courage - 'stand fast in the faith.' Then when the lines are drawn tight, surging issues of truth and error are locked in the grim struggle for mastery - Christ calls for valour - 'quit ye like men.' Perform like a Christian soldier,

worthy of the name. Finally, when the crisis has come in the conflict of the faith, with the turn of the tide of events affecting the fate and fortune of the church is uncertain, when men are seen to weaken and waver - Christ calls for heroism, the heroism of faith - 'be strong' - 'hold the line!'"<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>James Bales, "The Difference is not Really so Small," *The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 2, No.1, Oct., 1970, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup>Warren, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>E. R. Harper, "Brother Harper Writes," *Gospel Advocate* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, Aug. 31, 1972), p. 549.

<sup>23</sup>Foy E. Wallace, Jr., "The Faith Once Delivered," *God's Prophetic Word* (Lufkin: The Roy E. Cogdill Publishing Company, 1946), p. 42.



HISTORY OF PAST AND PRESENT UNITY MOVEMENTS

JAMES MEADOWS

MARCH 26, 1988

INTRODUCTION

- 1. Unity has always been the priceless ingredient (cf John 17:20,21).
- 2. In this study we plan to discuss the following:
  - a. The first unity movement was led by Christ and the apostles.
  - b. Brief History of the Restoration Movement and Unity Efforts
  - c. Some Unity Movements following the split in 1906
  - d. Some Current Unity Movements
  - e. Some Observations
  - f. Conclusion

DISCUSSION

- I. The First Unity Movement was led by Christ and the Apostles.
  - A. The Lord prayed for unity. John 17:20,21
  - B. The Lord died in order to make unity possible. Eph. 2:14-16
  - C. The apostles preached unity. I Cor. 1:10, Eph. 4:1-6
  - D. The early church enjoyed unity. Acts 2:46, 4:32
    - 1. They looked to Jesus as head of the church. Eph. 1:22,23
    - 2. They followed the apostles' doctrine. Acts 2:42
  - E. The apostasy and the division that followed (brief history from 1st century to 16th century).
    - 1. The departure I Tim. 4:1-4
    - 2. The Reformation Efforts

## II. Brief History of Restoration Movement and Unity Efforts

- A. "The Restoration Movement of the nineteenth century was born in the desire for unity." (Earl West, G. A., Dec. 3, 1964, p. 775).
- B. With unity as the goal the Restoration proposed the return to primitive Christianity as the method.
- C. Four separate movements (which later merged, or partially so) had two major goals - the unity of Christians and the restoration of primitive Christianity.
  1. The first movement dates from August 4, 1794.
    - a. James O'Kelley and a number of followers (Virginia and North Carolina) left the Methodist Episcopal Church Dec. 25, 1793.
    - b. They took the name "Christian" as their only name.
    - c. They took the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.
    - d. In 1810 immersion was introduced and adopted by many.
  2. The second movement began in the New England States of Vermont and New Hampshire.
    - a. The years were 1800 - 1803
    - b. The leaders were Dr. Abner Jones and Elias Smith, former Baptist ministers.
      - (1) They renounced the name Baptist in favor of the name Christian.
      - (2) They renounced the Philadelphia Confession of Faith in favor of the Bible.
    - c. Elias Smith founded and published a religious paper called the Herald of Gospel Liberty.
  3. The third movement had its origin June 28, 1804.
    - a. It began in what was then the Western State of Kentucky, at

- b. The leaders were Barton W. Stone and Colleagues.
  - (1) They renounced the name Presbyterians and the Westminster Confession of Faith.
  - (2) They adopted the name Christian and the Bible.
  - (3) They were influenced by Rice Haggard of the O'Kelly movement
- c. In 1811 there was a formal union of the Smith-Jones and the O'Kelly movement which automatically included the Stone movement.
- d. The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery was written (led by Barton W. Stone) on June 28, 1804.
  - (1) The documents shows that the authors were lifting their eyes to New Testament Christianity.
  - (2) Several statements are very weighty.
    - (a) "We will that this body die, be dissolved and sink into union with the body of Christ at large; for there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope for our calling."
    - (b) "We will that our power of making laws for the government of th church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease, that the people may have free course to the Bible and to adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ."
    - (c) "We will that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cut them into the fire of their choice; for it is better to

enter life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell."

(d) "We will that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth near."

4. The fourth movement developed in Southwest Pennsylvania
- a. It began in 1809.
  - b. It began with Thomas Campbell and he was soon joined by Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott.
  - c. The Campbells had renounced all human creeds and took the Bible as their guide.
  - d. The Declaration and Address, by Thomas Campbell, grew out of the meeting of a group in 1809, bound together by the desire for Christian unity.
  - e. The first proposition clearly shows their interest in unity. "That the church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else, or none else can be truly and properly called Christians."
  - f. The tenth proposition showed their dislike of division. "That divisions among Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is anti-Christian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of

himself. It is anti-scriptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority; a direct violation of his command. It is antisciptural, as it excites Christian to condemn, to hate and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligation to love one another as brethren even as Christ loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion and of every evil work."

D. Why then did division take place in the Restoration Movement?

1. The fault in the early days of Christianity lay, not in the word of God, but in man's refusal to follow it.
2. The divisions of modern times can be traceable to the same source.

### III. Some Unity Movements Following the Split in 1906

- A. The official division between the Christian Church and the Lord's church took place in 1906.
- B. In 1926 (20 years after the Christian Church began) the Christian Church split into two groups.
  1. The ultra-liberal Disciples of Christ. (They suffered another division in 1968 by the withdrawal of 2,113 out of 8,047 congregations - 500,000 members lost)
  2. The less liberal ICC (Independent Christian Church)
- C. A unity movement was launched in 1914 by E.H. Koch, State Secretary of the Tennessee Christian Missionary Society.
  1. "The Commission on Unity" (for the sake of addressing the issue of instrumental music) was formed in the 1920's.
  2. The Hardeman-Boswell Debate in 1923 (brought about by the movement) largely terminated it and effectively pointed out that the instrumental music question had to be solved.
- D. In the 1930's a movement began which was aimed at unity between the ICC and the churches of Christ.
  1. James DeForest March (1933) wrote continuously in the "Christian Action" a publication of Christian Standard.
  2. Christian Action Conferences were held through the nation. The purpose was "to infiltrate churches of Christ and teach them that instrumental music in worship was an indifferent matter." (G.K. Wallace, FHC Lectures, 1974, p. 60.)
  3. The first National Unity meeting was held in Detroit, Michigan, May 3-4, 1938.
    - a. This was where Claude F. Witty preached.
    - b. The participants were H. H. Adamson, J.N. Armstrong, W.R. Walker, P.H. Welshmer and O.A. Trinkle, etc.
  4. The second National Unity Meeting was held in Indianapolis,

Indiana, in May, 1939.

- a. W. R. Walker tried to defend the use of instrumental music by the silence of the scriptures.
  - b. Edwin R. Errett, editor of the Christian Standard, tried to defend their position in an exchange with H. Leo Boles.
  - c. H. Leo Boles delivered a speech (1 1/2 hours long) in which he stated that they had all believed the same thing until the introduction of the missionary society in 1849 and the instrument ten years later. He further stated: "You know where you left the Churches of Christ; hence you know where to find them; come back and unity is the inevitable result."
5. In 1943 Murch and Witty started a Unity Movement which had a five point program:
- a. "Prayer"
  - b. "Survey" - See how people believe
  - c. "Friendliness" - fellowship meetings - This is the pattern of similar unity movements being initiated by others today. Here is where they learned it.
  - d. "Cooperation" - work together in common enterprises.
  - e. "Study and discussion" (James DeForest Murch, Christians Only (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co.) p. 275.
6. In 1950 Earnest Beam (California) took up the plea of the Christian Church in a paper entitled "The Christian Forum." This paper was designed to promote unity. It promoted the instrument and missionary society. (Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and G.C. Brewer strongly opposed him.)
7. W. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett were the next two.
- a. In the 1950's Ketcherside opposed "located" preachers,

orphan homes, and christian colleges. He pushed these vices in public debates and his paper, The Mission Messenger.

b. Leroy Garrett edited a paper called Bible Talk.

c. In the 1960's Ketcherside and Garrett began to champion "unity in diversity" or "fellowship without endorsement."

(1) Fellowship with all who have obeyed the "Gospel" regardless of their doctrinal beliefs or practices.

(2) "Doctrine" is distinct from "gospel." New Testament does not support such an idea (Rom. 16:17,18; Acts 13:5,7,10,12; Rom. 1:15; Gal. 2:5; 5:1)

(3) Ketcherside and Garrett said: "Such matters as instrumental music in worship, premillennialism, the missionary society, speaking in tongues, observance of the Lord's supper on Thursday night or women preachers have no bearing on fellowship whatever." (Dub McClish, The Current Unity Movement, Tract, p. 7)

#### IV. Some Current Unity Movements

A. Its hard to tell just exactly when the present movements began, but most think in 1982 or 1983.

B. The first current unity meeting was held in Joplin, Missouri, August 7-9, 1984.

1. It was called "Restoration Summit." ("Summit" (the term) raised a lot of questions)

2. This was "by invitation only" and invitations went to 50 men from each group (church of Christ and ICC)



3. Alan Cloyd and Don DeVelt were the leaders in this meeting.
  4. It raised grave concern among many brethren for several reasons: (Suggested by Dub McClish)
    - a. It was questionable as to whether the most representative men in the brotherhood were invited.
    - b. H. Leo Boles speech of 1939 (in tract form) was not allowed to be distributed.
    - c. Suggestions were made that the speakers go home and arrange combined periods of worship (with ICC) and exchange pulpits.
    - d. The main issue of instrumental music was not really dealt with.
- C. The next "Restoration Forum" was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, March 18-20, 1985.
1. It was hosted by the Garnett Road Church.
  2. Again the participants were by "invitation only."
  3. There were speeches followed by small group discussion.
- D. Three other unity meetings are:
1. Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, July 7-9, 1985.
  2. Milligan College in Johnson City, Tennessee, April 29-30, 1986.
  3. Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary, at Cincinnati Ohio, April 28-30, 1987.
- V. Some Observations (Many suggested by Dub McClish)
- A. The earlier efforts seemed to have been aimed at unity by settling the cause of division (namely a wrong concept of scriptural authority). Largely failed.
  - B. Since 1937 (beginning with Murch/Witty work) the efforts have been more toward "union", "fellowship."

1. "Acceptance and cooperation in spite of crucial differences which prevent true unity." (Dub McClish, p. 12)
  - ✓ 2. Alan Highers wrote:  
 "In more recent years, however, the emphasis has shifted away from the 'unity' concept (which involved a settlement or resolution of doctrinal differences) and has turned more toward a 'fellowship' concept (which seeks to promote joint participation and activity without the resolution of the issues and practices that divide us). Firm Foundation, 3/25/86.
- C. Resemblances between the Murch/Witty meeting (50 years ago) and current ones.
1. Both begun by one man from each group.
  2. Both involved 50 men from each group in earlier meetings with similar formats of speeches.
  3. Both gave birth to a paper (Murch/Witty, Christian Unity Quarterly; Dewelt/Lloyd, One Body)
  4. Both have involved several meetings on both a local and nationwide scale.
  5. Both produced (and continue) some exchanges of articles in papers and appointments for speeches.
  6. Both have involved a number of young preachers.

### Conclusion

1. The desire for unity launched the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Three vital elements in the principle for this unity:
  1. The word of God, not human creeds, was to be the only rule of faith and practice. The word taught divine precepts by:
    - a. Direct Commands
    - b. Approved precedents or examples
    - c. Necessary inferences
  2. "A wide range was allowed in which human opinions might roam. Men

~~were allowed to possess their own opinions so long as they were not enjoined upon other Christians with the full force of doctrine."~~

3. ~~"Brotherly love was to be the cohesive element in the church. As the Scriptures would bind brethren together intellectually, love would bind them together emotionally."~~ (Earl West, G. A., Dec. 3, 1964).

2. Suggestions that can contribute to unity, (M. Norvel Young-F. F. 7/11/67.

- a. Encourage more individual study of scriptures (Ignorance leads to division)
- b. Pray earnestly for unity.
- c. Avoid following men rather than the Lord.
- d. Avoid becoming so attached to the traditions in your part of the country that you will be tempted to equate them with the will of God.
- e. Encourage brethren to work together.
- f. Don't take unity for granted.
- g. Be alert to opportunities to teach others the way of the Lord.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

---

A term paper  
presented to Mark Crowell

---

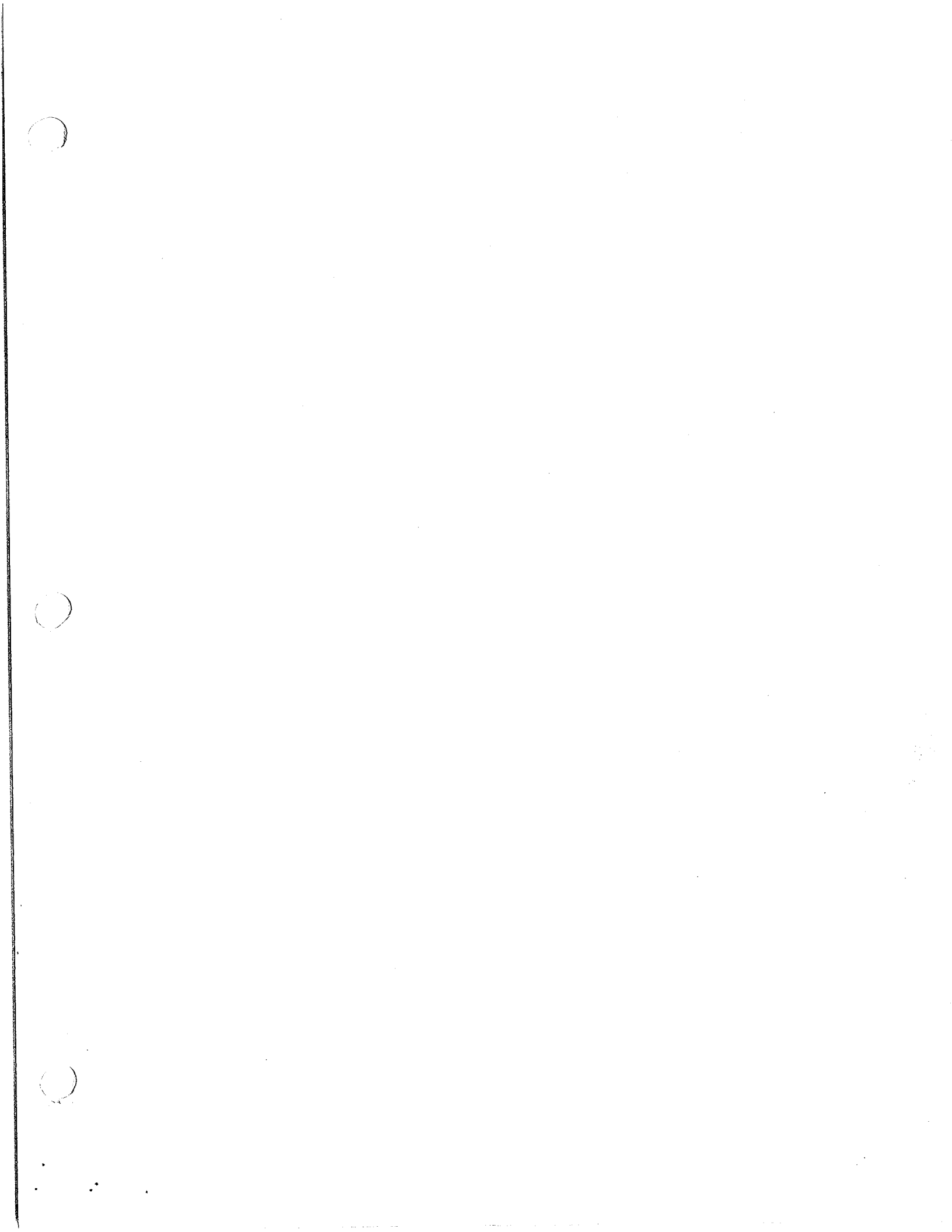
In  
partial fulfillment of requirements for  
Sociology 410

---

By  
James Meadows

---

December 9, 1986



protracted legal proceedings challenging it on constitutional grounds. On July 2, 1976, the Supreme Court made four related decisions which provided the framework for reintroducing the death penalty.

These decisions . . . were of importance to the entire western world. Until then, no industrial democracy had reintroduced the death penalty after taking substantial steps (in 1972) toward its abolition. Thus, after a nine year moratorium on executions, the Supreme Court's declaration that the states were free to execute were without modern precedent.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976, and even though thirty-seven states have death penalty statutes on their books, only twelve states have executed since 1977. There are more people sitting on death row than at any time in the nation's history. This sociological "time bomb", many feel, will explode at any time. One of the reasons for the increased number of prisoners and the "time bomb" feeling, is the lapse of time between sentencing and execution. "The average time on death row for 32 people executed between 1977 and years-end 1984 was six years."<sup>2</sup>

The following chart<sup>3</sup> shows the number of prisoners on death row, and their ages, from 1980 to the present.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>UNDER AGE 20</u>	<u>55 AND OVER</u>
1980:	714	11	10
1981:	838	15	13
1982:	1,050	18	12
1983:	1,202	12	17
1984:	1,405	11	24
1985:	1,655		
1986:	1,780		

---

<sup>1</sup>Len Davis, "The Death Penalty: Vengeance or Justice," Police Product News 10 (September, 1986), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Statistical Abstract of the U. S., Bureau of the Census (1896).

The federal government began to collect data on executions in 1930 and since that time nearly 4,000 people have been put to death. The following chart<sup>1</sup> gives a breakdown by years:

<u>YEARS</u>	<u>NUMBERS</u>
1930-1939:	1,646
1940-1949:	1,284
1950-1959:	717
1960-1964:	181
1965-1967:	10
1968-1976:	0
1977-1982:	6
1983:	5
1984:	21
1985-1986 (July 3 Ending)	29

Three Thousand Three Hundred Forty-five (3,345) of the individuals put to death between 1930 and 1984 were guilty of murder. Researchers Hugo Adam Bedam of Tufts University and Michael Radelet of the University of Florida report twenty-five wrongful executions since 1900.

Public opinion polls over the past ten years show a growing, at least a steady, support for capital punishment. A Gallup Poll, in April, 1976, showed that sixty-five percent of Americans favored the death penalty, compared to forty-two percent in 1966. On January 8, 1977, The National Observer's Poll showed eighty percent favoring it. The Spartanburg Herald reported the Sociology Research Associates Poll in Columbia, S.C., January 18, 1977, and showed seventy percent favoring the death penalty. A Harris Poll taken

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 36.

a few days before the execution of Gary Gilmore, January 17, 1977, ~~showed~~ seventy-one percent favored his execution. The latest poll in 1986 showed over sixty percent still favor the death penalty for murder. "But for one who believes the Bible to be the verbally inspired and authoritative word of God, it is not public opinion but scripture which molds his attitude."<sup>1</sup>

#### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GOD'S WORD

First, capital punishment, as the Latin origin of the term signifies, means punishment which takes the "head," and hence the life of man. In this connection it means that his life, for what is regarded as justifiable reason, is legally taken by the existing form of government under which he lives.

Second, in early history of man, God decreed capital punishment as the penalty for murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. 9:6). First, this statement is found in a context of universal principles where God made pledges to Himself. "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Gen. 8:21); the promise of seedtime and harvest as well as the rotation of the seasons (Gen. 8:22); the instructions to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1; cf. Gen. 1:28a); the fear and dread of man were placed upon all living creatures (Gen. 9:1, cf. Gen. 1:28b); the flesh of animals was given to man for food (Gen. 9:3; cf. I Tim. 4:3,4); and the promise of no more flood (Gen. 9:8-15).

---

<sup>1</sup>Ruble Shelly, "Gary Gilmore Is Dead," Gospel Advocate (March, 1977), p. 152.



Now in the last half of the twentieth century it is recognized that all of these things have continued in their order since the time of Noah. "No satisfactory Biblical evidence has been produced to justify the removal of Genesis 9:5,6 from the text itself or to explain it being of any less authority than the other portion of Genesis 8:20 - 9:17 . . . It therefore appears reasonable to insist that the decree of Genesis 9:5,6 is equally enduring and cannot be separated from the other pledges and instructions of its immediate context, Genesis 8:20 - 9:17."<sup>1</sup> Second, note the reason assigned: "for in the image of God made he man." Is that reason any less true today than when first uttered? No! According to God's own specific declaration, as long as it is a fact that man is in the divine image, that long will this law on capital punishment be in force.

Third, God continued the death penalty for murder under the law of Moses. Having established from Genesis 9:6 that God's law on murder is universal law applying to all people of all ages, then whatever is said about murder in other places will equally apply. "Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death . . . and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." (Num. 35:31-33). The reason assigned is that no expiation can be made (the land cannot be made clean), but by the blood of him that shed it. Was

---

<sup>1</sup>Gervas A. Carey, "A Bible Study," The Death Penalty, ed. T. Robert Ingram (Houston: St. Thomas Press, 1963), pp. 111-112.

this statement true when God first uttered it? Yes! Is it not just as true now as when God first said it? One who says that it is not assumes the logical obligation to prove that it is not.

Fourth, the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," (20:13) does not forbid capital punishment. This can be learned in a number of ways. First, there are fifteen different words used in the Bible that deal with killing, which are (1) haraz - to slay (Gen. 12:12; Lev. 10:6; Eccle. 2:3); (2) zabach - to slaughter (Deut. 12:15; I Sam. 28:24); (3) chalal - to pierce, wound (Jud. 20:39); (4) tabach - to slaughter (Ex. 22:1; I Sam 25:11); (5) muth - to put to death (Ex. 1:16; Num. 14:15); (6) nakan - to smite, cause to smite (Gen. 4:15; Num. 35:11); (7) nagaph - to go round (Isa. 29:1); (8) ratsach - to murder, pierce (Ex. 20:13; I Kgs. 21:19); (9) shachat - to slaughter, kill (Gen. 37:31; Lev. 1:5); (10) anaireo - to take away, kill (Lk. 22:2; Acts 12:2); (11) apoketeino - to kill entirely (Matt. 10:28; 23:37); (12) diacheirizo - to handle violently (Acts 26:21); (13) thue - to slaughter, sacrifice; (14) sphatto - to slay, kill wound (Rev. 6:4); (15) phoneuo - to murder (Matt. 5:21; 23:31; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 18:20; Rom 13:9; James 2:11). Second, the word ratsach (to murder) is the word used in Exodus 20:13. Everytime it is used in the Old Testament it refers to murder (Ex. 20:13; Num. 35, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 30, 31; Deut. 4:42; 5:17; I kgs. 21:19; Job 24:14; Psa. 94:6; Jer. 7:9; Hos 4:2; 6:9). The corresponding Greek word in the New Testament is phoneuo, and every time it is used it means murder (Matt. 5:21, 22:7; 23:31; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 18:20; Acts 3:14; 7:52; 28:4; Rom. 13:9; Jas. 2:11; 4:2; 5:6; I Pet. 4:15; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). Jesus explained "Thou shalt not kill" in Matthew 19:18 when

He said, "Thou shalt do no murder." Third, God used the word harag (to slay) when he commanded Moses to put criminals to death (I Sam. 15:1ff; Josh 7:22ff). From this it is evident that the sixth commandment did not forbid all killing. It prohibited unauthorized killing (i.e. murder) but it did not prohibit authorized killing (i.e. execution).

Fifth, capital punishment is recognized as a legitimate prerogative of the state in the New Testament. First, "Pilate asked Jesus, 'Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?' (John 19:10). Jesus' reply acknowledged Pilate's right as an agent of the State to execute criminals. His quarrel with Pilate was not over the legitimacy of capital punishment, but with the charge that he was a criminal and thus deserving of this penalty himself. He said, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," (John 19:11). Second, Paul was once charged with a crime whose penalty was death. "For if I be an offender or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things where of these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them," (Acts 25:11). Paul did not challenge the law or its prescribed penalty, but the justness of the charge against him. Third, Romans 13:1-6 shows the right of civil government to bear the sword and to exercise the kind of punishment that sword represents. The civil government is ordained to encourage good (Rom. 13:3-4a) and be "the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 12:19-26). The State, acting as "a minister of God," carries out this function. To deny the right, the duty of

the government, to assess and inflict the death penalty is to deny the authority and right God has given it, and that leads to anarchy.

WHAT ARE SOME ARGUMENTS ADVANCED AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

First, capital punishment is no deterrent to murder. Even though this is a highly charged, emotional and controversial issue, statistics (and statistics usually depend on who compiles them and why) show that a cross section of U. S. lawmen believe that it does help deter the committing of major crimes. But this argument overlooks the fact that the primary purpose of capital punishment is not deterrent in others, but punishment of the criminal who committed the act (Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:33).

The person who commits a crime incurs a penalty. He is not simply liable to rehabilitation; he is subject to punishment. And this is true whether or not others may be deterred by what happens to him. If there is no penalty, if there is only rehabilitation and redemption, then crime is committed with impunity.<sup>1</sup>

No one will deny that capital punishment does deter the repetition of the crime by the executed murderer. The lack of evidence, in many cases, supporting the deterrent effectiveness of the death penalty does not disprove its effectiveness--lack of evidence does not constitute disproof.

Second, "capital punishment is for the poor because the rich can hire lawyers with ability to free them from the death penalty." Such a contention, if true, has no real bearing on the question. It is not a reflection on the law of God if injustices are committed,

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Aiken Taylor. "Capital Punishment-Right and Necessary," The Death Penalty (Houston: St. Thomas Press, 1963), p. 50.

but it is a reflection upon the administration of the law which God has ordained. Simply because enforcement and judicial agencies are not always capable of bringing about justice, does not mean that the requirements of justice should be nullified. The fact that it may have been applied in a discriminatory fashion, at times, does not mean that the problem is with the death penalty, but rather with the discriminatory manner in which it has been imposed. If this argument were applied in accordance with its logic it would require the repeal of every penalty on the statute books.

Third, it is argued that capital punishment cannot be harmonized with love of God. How does one explain the death of Ananias and Sapphira, if it is impossible to take life, or otherwise use punitive force against men out of love? How does one explain God's command to Saul to destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15), if taking of life is out of harmony with God's love? How shall we explain the impenitent sinner's part eventually in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:15; 21:8)? This abolitionist's argument overlooks the holiness and justice of God.

Fourth, capital punishment was decreed for several violations under the law of Moses. Why just pick out the murderer? It is true that capital punishment was decreed for: (1) accidentally causing the death of a pregnant woman or her baby if injured in the course of a fight (Ex. 21:22-25); (2) killing of a person by a dangerous animal that had killed before, yet had not been kept caged (both animal and owner to be killed) (Ex. 21:28-30); (3) kidnapping (Ex. 21:16); (4) rape of a married woman (but not a virgin) (Deut. 22:25-29); (5) fornication (Deut. 22:13-21; Lev. 21:9; Exception, Lev. 19:20-22); (6) adult-

ery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24; Num. 5:12-30); (7) incest (Lev. 20:11-12, 14); (8) homosexuality (Lev. 20:13); (9) sexual intercourse with an animal (Lev. 20:15-16); (10) striking a parent (Ex. 21:15); (11) cursing a parent (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9); (12) rebelling against parents (Deut. 21:18-21); (13) sorcery, witchcraft (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27); (14) cursing God (Lev. 24:10-16); (15) attempting to lead people to worship other gods (Deut. 13:1-16; 18:20; cf. Ex. 22:20); (16) avenging a death despite acquittal by the law (Deut. 17:12); (17) intentionally testifying false against someone in jeopardy of the death penalty (Deut. 19:16-19); and (18) murder (Ex. 21:12-14; Lev. 20:2, 24:17; Num. 35:11-21 Deut. 19:11-13). The careful student will observe that, out of the entire list, only murder pre-dates the legislation from Sinai (Gen. 9:6) calling for capital punishment. Capital punishment is a universal law, whereas certain things were included under the law of Moses that were not applicable before, nor have they been since that time.

#### CONCLUSION

Capital punishment seems to have been God's law from the beginning (Gen. 9:6). No amount of reasoning on man's part can change that truth, although the question will probably be debated until the end of time. Furthermore, many who have studied the death penalty conclude that capital punishment is tragic (because some commit murder whereby justice demands the death penalty), but necessary in today's society-as it has been over the millenia.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Berns, Walter. For Capital Punishment. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publications, 1979.
- Campbell, Alexander. "Is Capital Punishment Sanctioned by Divine Authority," Popular Lectures and Addresses. Bethany, Virginia, 1861.
- Cheatwood, Derral. "Capital Punishment and Corrections: Is There An Impending Crisis?" Crime and Delinquency 31 (October, 1985) 4: 461-479.
- Cohen, Bernard Lande. Law Without Order. New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1970.
- Dankenbring, William F. "An Alternative to Capital Punishment," Plain Truth. (November, 1972) : 35-40.
- Darrow, Clarence. "The Futility of the Death Penalty," Verdicts Out of Court. Edited by Arthur and Lila Weinburg. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1963.
- Davis, Leo. "The Death Penalty: Vengeance or Justice, : Police Product News 10 (September, 1986), 9: 34-40.
- Emery, Jr. Austin H. "What About Capital Punishment," Firm Foundation (March, 1970) : 182.
- Haag, Ernest van den and Conrad, John P. A review of "The Death Penalty: A Debate," by Peter G. Garabedian in the Crime and Delinquency Journal (Winter, 1975), pp. 631-635.
- Ingram, Robert. The Death Penalty. Houston: St. Thomas Press, 1963.
- Joyce, James Avery. "Who Killed Chessman," Capital Punishment. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961.
- Kurfees, M. C. Personal Notes on Capital Punishment, 1934.
- Lard, Moses E. Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Co., 1875.
- Lewis, Peter W. "Killing the Killers: A Post-Furman Profile of Florida's Condemned," Crime and Delinquency 25 (April, 1979) : 200-218.

- Meadows, James. "What Does the Bible Say About Capital Punishment," Gospel Advocate CXXII (September, 1980) : 563, 570.
- Mishkim, Barry D. Capital Punishment An Issue Again. Cincinnati: Pamphlet Publications, 1981.
- Rankin, Joseph H. "Changing Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment," Social Forces 58 (September, 1979) 1: 194-211.
- Report Given To The United Nations In New York (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960, 1961-1965).
- Stifler, James M. Romans. Chicago: Moody Press, 1960.
- Shelly, Rubel. "Gary Gilmore is Dead," Gospel Advocate (March, 1977) : 152-153.
- Spartanburg Herald, Death Penalty Supported, 18 (January, 1977).
- The Christian Science Monitor, Will the Supreme Court Decision Halt The Death Penalty Gavel, 2 (October, 1986).
- The National Observer, Punishment Is A Deterrent To Crime, 19 (June, 1976).
- Thorsten, Sellin. Capital Punishment. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Wallace, Jr., Foy E. The Christian And The Civil Government. Nashville, Tennessee: Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, 1968.
- Whiteside, R. L. A New Commentary On Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome. Denton, Texas: Published by Miss Inys Whiteside, 1945.
- Williams, Julian. "Capital Punishment in the U. S.," Christian Crusade Weekly (June, 1974) : 11.



ENDNOTES

- 8 →
1. Adam Clarke, The Old Testament—"Joshua To Esther," Vol. II (New York: Abingdon Press), p. 341
  2. E. M. Zerr, Bible Commentary, Vol. 2 (University, Mo: Mission Messenger), 1948, p. 67.
  3. Joseph Benson, Genesis To The Second Book of Samuel, Vol. I (New York: Published by George Lane and Levi Scott), 1850, p. 903.
  4. Benson, *Ibid.*, p. 905.
  5. J. J. S. Perowne, The Cambridge Bible—"The Second Book of Samuel" (Cambridge: University Press), 1884, p. 142.
  6. Perowne, *Ibid.*, p. 142.
  7. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 345.
  8. Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 911.
  9. B. Dale, The Pulpit Commentary, "Ruth, I & II Samuel", Edit. by H. D. M. Spence, Vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 1950, p. 333.
  10. Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture, "Second Samuel and the Books of Kings" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 1978, p. 79.

## Bibliography

Cottrell, Jack. Tough Questions - Biblical Answers, Part One. Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing, 1985.

Thomas, Leslie G. Thomas. Women And Their Veils. Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing Co.

Kroeger, Richard Clark and Kroeger, Catherine Clark. I Suffer Not as a Woman: Grand Rapids. Baker Book House, 1992.

Elkins, Garland, Editor. The Role of Women - Power. Southaven, Miss. Spring, 1990.

Mapwell, Wallace. What is the Role of Women in Public Assemblies? Jacksonville, Fla: Wallace Mapwell, 1971.

Powland, Robert H. "I Permit Not a Woman ... to Remain Shackled". Newport Oregon: Lighthouse Publishing Co., 1991.

GRIEVOUS PROBLEMS AMONG THE CHILDREN OF DAVID  
2 Samuel 13-14

INTRODUCTION.

1. Give background to the chapters
2. Propose to give brief exegesis of the chapters and then note some practical lessons.

DISCUSSION.

- I. 2 Samuel 13:1-6.
  - A. The lust of Amnon
  - B. Jonadab's advice
- II. 2 Samuel 13:7-14.
  - A. Amnon Satisfies his lust.
  - B. Tamar's efforts to persuade him from the act.
- III. 2 Samuel 13:15-19.
  - A. Amnon's love turns to hate.
  - B. Tamar's reactions to what was done to her.
- IV. 2 Samuel 13:20-22. Absalom's hatred and determined vengeance.
- V. 2 Samuel 13:23-29.
  - A. Absalom's real motive covered by method of invitation.
  - B. The act of killing Amnon carried out.
- VI. 2 Samuel 13:30-39.
  - A. David received the news.
  - B. Absalom's flight to Geshur.
- VII. 2 Samuel 14:1-3. Joab's plan to bring Absalom home.
- VIII. 2 Samuel 14:4-7. The woman presents her case.
- IX. 2 Samuel 14:8-11. David promises the woman pardon and protection.
- X. 2 Samuel 14:12-20. The woman makes application to David's case.
- XI. 2 Samuel 14:21-27. Joab Sent to bring Absalom home.
- XII. 2 Samuel 14:28-33. Absalom re-admitted to David's presence through Joab's mediation.

XIII. LESSONS GAINED FROM THESE CHAPTERS.

- A. There is always an aftermath of sin. 2 Sam. 13:1; Num. 32:23; Eccle. 8:11; Gal. 6:7. *David's sin in 2 Sam. 11 + 12.*
- B. The sinfulness of selfishness and lust clearly seen. Polygamy.
- C. When people marry upon basis of physical attraction alone, problems will always arise.
- D. One needs to be extremely careful in the selection of friends. 1 Sam. 18:1-4; Prov. 27:6a; 1 Cor. 15:33.
- E. God's people are to be different. *God expects that. Look what David's sin did. 2 Sam. 12:14; cf. Rom. 7:24; 1 Tim. 5:14*
  1. Tamar's plea (2 Sam. 13:12)
  2. Lev. 11:44; 20:24-26
  3. Rom. 12:1-2; Tit. 2:14; Phil. 1:27.
- F. Sixth, some fundamental principles of redemption taught.
  1. Absalom and Amnon had broken the law and David had a responsibility .
  2. Man' violated God's law (Gen. 2:15-17; Gen. 3:1-6)
  3. God "deviseth means" ( 2 Sam. 14:14; Rom. 3:21-26).

CONCLUSION.

2. God's people today are to be different  
(Rom. 12:1-2; Tit. 2:11-14).

F. When David heard these things "he was very  
wroth" (2 Sam. 13:21)

1. But David did nothing about - no self-discipline.

2. Look at Eli (1 Sam. 2:22-25) or Samuel  
(1 Sam. 8:1-5).

3. Many fathers today are too busy to  
correct their children.

H. Sixth some fundamental principles of  
redemption taught in this chapter.

1. Absalom and Amnon had broken the  
law and David had a responsibility.

a. He couldn't ignore the law; if so,  
he opened the floodgate for all to violate  
it. Cf. Dan. 6:1ff. Darius violated law.

b. David brought Absalom back but it  
didn't solve the problem.

c. What David did brought no change  
in Absalom's nature

2. Man violated God's law. (Gen. 2:15-17)  
3:1-6)

3. God "deserveth means" or God "planneth plans"  
(2 Sam. 14:14; Rom. 3:21-26)

CLARIFYING

THE DIFFICULTIES

ARISING FROM

SOME ALLEGED

CONTRADICTIONS

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

AND NEW TESTAMENT

BY JAMES MEADOWS

## PREFACE

IN 1982 ~~AND~~ 1983 I SPOKE ON THE FORTH WORTH LECTURES CONDUCTED BY THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST, BEDFORD, TEXAS. IN 1982 "DIFFICULT TEXTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT" WERE DISCUSSED. IN 1983 "DIFFICULT TEXTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT" WERE DISCUSSED. ~~THESE LECTURE BOOKS WERE~~ THESE LECTURE BOOKS WERE PRINTED BY WINKLER PUBLICATIONS IN HURST, TEXAS. THEY WERE EDITED BY WENDELL WINKLER.

"CLARIFYING THE DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS MY ASSIGNED SUBJECT IN 1982. "CLARIFYING DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT" was the subject DISCUSSED IN 1983. THESE TWO LECTURES ARE "PRINTED BY PERMISSION" FROM WENDELL WINKLER, AUGUST 14, 1995. I PRAY THAT THEY MAY PROVOKE FURTHER STUDY ON THESE MATTERS AND THAT DEEPER FAITH IN THE BIBLE AS GOD'S WORD WILL RESULT.

MAY GOD BLESS THE READING AND STUDY OF THIS MATERIAL.

JAMES MEADOWS

CLARIFYING THE DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM <sup>SOME</sup> ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS  
IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

I. DEFINITIONS AND LAWS:

- A. Terms defined.
- B. A ramification of the Law of Contradiction.
- C. The Law of Contradiction implies.
- D. Absence of a solution does not prove contradictions.

II. DESIGN OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS:

- A. Strong incidental proof there was no collusion.
- B. Stimulate the human intellect.
- C. Test the moral character of individuals.
- D. They give evidence that the Bible and nature came from the same source.

III. SOURCES OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS:

- A. Haley's list.
- B. Ignorance.
- C. No single author claims to tell the whole story.
- D. Failure to be fair with the Bible.
- E. Misinterpretation of the Bible.
- F. Change in circumstances.
- G. Blind prejudice of the critic.

IV. IF CONTRADICTIONS REALLY EXIST:

- A. God is a liar.
- B. God has not revealed himself.
- C. The Bible's claim of inspiration is false.
- D. Truth is not as powerful as contradictions and lies.

*W.* SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS *in the Old Testament:*

- A. Genesis 22:1 vs. James 1:13.
- B. Genesis 33:19 *vs. Acts 7:16,*
- C. Genesis 46:26 vs. Acts 7:12-14.
- D. Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20 vs. Joshua 7:24; II Samuel 21:8, 9.
- E. Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7
- F. I Samuel 16:22 vs. I Samuel 17:56.
- G. II Samuel 24:1 vs. I Chronicles 21:1.
- H. Genesis 32:30 vs. John 1:18.
- I. II Samuel 24:9 vs. I Chronicles 21:5.
- J. I Samuel 15:29 vs. Genesis 6:6.
- K. I Samuel 31:3-5 vs. II Samuel 1:5-10.
- L. Acts 13:19, 20 *vs. 2 Kings 6, etc.*

*Handwritten notes:*  
 P. 10  
 P. 11  
 P. 12  
 P. 13  
 P. 14  
 P. 15  
 P. 16  
 P. 17  
 P. 18  
 P. 19  
 P. 20  
 P. 21  
 P. 22  
 P. 23  
 P. 24  
 P. 25  
 P. 26  
 P. 27  
 P. 28  
 P. 29  
 P. 30  
 P. 31  
 P. 32  
 P. 33  
 P. 34  
 P. 35  
 P. 36  
 P. 37  
 P. 38  
 P. 39  
 P. 40  
 P. 41  
 P. 42  
 P. 43  
 P. 44  
 P. 45  
 P. 46  
 P. 47  
 P. 48  
 P. 49  
 P. 50  
 P. 51  
 P. 52  
 P. 53  
 P. 54  
 P. 55  
 P. 56  
 P. 57  
 P. 58  
 P. 59  
 P. 60  
 P. 61  
 P. 62  
 P. 63  
 P. 64  
 P. 65  
 P. 66  
 P. 67  
 P. 68  
 P. 69  
 P. 70  
 P. 71  
 P. 72  
 P. 73  
 P. 74  
 P. 75  
 P. 76  
 P. 77  
 P. 78  
 P. 79  
 P. 80  
 P. 81  
 P. 82  
 P. 83  
 P. 84  
 P. 85  
 P. 86  
 P. 87  
 P. 88  
 P. 89  
 P. 90  
 P. 91  
 P. 92  
 P. 93  
 P. 94  
 P. 95  
 P. 96  
 P. 97  
 P. 98  
 P. 99  
 P. 100

VI. SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Differences in the Synoptic Gospels.
- B. The healing of the blind men in Jericho Matt. 20:20-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43).
- C. What about the words written on the cross?
- D. What time did the women arrive at the sepulchre?
- E. Is there a contradiction in reference to the names of the women?
- F. How many angels were seen by the women at the tomb?
- G. Do Acts 9:8 and Acts 22:9 contradict each other?
- H. Do 1 Corinthians 10:8 and Numbers 25:9 contradict each other?

CONCLUSION:



27

ENDNOTES

- 1Jevons, Elementary Lessons In Logic, p. 118.
- 2Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier. Date Unknown.
- 3Rene Packe, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 148.
- 4B.B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, p. 439.
- 5J.W. McGarvey, Evidences of Christianity (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956).
- 6John W. Haley, An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible (B.C. Goodpasture, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1951), p. 31.
- 7Ibid, p. 36.
- 8David Hartley, A Collection of Theological Tracts, by Richard Watson (London: Evans, et. al., 1791), Vol. V., p. 33.
- 9B.F Westcott, Introduction To The Study of the Gospels (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1872), p. 393.
- 10Augustus Neander, The Life of Jesus Christ (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub., 1873), Preface to First Edit., p. XXIV.
- 11Haley, op. cit., p. 34.
- 12Ibid, pp. 3-29.
- 13Harold Lindsell, The Battle For The Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 161.
- 14Haley, op. cit., p. 3.
- 15George W. Clark, A New Harmony of the Four Gospels in English (New York: S.W. Green Co., 1870), Introd., p. XI.
- 16Haley, op. cit., p. 357.
- 17Ibid., p. 351.
- 17Ibid., p. 380.
- 18Ibid., p. 361.
- 19ibid., p. 333.

<sup>20</sup>E.M. Zerr, Bible Commentary (University City: Missouri Mission Messenger, 1948), Vol. 2, p. 85.

<sup>21</sup>Haley, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 422.

<sup>23</sup>Martin Anstey, Chronology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1973). p. 74.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>25</sup>ibid., p. 80.

<sup>26</sup>Sidney Collett, All About The Bible (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1958), p. 538.

<sup>27</sup>Wayne Jackson, op. cit., pg?

<sup>28</sup>Simon Greenleaf, The Testimony of the Evangelists (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 538.

<sup>29</sup>McGarvey, op. cit., p. 127.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>31</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 181-82.

## INTRODUCTION

Infidels and atheists have attempted ever since the Bible was written, to disprove its histories, impugn its motives, and misrepresent its morals. Skeptics and unbelievers often make the following argument against the Bible: "The Bible is filled with errors, obvious myths and self-contradictions. This proves that it is not a book written by divine guidance, but by fallible men. Therefore the Bible must simply be viewed as an ancient book which, although containing wise sayings and valuable illustrations of certain moral principles, should not be exalted to the status of a divine production."

It is not to be denied that some passages which, when compared with corresponding passages, do appear at first sight to be contradictory. But the fact that two statements may be difficult to reconcile is no proof that they are contradictory statements. It shall be the purpose of this lesson to define contradictions, show some of the sources of contradictions, explain reasons for the differences, discuss some things that must be established before a valid contradiction can be charged, and give as many examples as time and space will permit.

### I. DEFINITIONS AND LAWS

In order to get our subject clearly before us we need to define our terms: Contradiction, contradictory, difficult, discrepancy, alleged. (1) Contradiction means "a statement or proposition that contradicts or denies another or itself and is logically

incongruous." (2) Contradictory means "In logic: a proposition so related to a second that it is impossible for both to be true."

(3) Difficult means "hard to do, make, or carry out. . . hard to deal with, manage or overcome. . . hard to understand. . ."

(Webster). (4) Discrepancy means "the state or quality of being discrepant, differing, disagreeing, discordant, inconsistent."

(5) Alleged means that something is asserted to be true or to exist. It is asserted that contradictions definitely exist in the Bible.

One of the ramifications of the Law of Contradiction is the concept that "nothing can have at the same time and at the same place contradictory and inconsistent qualities."<sup>1</sup> "A door may be open or shut, but the same door may not be open and shut at the same time. Open and shut are opposites, yet they are not contradictory unless they are affirmed of the same object at the same time. Here is the principle: opposites are not necessarily contradictory."<sup>2</sup>

The Law of Contradiction also implies that a proposition cannot, with reference to the same matter, be both true and false. To say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then assert that Jane Smith is not a wife is a contradiction. But to say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then add that she is a mother, does not constitute a contradiction. The two terms, although different, supplement each other, but do not contradict each other. "It is sometimes possible, by means of close study, to show without forcing the issue that two supposedly contradictory passages are really complementary."<sup>3</sup>

It must be absolutely impossible to harmonize two statements before we conclude that they are contradictory. "It is the first

principle of historical science that any solution which affords a possible method of harmonizing any two statements is preferable to the assumption of inaccuracy or error - whether these statements are found in the same or different writers. To act on any other basis, it is clearly acknowledged, is to assume, not prove, error."<sup>4</sup>

Two statements are not contradictory unless it is impossible for both to be true. ". . . that if, on any rational hypothesis, they both can be supposed true, they both may be true, and no contradiction is made out. This rule is made necessary by the fact that writers and speakers often omit details, the absence of which give their statements the appearance of inconsistency, whereas their presence in the narrative would have prevented this appearance. It is unjust to refuse any writers the benefit of this rule; for in doing so we are liable to charge with falsehood the most truthful writers, and with incorrect information those best informed."<sup>5</sup>

The absence of a solution to so-called contradictions does not constitute evidence that there is no solution. It is possible that many of us may be unable to solve many of the difficulties which have been pointed out by infidels as contradictions, while others who have delved more deeply into the scriptures have little trouble solving the difficulty.

## II. DESIGN OF THE SUPPOSED CONTRADICTIONS

Whately, as quoted by Haley, wrote: "The seeming contradictions in scripture are too numerous not to be the result of design; and doubtless were designed, not as mere difficulties to try our faith and patience, but as furnishing the most suitable mode of

instruction that could have been devised, by mutually explaining and modifying or limiting or extending one another's meaning."<sup>6</sup>

What purposes are served by the supposed contradictions?

(1) They become "strong incidental proof that there was no collusion among the sacred writers."<sup>7</sup> The seeming Bible contradictions become one of the greatest proofs that <sup>the</sup> writers did not get together and conceive a plan to deceive the world. David Hartley, in 1749, said, "No single forger, or combination of forgers, would have suffered the apparent inconsistencies which occur in a few places, such as the different genealogies of Christ. . . and some little variations in the narration of the same fact in different Gospels. These are too obvious at first sight, not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud."<sup>8</sup>

(2) They stimulate the human intellect. Difficulties often arouse men to diligent efforts to find the solutions. Bible difficulties "have stimulated infidels to write more books about the Bible than have been written criticizing any other book; and believers have been stimulated to study more than they would have studied to answer infidel criticisms." (Roy Lanier, Sr.). Westcott wrote, ". . . the very existence of the difficulties in our Gospels - which are the groundwork of our faith - is a fresh incentive to vigorous and rational study."<sup>9</sup>

(3) They test the moral character of individuals. Jesus often spoke in parables to test the moral character and sincerity of his hearers (Matt. 13:1-15; Mark 4:11-13). He knew that those with honest hearts would exert the necessary effort to learn the truth, but those superficial and insincere characters would reject it. So today those who "love the truth" will search diligently

for the solution to all the difficulties, but those <sup>that</sup> "love not the truth" will be sent a "strong delusion" (II Thess. 2:10-12), and will feel justified, because of the difficulties and seeming contradictions, in rejecting God's message.

(4) → Insert point four from the next page here--8a

### III. SOURCES OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

Some of our difficulties with alleged contradictions will be solved when we learn the sources of them. Haley<sup>10/12</sup> lists the following: (1) difference in dates; (2) difference of authorship; (3) difference of standpoint or of object; (4) different principles and methods of arrangement; (5) different modes of computing time; (6) peculiarities of oriental idiom; (7) use of several names for persons and places; (8) use of the same words for different meanings; (9) errors in manuscripts; and (10) the imagination of critics. The six main sources of alleged contradictions may be listed as follows:

(1) Ignorance. Many critics boldly proclaim that the "Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions," but when asked to produce one, they are, in most cases, totally ignorant, not only of the supposed errors, but of the precious truths of the Bible. For example, some critics were confident that the Old Testament references to the Hittites (more than forty in number) were in error, but, in 1906, excavations were begun at Bogazkoy (niney miles east of Ankara, Turkey), which proved to be the capital of the Hittite empire.

(2) No single author claims to tell the whole story. Each Bible writer had a definite purpose to accomplish in his writing. The Holy Spirit helped each one select the facts needed to accomplish that purpose, but no writer ever claimed to give all the

(4) They give evidence that the Bible and nature came from the same source. "God reveals himself in his word as he does in his works. In both we see a self-revealing self-concealing God, who makes himself known only to those who earnestly seek him; in both we find stimulants to faith and occasions to unbelief; in both we find contradictions whose higher harmony is hidden except from him who gives his whole mind <sup>up</sup> in reverence; in both, in a word, it is the law of revelation that the heart of men should be tested in receiving it; and that, in the spiritual life as well as in the bodily, must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow."<sup>10</sup> If one has trouble with all the seeming contradictions in the Bible, then look at all the contradictions in nature. There is the beauty of mountain meadows for some and the ugliness of barren deserts for others; there is plenty for some, starvation for others; sorrow and sadness fill the lives of some, while joy and peace are enjoyed by others. Butler once said, ". . . he who denies the scriptures to have been from God, on account of these difficulties may, for the same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him."<sup>11</sup>



facts. Each of the gospel writers tells us something that the other writers do not tell us, but no writer contradicts the other in the detail. Thus, in order to get the whole story, we must read all the accounts.

(3) Failure to be fair with the Bible. Failure to read exactly what the Bible says accounts for some of the alleged contradictions. For example, some people think they have found a contradiction in the Genesis account of the origin of the human family. They allege that the Bible says that all people descended from Adam and Eve. They then say that Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, is said to have gone to the land of Nod and found a woman who became his wife. "If everyone descended from Adam and Eve," the unbelievers ask, "where did this woman whom Cain married come from?" Now if these critics had been fair with the Bible they would never have come up with such a ridiculous criticism of it. The Bible does not say that Cain went into the land of Nod alone and then found a woman already living there. The Bible says that Cain "dwelt in the land of Nod: and that while living there "he knew his wife; and she conceived and bore Enoch" (Gen. 4:16,17). Thus the Bible actually says that Cain lived in Nod with his wife. In other words, it is only logical to assume that he had a wife before he went to the land of Nod, that she was one of the daughters of Adam and Eve mentioned in Genesis 5:4, and that Cain chose Nod as the place where they lived.

(4) Misinterpretation of the Bible. For years critics have argued that Paul and James contradict each other in their teaching about faith and works. It is argued that Paul teaches salvation by faith apart from works (Rom. 4) and that James contradicts Paul

by saying that salvation is by works (James 2). This alleged contradiction arises from a lack of study into what they actually wrote.

*a* close examination of the facts will show that both men teach that a man is saved by faith when that faith leads him to perform the works of obedience which God has assigned. There is not a single author of the Bible who anywhere teaches that salvation is by faith alone. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Paul wrote, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Now, where is the contradiction in these two positions? There is none!

(5) Change in circumstances. Men often take random statements from the Bible, failing to take into account their historical setting, and set them in opposition to each other in an effort to prove the Bible is self-contradictory. For example, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was good..." (Gen. 1:31). "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). There appears to be a contradiction when these two statements are placed side by side, but the <sup>critic</sup> fails to consider that they were made over one thousand years apart. Gen. 1:31 <sup>described event</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>immediately after creation</sup> ~~stated after God created the world~~ and before sin entered, while Gen. 6:6 <sup>described</sup> ~~was made after~~ <sup>it took</sup> man had reached such a level of spiritual degeneracy "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Each of the <sup>statements</sup> was perfectly correct at the time it was spoken.

(6) Blind prejudice of the critic. Many people simply do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the word of God; therefore, regardless of how much proof one may present in support of the Bible they will not believe. "... although in hundreds of cases criticisms of Scripture have been shown to be unfounded, those who refuse to believe in inerrancy, never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a <sup>long</sup> ~~fact~~ <sup>fact</sup>?"

~~IV~~

A-10

IF CONTRADICTIONS REALLY EXIST

To charge that contradictions really exist in the Bible implies a number of other propositions which are devilish in their nature. What are some of these implied propositions?

(1) God is a liar. The Bible declares that the "Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent..." (I Sam. 15:29); that God "...cannot lie" (Titus 1:2); that "...it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). If it is true that God cannot lie, and if God is the author of the Bible, then it follows that no two statements in the Bible can contradict each other.

(2) God has not revealed himself. "If the Bible was written by fallible men, unaided by any higher power, contradicting each other often; and if God cannot lie, it follows that God has not revealed himself." (Roy Lanier, Sr.) If actual contradictions are in the Bible then this proves, as we've already shown, that God is not its author. If God is not its author then it follows that God has not revealed himself to man in the Bible.

(3) The Bible's claim of inspiration is false. The Bible claims to be the word of God (I Cor. 2:6-13). It claims to be able to furnish us completely unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3,4). It claims to be the truth (John 17:17; 6:63). "Hence, should it be discovered that falsehoods or actual contradictions exist in the Bible, our conclusion must be, that, at any rate, these things do not come from God; that so far the Bible is not divinely inspired." <sup>8/2</sup>

(4) Truth is not as powerful as contradictions and lies. No book has done more for mankind in all areas of life than the Bible. How many books would be left in most libraries if all those influenced by the Bible were removed? If all the works of art, songs, and laws, influenced by the Bible, were destroyed, how much poorer the world would be. If the Bible writers' "testimony is not to be credited, and their story is 'cunningly devised fable,' then it follows, that a few unlettered peasants of Galilee devised a system of religious philosophy and morals that has overthrown all the boasted fabrics of human reason, putting to shame its profoundest speculations, and have become the leaders in human civilization, the acknowledged teachers and guides of the most enlightened nation.

*Impotence was never crowned with such a victory, in a fair field and an open conflict with truth. 11/14*

frame of mind that wants to disbelieve? Does it reflect a view-point that says in effect, 'I will not believe what the Scripture teaches about itself until every objection has been answered to my satisfaction.' ~~1:13~~

IV. SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS in the Old Testament,

(1) Genesis 22:1 vs. James 1:13 - Does God tempt man?

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am." "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Critics charge that these two verses contradict each other. First, such criticism arises from failure to understand that "tempt" carries more than one meaning. In James 1:2-12 "temptations" are used in the sense of trials or tests, but in James 1:13 a verbal form is used (Peirazomenos, present passive participle of peirazo, to solicit to do evil). Second, God does try men for the purpose of determining the genuineness of their faith, but he does not solicit men to do evil. God tested, tried, proved Abraham; the American Standard Version renders Gen. 22:1, "God did prove Abraham. . ."

*Acts 7:16*

(2) Genesis 33:19 - Did Jacob or Abraham buy the field?

"And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money." "And were carried over into Sychem ("Shechem," ASV) and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor ("Hamor," ASV) of Sychem" (Acts 7:16). The critics charge that Stephen made a sad mistake, but the charge is false for several reasons. First, Abraham bought a field, in which was located a cave, for the purpose of burying his dead (Gen. 23:3-20) - this transaction is not mentioned

in Acts 7:16, nor is it referred to at all by Stephen. Second, it is obvious that Abraham bought two sepulchres, the second of which Stephen speaks, but which is not mentioned in Genesis. In all probability Abraham's second sepulchre stood in the very field which Jacob bought years later; for it appears that this field and Abraham's second sepulchre formerly belonged to the same owners. Third, Genesis 33:19 does not say that Jacob bought a sepulchre, but "a parcel of a field . . . of the children of Hamor." Joshua 24:32 confirms this to the letter, where we read that "the bones of Joseph were buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor." Fourth, "in the one hundred and eighty=~~five~~ years which intervened, the Shechemites may have reoccupied the location, and Jacob may have renewed the purchase made by his grandfather." Fifth, Stephen was standing before a group of men who were thirsting for his blood and who knew most of the Old Testament by heart, but none of them detected an error in what he said (Acts 6:9-15).

(3) Genesis 46:26 vs. Acts 7:12-14 - Did seventy or seventy-five of Jacob's descendants go into Egypt? "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six. . . all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." Is there a contradiction? First, the number sixty-six refers to those that came out of Jacob's loins, but does not include his sons' wives (Gen. 46:26), Jacob, Joseph [who was already in Egypt - Ex. 1:5], and Joseph's two sons (Gen. 46:27). Second, the number

seventy refers to all who came out of Jacob's loins (Gen. 46:26) and includes Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, according to Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5. Third, the number seventy-five refers to "all his kindred" (Acts 7:14), which would include the wives [evidently some of the wives were already dead], but would not include Jacob [they came with him], and Joseph, his wife and his two sons, who were already in Egypt (Ex. 1:5).

(4) Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20 vs. Joshua 7:24; II Samuel 21:8,9 - Children were not to be put to death, but children were put to death. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sins" (Deut. 24:16; Cf. Ezek. 18:20). David delivered seven sons of Saul unto the Gibeonites and ". . . they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest. . ." (II Samuel 21:9). What is the explanation? First, Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 emphasize that God does not hold a son guilty of a sin committed by his father, but they do not say a son will never suffer the consequences of that sin. Second, Ezekiel 18:20 is part of the answer to a proverb (Ezek. 18:2) that implied that the sufferings of the Jews, at that time, were not in consequence of their own sins, but for the sins of their ancestors. Such a view is strongly refuted. Third, Exodus 20:5 states that God would visit ". . . the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." "Of them that hate me" indicates children who are sinful like their parents. Fourth, Joshua 7:24 is an example of some children suffering the consequence of the

sins of their father, or an example of some children who knew of the deed [since Achan hid the stuff in his tent, Josh. 7:21], but kept quiet about it. Fifth, II Samuel 21:1 speaks of Saul's "bloody house", which may indicate that the sons of Saul were participants in his crime, or, it is even probable, that the sin was still being committed.

(5) Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 - How does one harmonize the names and the numbers? First, there are at least twenty-seven differences in names, and at least twenty-three differences in numbers. Second, ". . . upon the hypothesis (1) that the same person bears several names; or (2) that several persons bear the same name; or (3) that copyists have blundered in respect to names; or (4) that the terms 'father' and 'son,' etc., are used in a loose sense for 'progenitor,' 'descendant,' and the like, we are able to explain a large number of 'apparent contradictions.'" <sup>16/13</sup> Third, there was a marked resemblance of Hebrew letters to one another [such made it easy for copyists to make mistakes, "especially when the numbers were blurred or unskillfully written], and these letters were often used for numbers. In most cases the difference is probably due to copyists blunders. Fourth, these mistakes "touch no vital point of scripture. No precept, promise, or doctrine is in the least degree impaired by them; nor do they militate against any well-balanced theory of inspiration." <sup>17/14</sup>

(6) I Samuel 16:22 vs. I Samuel 17:56 - "And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight." "And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is." How does one explain Saul knowing David, and Saul not knowing David? First, there may have been a

Start here  
pg 11

a considerable lapse of time between the events recorded, and David's physical appearance may have changed considerably.

Second, Saul's "half-mad state" [some say his "diseased mental state"], at times, may have caused him to forget David, which often happens.

Third, the "bustle of war and court life, with the multiplicity of Saul's servants and attendants," <sup>11/8</sup> may have caused forgetfulness.

Fourth, ~~some think that~~ Saul's question indicates <sup>may</sup> ignorance of David's family and his background, not David himself.

Fifth, I Samuel 17:15 <sup>implies</sup> would indicate that David did not remain with Saul all the time, but returned home to tend the sheep, and then back to Saul when needed. Even though I Samuel

16:21 states that David became Saul's armorbearer, this probably did not take place until <sup>after</sup> he had proven himself in battle with Goliath (I Samuel 17:1-50).

(7) II Samuel 24:1 vs. I Chronicles 21:1 - Who moved David to number the people? "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, God, number Israel and Judah" (II Samuel 24:1). "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel" (I Chronicles 21:1). 2 Samuel 24:1 pictures God as inciting the king to number the people, whereas, according to I Chronicles 21:1, Satan is responsible.

The critics charge a contradiction. First, both texts show an aspect of the truth. <sup>Satan and the Lord were both involved.</sup> Job was attacked by Satan with the express permission of God (Job 1:12; 2:6) <sup>and</sup> Saul was troubled by ". . . an evil spirit from the Lord" (I Sam. 16:14) ~~Satan and the Lord were involved in both cases.~~

Second, <sup>(Second)</sup> "It is consistent with Hebrew modes of thought that whatever occurs in the world, under the overruling providence of God, - whatever he suffers



to take place, - should be attributed to his agency." <sup>1980</sup> ~~16~~ <sup>Record</sup> ~~Third~~  
 since God does not tempt [solicit to do evil (James 1:13-15)],  
 and since David was tempted to do evil, then Satan was the one that  
 led him to commit sin (II Samuel 24:10). The margin of the KJV  
 has "Satan" in II Samuel 24:1.

(8) Genesis 32:30 vs. John 1:18 - "And Jacob called the name  
 of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my  
 life is preserved." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only  
 begotten, Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared  
 him." Is there a contradiction? First, "face to face" does not  
 mean, unless the context demands it, that an individual literally  
 sees God. God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai was called "face  
 to face" (Deut. 5:4, 5), even though Israel did not see God in  
 reality. <sup>(Deut. 19:20-24; 20:18-21).</sup> God's nearness to the children of Israel, in contrast  
 to his relation to other nations, is called "face to face" (Num.  
 14:14). The Lord spake "unto Moses face to face" (Ex. 33:11), yet  
 Moses did not literally see God's face (Ex. 33:19, 20). It meant  
 a clearness and fullness of revelation to Moses, beyond that given  
 to the other prophets (Num. 12:2-8). A partial revelation is  
 called seeing "through a glass darkly" (I Cor. 13:12a), but a  
 full-revelation is "face to face" (I Cor. 13:12b). Second, when  
 Jesus said that "no man hath seen God," he meant that he had never  
 been as fully and clearly revealed as he was about to declare him.  
 Jesus later said, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the  
 Father. . ." (John 14:9). Third, Jacob saw God through the angel  
 that was God's representation.

(9) II Samuel 24:9 vs. I Chronicles 21:5 - "And Joab gave  
 up the sum of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel

eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men." "And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and hundred thousand that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand that drew sword, <sup>3)</sup> and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand that drew sword." How does one explain the difference in the numbers? First, it could be an error of the copyists in one or both cases. Second, in I Chron. 21:5 mention is made of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi. "Although this fact is mentioned in this place, where the number given is the larger one, it should be considered in the account in 2 Samuel, where the smaller number is given. It seems that Joab obeyed the king's order in the main, but finally became provoked at the whole project, and left off two tribes in his return. ] The larger account includes all the tribes; but when he came to deliver the report to David, he gave the number, less those of the two tribes." <sup>20</sup> ~~1719~~ Third, Collet states that Chronicles gives emphasis to "all Israel were 1,100,000"; while Samuel selects only the warriors, and states that "there were in Israel 800,000 valiant men. He further states that Samuel emphasizes "all the men of Judah were 500,000"; while Chronicles merely mentions the men that drew the sword" as being 470,000, implying there were some who did not draw the sword.

(10) I Samuel 15:29 vs. Genesis 6:6 - "And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." How can God repent, yet not repent? First, Jeremiah 18:7-10 is a very explicit statement of God's plan or rule of conduct in dealing with men:

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, <sup>ai</sup> against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at that instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Second, man repents because he needs to change his mind about sin and to change his life, God does not repent, in this sense, because "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. . . ." (Num. 23:19). Third, repentance basically involves a change. This does not mean a change in God - "his attitude toward sin and sinners, on the one hand, and toward goodness and the good on the other, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It is precisely because God is immutable, that his relation to men, and his treatment of them vary with the <sup>ha</sup> changes in their character and conduct. In a word, he changes because he is unchangeable."<sup>2/20</sup> When Israel sinned at Mt. Sinai <sup>ai</sup> God willed that they be destroyed, but when Israel turned from their evil way God repented, i.e., he willed that the decree to destroy the people be changed so that they not be destroyed (Ex. 32:1-14). God made Saul king of Israel, but when Saul became disobedient, God said "it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king . . ." (I Sam. 15:11). God decreed that the kingdom be taken from Saul (I Sam. 15:24-28). In this context it is said that the "Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent . . ." i.e., he was not going to will a change in his decree.

(11) I Samuel 31:3-5 vs. II Samuel 1:5-10. I Samuel 31:3-5 states that Saul fell on his sword and killed himself, while II Samuel 1:5-10 relates the story of the young Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul. How did Saul really die? First, I Samuel 31:3-5 is a true record of how Saul really died. He had been wounded and, afraid of capture by the Philistines, asked his armorbearer to kill him. When his armorbearer refused, he killed himself. Second, it is true that the events recorded in II Samuel 1:5-11 took place, but what the Amalekite told <sup>was</sup> not the truth. How does one explain that the young Amalekite just happened to be wandering around on Mount Gilboa and met Saul (II Samuel 1:6)? Furthermore, it is not likely that Saul would have asked an uncircumcised Amalekite to kill him, since he had <sup>earlier</sup> expressed alarm at being thrust through and abused by the uncircumcised (I Samuel 31:4).

<sup>I Kings 6:1 vs.</sup>  
 (12) Acts 13:19, 20 - "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." Difficulty has arisen in trying to reconcile these verses with I Kings 6:1 which says: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt . . . he began to build the house of the Lord." This indicates a longer period of time. What is the <sup>explanation</sup> ~~Explanation~~? First, "the text from Acts really has no bearing upon the subject, since, according to the order of the Greek in the four oldest and best manuscripts, the correct rendering is, 'He gave them their land as a possession about four hundred and fifty years; and, after that,

he gave [to them] judges until Samuel the prophet." <sup>22</sup>~~19~~ Second, Anstey, in his Chronology of the Old Testament, shows that the years of servitude, rest, usurpation, and Judgeship, from the first servitude under Cushan to the election of Saul, is exactly four hundred fifty years. ". . . Paul is, however, quite right in using the word 'about,' and he was compelled to use it in order to be accurate, because the period of which he is speaking is the period from the division of the Land to the end of the Judgeship of Samuel. It includes, therefore, the so-called Joshua-Judges chasm of 13 years, and as this is not specified in the Text of the Old Testament, and not included in the 450 years that are specified. St. Paul is obliged to allow for this space, and he does so quite naturally and quite accurately by describing this period as a period of 'about 450 years.'" <sup>23</sup>~~20~~ He further says that the ". . . 480 is arrived at by omitting from the 594 years of the entire period the 111 years of the six servitudes and the 3 years of the usurpation of Abimelech." <sup>24</sup>~~21~~ These years are omitted "because the author is computing the years of the Theocracy, of the government of God, of Isra-El, and during these years Israel was not Isra-El, not governed by God, but under the heel of the oppressor and the usurper. Hence they are not included in the Theocratic years of the reckoning of God, though they are reckoned in the computation of the years of the age of the World." <sup>25</sup>~~22~~ Third, some explain the difficulty as an error by the copyist due to the similarity of letters and the blurred images they may have seen.

obedience which God has assigned. There is not a single author of the Bible who anywhere teaches that salvation is by faith alone. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Paul wrote, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Now, where is the contradiction in these two positions? There is none!

(5) Change in circumstances. Men often take random statements from the Bible, failing to take into account their historical setting, and set them in opposition to each other in an effort to prove the Bible is self-contradictory. For example, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was good..." (Gen. 1:31). "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). There appears to be a contradiction when these two statements are placed side by side, but the critic fails to consider that they were made over one thousand years apart. Genesis 1:31 was stated after God created the world and before sin entered, while Genesis 6:6 was made after man had reached such a level of spiritual degeneracy "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Each of the statements was perfectly correct at the time it was spoken.

(6) Blind prejudice of the critic. Many people simply do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the word of God; therefore, regardless of how much proof one may present in support of the Bible they will not believe. "...although in hundreds of cases criticisms of Scripture have been shown to be unfounded, those who refuse to believe in inerrancy, never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that wants to disbelieve? Does it reflect a viewpoint that says in effect, 'I will not believe what the Scripture teaches about itself until every objection has been answered to my satisfaction'." 15

V. SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS *in The New Testament*

Pg 14

(1) Differences in the synoptic gospels. The difference in the synoptic gospels must be due to the fault of the evangelists in not producing a faithful record or to a definite design on the part of the Holy Spirit. It seems quite clear that the difference cannot be due to carelessness or forgetfulness on the part of the evangelists for two reasons, - "viz,

first, all the differences put together do not furnish one single case of real contradiction or error; and secondly, these very differences, when carefully studied, are found to constitute an added beauty to the Gospel narratives." <sup>He 18</sup> It is quite obvious to the careful Bible student that each writer had a special purpose in mind in presenting Christ. Matthew presents him as King of the Jews; Mark the Servant of Jehovah; Luke the Perfect Son of Man; and John the Son of God. Naturally each writer would select the words and deeds of the Lord, which, while being absolutely correct, might differ widely from the others. But remember that two statements that differ do not constitute a contradiction unless it is impossible for both to be true. No legitimate contradiction can ever be charged if there is a reasonable way of harmonizing the records.

(2) The healing of the blind men of Jericho (Matt. 20:20-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). What problems are charged? As Jesus traveled toward Jerusalem for the last Passover, Mark and Luke mention the healing of only one blind man (Mark 10:46; Luke 18:35) while Matthew records the healing to two men (Matt. 20:30). Matthew and Mark indicate the healing was done as Jesus was leaving Jericho, whereas Luke appears to suggest that a blind man was healed as the Lord "drew nigh" to the city. There would be a contradiction if Mark had stated that only one man was healed, while Matthew affirms that more than one was healed, but such is not the case. Matthew merely supplements Mark and Luke.

Several reasonable possibilities have been advanced by scholarly writers for the second difficulty. "(1) It is possible that three blind men were healed in the vicinity of Jericho on this occasion. The instances mentioned by Luke as occurring when Jesus approached the city might have represented a different case than that recorded by Matthew and Mark. It cannot be proved that this is not the situation. (2) Noted lexicographer Edward Robinson argued that the verb eggizo (rendered "drew near" in Luke 18:35) could also mean "to be near." He cited evidence from the LXX (I Kgs. 21:2 - "it is near unto my house"; Deut. 21:3 - "the city next unto the slain man", cf. Jer. 23:23; Ruth 2:20; II Sam. 19:42) and also from the N.T. (Lk. 19:29, compared with Mt. 21:1; Phil. 2:3). He thus translated Luke 18:35 as "while he was yet nigh unto Jericho" (Greek-English Lexicon, p.200). This view implies that Luke therefore simply located the miracle near Jericho and hence such can be readily harmonized with the other two accounts. This suggestion certainly cannot be absolutely ruled out. (3)

A harmonization that is very popular among reputable writers is the fact that at the time of Christ there were actually two Jerichos. First, there was the Jericho of O.T. history (Josh. 6:1f; I Kgs. 16:34), which was located at the sight of Elijah's spring. In the first century, however, that city lay mostly in ruins. Second, about two miles south of that site was new Jericho built by Herod the Great. The Lord, therefore, traveling toward Jerusalem, would first pass through O.T. Jericho, and then, some two miles to the south-west, go through Herodian Jericho. The miracles under consideration, therefore, may have been performed between the two Jerichos. Accordingly, the references of Matthew and Mark to leaving Jericho would allude to old Jericho, whereas Luke's observation to drawing near to Jericho would refer to the newer city (cf. Robertson, Word Pictures, I, p. 163).<sup>27</sup> ~~1726~~

(3) What about the words written on the cross? Critics have charged that the authors of the four gospels contradict each other in the accounts of the words written on the superscription on Jesus' cross. But do they? Matthew wrote, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matt. 27:37). Mark says, "THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Mark 15:26). Luke says, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38). John says, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19), and then adds that the superscription was "written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" (John 19:20). The total would read: "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." Now where is the contradiction? These accounts are not contradictory, but supplementary.

(4) What time did the women arrive at the sepulchre? Skeptics argue that the gospel writers contradict each other. Matthew says "...as the day was dawning" (28:1). Mark writes "...very early in the morning...at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:2) or "when the sun was risen." (ASV) Luke has "...very early in the morning" (Luke 24:1) and John writes "when it was yet dark" (John 20:1). There are two possible explanations. First, since Mark said very early in the morning (supported by all the others) we must not suppose he means to contradict himself when he mentions "the rising of the sun." "As the sun is the source of light and of the day, as his earliest rays produce the contrast between darkness and light, between night and dawn, so the term sunrising might easily come in popular language, by a metonymy of cause for effect, to be put for all that earlier interval, when his rays, still struggling with darkness, do nevertheless, usher in the day."<sup>28</sup> The Bible supports this thought. (cf. Judges 9:32-34). "The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens." (Psa. 104:22) Wild animals do not wait for the



actual appearance of the sun before they steal away to their dens, but the dawning light, the break of day, is the signal for their retreat. Mark seems to be using the rising of the sun in a popular sense as equivalent to the rising of the day or early dawn. Second, McGarvey says the word came (epxoaaau) is sometimes used with reference to starting instead of arriving, and he gives Matthew 14:12 and John 6:17 as examples. Matthew and John have in mind the time when the women started to the sepulcher, according to their usage elsewhere, while Mark refers to the arrival. This seems clear from the fact that Mark refers to the women's purchase of the spices on the way in the preceding clause (Mark 16:1).

(5) Is there a contradiction in reference to the names of the women? Luke says that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and "other women" went; Mark, that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went; Matthew, that Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph went; and John, that Mary Magdalene went. If any one of the writers had said that only those whom he mentions went, then a logical contradiction could be charged, but no exclusive term is used. "The only fair and just way, therefore, to deal with the several statements is to suppose that all the women mentioned went, and that each writer, for reasons which we may or may not discover, chose to speak of them as he does. An omission is not a contradiction." *1829*

(6) How many angels were seen by the women at the tomb? Matthew mentions "the angel of the Lord" that rolled back the stone and spake to the women (Matt. 28:1-5). Luke says "behold, two men stood by them in shining garments" (Luke 24:4). John writes that two angels were seen by Mary Magdalene (John 20:11, 12). There were actually two angels, but Matthew sees fit to mention the one who was the speaker without mentioning the other. Luke and John, on the other hand, mention both angels without distinguishing the one who did the speaking. *1812* McGarvey says, "It is an every day occurrence to speak of having met a friend and of having a conversation with him, without mentioning another friend who was present at the time; and yet, in referring to the same incident, to speak of having met both." *2030*

(7) Do Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9 contradict each other? "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man" (Acts 9:7). "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were *1812* afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spoke to me" (Acts 22:9). Failure to grasp that a word may have more than one

meaning leads to this difficulty. Arndt and Gingrich, pp. 31-32, state that the Greek word ahouo means "to hear, the sense of perception" and it also means "to understand." The men that were with Saul "heard the sound" but they did not "understand what was said." Jesus said to some unbelieving Jews, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43). Jesus used the same word in Matthew 13:13 when he said "...and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."

(8) Do I Corinthians 10:8 and Numbers 25:9 contradict each other? "...and fell in one day three and twenty thousand" (I Cor. 10:8). "And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand" (Num. 25:9). First, it is not an unheard of thing, where there is no intention of making an exact count to give an approximate number - speaking in round numbers. "For example, there were those whom the Romans called the Centumviri, The Hundred, when in fact there were one hundred and two of them" (John Calvin). Since there were over twenty three thousand Moses could have been using the larger number and Paul the smaller. Do the critics want to insist that the writers of the scriptures have no right to use round figures? Second, a careful reading of Numbers 25:4,5, indicates that the judges were to put to death the heads or leaders of the people, which Clarke thinks may have numbered as many as one thousand, and for which Paul allows. Twenty three thousand died from the plague, a term which occurs more than one hundred twenty times, referring to divine visitation in forms of diseases, pestilence, etc. Third, Moses says "those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand" (Num. 25:9) while Paul says there "fell in one day three and twenty thousand." (I Cor. 10:8). The Bible doesn't tell us how long the plague lasted - one day or more.

CONCLUSION

"It is my judgement that many of the so-called discrepancies will be resolved as evangelical scholars give their attention to them. It would be foolish for me or for anyone else to assert that all of the difficulties will be answered this side of eternity. They may, or they may not be. But the absence of a solution for even a single remaining problem is no reason to suppose that there is no solution. The fact that there have been dogmatic assertions made about the certainty of this mistake or that only to have the miasma dispelled by a solution suggests that need for critics to be very tentative in charging error against Scripture." 233

# CLARIFYING THE DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. DEFINITIONS AND LAWS:

- A. Terms defined.
- B. A ramification of the Law of Contradiction.
- C. The Law of Contradiction implies.
- D. Absence of a solution does not prove contradictions.

#### II. DESIGN OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS:

- A. Strong incidental proof there was no collusion.
- B. Stimulate the human intellect.
- C. Test the moral character of individuals.

#### III. SOURCES OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS:

- A. Haley's list.
- B. Ignorance.
- C. No single author claims to tell the whole story.
- D. Failure to be fair with the Bible.
- E. Misinterpretation of the Bible.
- F. Change in circumstances.
- G. Blind prejudice of the critic.

#### IV. SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS:

- A. Genesis 22:1 vs. James 1:13.
- B. Genesis 33:19 vs. Acts 7:16.
- C. Genesis 46:26 vs. Acts 7:12-14.
- D. Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20 vs. Joshua 7:24; II Samuel 21:8, 9.
- E. Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7.
- F. I Samuel 16:22 vs. I Samuel 17:56.
- G. II Samuel 24:1 vs. I Chronicles 21:1.
- H. Genesis 32:30 vs. John 1:18.
- I. II Samuel 24:9 vs. I Chronicles 21:5.
- J. I Samuel 15:29 vs. Genesis 6:6.
- K. I Samuel 31:3-5 vs. II Samuel 1:5-10.
- L. Acts 13:19, 20 vs. II Kings 6:1, etc.

### CONCLUSION

## INTRODUCTION

Infidels and atheists have attempted ever since the Bible was written, to disprove its histories, impugn its motives, and misrepresent its morals. Skeptics and unbelievers often make the following argument against the Bible: "The

Bible is filled with errors, obvious myths and self-contradictions. This proves that it is not a book written by divine guidance, but by fallible men. Therefore the Bible must simply be viewed as an ancient book which, although containing wise sayings and valuable illustrations of certain moral principles, should not be exalted to the status of a divine production."

It is not to be denied that some passages which, when compared with corresponding passages, do appear at first sight to be contradictory. But the fact that two statements may be difficult to reconcile is no proof that they are contradictory statements. It shall be the purpose of this lesson to define contradictions, show some of the sources of contradictions, explain reasons for the differences, discuss some things that must be established before a valid contradiction can be charged, and give as many examples as time and space will permit.

### I. DEFINITIONS AND LAWS

In order to get our subject clearly before us we need to define our terms:

Contradiction, contradictory, difficult, discrepancy, alleged. (1) Contradiction means "a statement or proposition that contradicts or denies another or itself and is logically incongruous." (2) Contradictory means "In logic: a proposition so related to a second that it is impossible for both to be true." (3) Difficult means "hard to do, make, or carry out. . . hard to deal with, manage or overcome. . . hard to understand. . ." (Webster). (4) Discrepancy means "the state or quality of being discrepant, differing, disagreeing, discordant, inconsistent."

(5) Alleged means that something is asserted to be true or to exist. It is asserted that contradictions definitely exist in the Bible.

One of the ramifications of the Law of Contradiction is the concept that "nothing can have at the same time and at the same place contradictory and inconsistent qualities."<sup>1</sup> "A door may be open or shut, but the same door may not be open and shut at the same time. Open and shut are opposites, yet they are not contradictory unless they are affirmed of the same object at the same time. Here is the principle: opposites are not necessarily contradictory."<sup>2</sup>

The Law of Contradiction also implies that a proposition cannot, with reference to the same matter, be both true and false. To say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then assert that Jane Smith is not a wife is a contradiction. But to say that Jane Smith is a wife, and then add that she is a mother, does not constitute a contradiction. The two terms, although different, supplement each other, but do not contradict each other. "It is sometimes possible, by means of close study, to show without forcing the issue that two supposedly contradictory passages are really complementary."<sup>3</sup>

It must be absolutely impossible to harmonize two statements before we conclude that they are contradictory. "It is the first principle of historical science that any solution which affords a possible method of harmonizing any two statements is preferable to the assumption of inaccuracy or error - whether these statements are found in the same or different writers. To act on any other basis, it is clearly acknowledged, is to assume, not prove, error."<sup>4</sup> Two statements are not contradictory unless it is impossible for both to be true.

". . . that if, on any rational hypothesis, they both can be supposed true, they both may be true, and no contradiction is made out. This rule is made necessary by the fact that writers and speakers often omit details, the absence of which gives their statements the appearance of inconsistency, whereas their presence in the narrative would have prevented this appearance. It is unjust to refuse any writers the benefit of this rule; for in doing so we are liable to charge with falsehood the most truthful writers, and with incorrect information those best informed."<sup>5</sup> The absence of a solution to so-called contradictions does not constitute evidence that there is no solution. It is possible that many of us may be unable to solve many of the difficulties which have been pointed out by infidels as contradictions, while others who have delved more deeply into the scriptures have little trouble solving the difficulty.

## II. DESIGN OF THE SUPPOSED CONTRADICTIONS

Whately, as quoted by Haley, wrote: "The seeming contradictions in

scripture are too numerous not to be the result of design; and doubtless were designed, not as mere difficulties to try our faith and patience, but as furnishing the most suitable mode of instruction that could have been devised, by mutually explaining and modifying or limiting or extending one another's meaning."<sup>6</sup> What purposes are served by the supposed contradictions?

(1) They become "strong incidental proof that there was no collusion among the sacred writers."<sup>7</sup> David Hartley, in 1749, said, "No single forger, or combination of forgers, would have suffered the apparent inconsistencies which occur in a few places, such as the different genealogies of Christ. . . and some little variations in the narration of the same fact in different Gospels. These are too obvious at first sight, not to have been prevented, had there been any fraud."<sup>8</sup>

(2) They stimulate the human intellect. Difficulties often arouse men to diligent efforts to find the solutions. Bible difficulties "have stimulated infidels to write more books about the Bible than have been written criticizing any other book; and believers have been stimulated to study more than they would have studied to answer infidel criticisms" (Roy Lanier, Sr.).

(3) They test the moral character of individuals. Jesus often spoke in parables to test the moral character and sincerity of his hearers (Matt. 13:1-15; Mark 4:11-13). He knew that those with honest hearts would exert the necessary effort to learn the truth, but those superficial and insincere characters would reject it. So today those who "love the truth" will search diligently for the solution to all the difficulties, but those that "love not the truth" will be sent a "strong delusion" (II Thess. 2:10-12), and will feel justified, because of the difficulties and seeming contradictions, in rejecting God's message.

### III. SOURCES OF THE ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

Some of our difficulties with alleged contradictions will be solved when we learn the sources of them. Haley<sup>10</sup> lists the following: (1) difference in

dates; (2) difference of authorship; (3) difference of standpoint or of object; (4) different principles and methods of arrangement; (5) different modes of computing time; (6) peculiarities of oriental idiom; (7) use of several names for persons and places; (8) use of the same words for different meanings; (9) errors in manuscripts; and (10) the imagination of critics.

The six main sources of alleged contradictions may be listed as follows:

(1) Ignorance. Many critics boldly proclaim that the "Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions," but when asked to produce one, they are, in most cases, totally ignorant, not only of the supposed errors, but of the precious truths of the Bible. For example, some critics were confident that the Old Testament references to the Hittites (more than forty in number) were in error, but, in 1906, excavations were begun at Bogazkoy (ninety miles east of Ankara, Turkey), which proved to be the capital of the Hittite empire.

(2) No single author claims to tell the whole story. Each Bible writer had a definite purpose to accomplish in his writing. The Holy Spirit helped each one select the facts needed to accomplish that purpose, but no writer ever claimed to give all the facts.

(3) Failure to be fair with the Bible. Failure to read exactly what the Bible says accounts for some of the alleged contradictions. For example, some people think they have found a contradiction in the Genesis account of the origin of the human family. They allege that the Bible says that all people descended from Adam and Eve. They then say that Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, is said to have gone to the land of Nod and found a woman who became his wife. "If everyone descended from Adam and Eve," the unbelievers ask, "where did this woman whom Cain married come from?" Now if these critics had been fair with the Bible they would never have come up with such a ridiculous criticism of it. The Bible does not say that Cain went into the land of Nod alone and then found a woman already living there. The Bible says that Cain "dwelt in the land of Nod:" and

that while living there "he knew his wife; and she conceived and bore Enoch" (Genesis 4:16, 17). Thus the Bible actually says that Cain lived in Nod with his wife. In other words, it is only logical to assume that he had a wife before he went to the land of Nod, that she was one of the daughters of Adam and Eve mentioned in Genesis 5:4, and that Cain chose Nod as the place where they lived.

(4) Misinterpretation of the Bible. For years critics have argued that Paul and James contradict each other in their teaching about faith and works. It is argued that Paul teaches salvation by faith apart from works (Rom. 4) and that James contradicts Paul by saying that salvation is by works (James 2). This alleged contradiction arises from a lack of study into what they actually wrote. A close examination of the facts will show that both men teach that a man is saved by faith when that faith leads him to perform the works of obedience which God has assigned. There is not a single author of the Bible who anywhere teaches that salvation is by faith alone. James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Paul wrote, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Now, where is the contradiction in these two positions? There is none!

(5) Change in circumstances. Men often take random statements from the Bible, failing to take into account their historical setting, and set them in opposition to each other in an effort to prove the Bible is self-contradictory. For example, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was good. . ." (Gen. 1:31). "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). There appears to be a contradiction when these two statements are placed side by side, but the critic fails to consider that they were made over one thousand years apart. Gen. 1:31 describes events immediately after creation, and before sin entered, while Gen. 6:6 describes man after he had reached such a level of spiritual degeneracy "that



every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Each of the statements was perfectly correct at the time it was spoken.

(6) Blind prejudice of the critic. Many people simply do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the word of God; therefore, regardless of how much proof one may present in support of the Bible they will not believe. ". . . although in hundreds of cases criticisms of Scripture have been shown to be unfounded, those who refuse to believe in inerrancy, never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that wants to disbelieve? Does it reflect a viewpoint that says in effect, 'I will not believe what the Scripture teaches about itself until every objection has been answered to my satisfaction.'"<sup>11</sup>

#### IV. SOME ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

(1) Genesis 22:1 vs. James 1:13 - Does God tempt man? "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am." "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Critics charge that these two verses contradict each other. First, such criticism arises from failure to understand that "tempt" carries more than one meaning. In James 1:2-12 "temptations" are used in the sense of trials or tests, but in James 1:13 a verbal form is used (Peirazomenos, present passive participle of peirazo, to solicit to do evil). Second, God does try men for the purpose of determining the genuineness of their faith, but he does not solicit men to do evil. God tested, tried, proved Abraham; the American Standard Version renders Gen. 22:1, "God did prove Abraham. . ."

(2) Genesis 33:19 vs. Acts 7:16 - Did Jacob or Abraham buy the field? "And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money." "And

were carried over into Sychem ("Shechem," ASV) and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor ("Hamor," ASV) of Sychem." The critics charge that Stephen made a sad mistake, but the charge is false for several reasons. First, Abraham bought a field, in which was located a cave, for the purpose of burying his dead (Gen. 23:3-20) - this transaction is not mentioned in Acts 7:16, nor is it referred to at all by Stephen. Second, it is obvious that Abraham bought two sepulchres, the second of which Stephen speaks, but which is not mentioned in Genesis. In all probability Abraham's second sepulchre stood in the very field which Jacob bought years later; for it appears that this field and Abraham's second sepulchre formerly belonged to the same owners. Third, Genesis 33:19 does not say that Jacob bought a sepulchre, but "a parcel of a field . . . of the children of Hamor." Joshua 24:32 confirms this to the letter, where we read that "the bones of Joseph were buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor." Fourth, "in the one hundred and eighty-five years which intervened, the Shechemites may have reoccupied the location, and Jacob may have renewed the purchase made by his grandfather."<sup>12</sup> Fifth, Stephen was standing before a group of men who were thirsting for his blood, and who knew most of the Old Testament by heart, but none of them detected an error in what he said (Acts 6:9-15).

(3) Genesis 46:26 vs. Acts 7:12-14 - Did seventy or seventy-five of Jacob's descendants go into Egypt? "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six. . . all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." Is there a contradiction? First, the number sixty-six refers to those that came out of Jacob's loins, but does not include his sons' wives (Gen. 46:26), Jacob, Joseph (who was already in Egypt - Ex. 1:5), and Joseph's two sons (Gen. 46:27). Second, the number

seventy refers to all who came out of Jacob's loins (Gen. 46:26) and includes Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, according to Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5.

Third, the number seventy-five refers to "all his kindred" (Acts 7:14), which would include the wives (evidently some of the wives were already dead), but would not include Jacob (they came with him), and Joseph, his wife and his two sons, who were already in Egypt (Ex. 1:5).

(4) Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20 vs. Joshua 7:24; II Samuel 21:8, 9 - Children were not to be put to death, but children were put to death. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sins" (Deut. 24:16; Cf. Ezek. 18:20). David delivered seven sons of Saul unto the Gibeonites and ". . . they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest. . . ." (II Samuel 21:9). What is the explanation? First, Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 emphasize that God does not hold a son guilty of a sin committed by his father, but they do not say a son will never suffer the consequences of that sin. Second, Ezekiel 18:20 is part of the answer to a proverb (Ezek. 18:2) that implied that the sufferings of the Jews, at that time, were not in consequence of their own sins, but for the sins of their ancestors. Such a view is strongly refuted. Third, Exodus 20:5 states that God would visit ". . . the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." "Of them that hate me" indicates children who are sinful like their parents. Fourth, Joshua 7:24 is an example of some children suffering the consequence of the sins of their father, or an example of some children who knew of the deed (since Achan hid the stuff in his tent, Josh. 7:21), but kept quiet about it. Fifth, II Samuel 21:1 speaks of Saul's "bloody house," which may indicate that the sons of Saul were participants in his crime, or, it is even probable, that the sin was still being committed.

(5) Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 - How does one harmonize the names and the numbers? First, there are at least twenty-seven differences in names, and at least twenty-three differences in numbers. Second, ". . . upon the hypothesis (1) that the same person bears several names; or (2) that several persons bear the same name; or (3) that copyists have blundered in respect to names; or (4) that the terms 'father' and 'son,' etc., are used in a loose sense for 'progenitor,' 'descendant,' and the like, we are able to explain a large number of 'apparent contradictions.'"<sup>13</sup> Third, there was a marked resemblance of Hebrew letters to one another (such made it easy for copyists to make mistakes, "especially when the numbers were blurred or unskillfully written), and these letters were often used for numbers. In most cases the difference is probably due to copyists blunders. Fourth, these mistakes "touch no vital point of scripture. No precept, promise, or doctrine is in the least degree impaired by them; nor do they militate against any well-balanced theory of inspiration."<sup>14</sup>

(6) I Samuel 16:22 vs. I Samuel 17:56 - "And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight." "And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is." How does one explain Saul knowing David and Saul not knowing David? First, there may have been a considerable lapse of time between the events recorded, and David's physical appearance may have changed considerably. Second, Saul's "half-mad state" (some say his "diseased mental state"), at times, may have caused him to forget David, which often happens. Third, the "bustle of war and court life, with the multiplicity of Saul's servants and attendants, may have caused forgetfulness."<sup>15</sup> Fourth, Saul's question may indicate ignorance of David's family and his background, not David himself. Fifth, I Samuel 17:15 implies that David did not remain with Saul all the time, but returned home to tend the sheep, and then back to Saul when needed. Even though I Samuel 16:21 states

that David became Saul's armorbearer, this probably did not take place until after he had proven himself in battle with Goliath (I Samuel 17:1-50).

(7) II Samuel 24:1 vs. I Chronicles 21:1 - Who moved David to number the people? "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (II Samuel 24:1). "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel" (I Chronicles 21:1). II Samuel 24:1 pictures God as inciting the king to number the people, whereas, according to I Chronicles 21:1 Satan is responsible. The critics charge a contradiction. First, both texts show an aspect of the truth. Satan and the Lord were both involved. Job was attacked by Satan with the express permission of God (Job 1:12; 2:6) and Saul was troubled by ". . . an evil spirit from the Lord" (I Sam. 16:14). "It is consistent with Hebrew modes of thought that whatever occurs in the world, under the overruling providence of God, - whatever he suffers to take place, - should be attributed to his agency."<sup>16</sup> Second, since God does not tempt (solicit to do evil (James 1:13-15)), and since David was tempted to do evil, then Satan was the one that led him to commit sin (II Samuel 24:10). The margin of KJV has "Satan" in II Samuel 24:1.

(8) Genesis 32:30 vs. John 1:18 - "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten, Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Is there a contradiction? First, "face to face" does not mean, unless the context demands it, that an individual literally sees God. God's revelation to Israel at Mt. Sinai was called "face to face" (Deut. 5:4, 5), even though Israel did not see God in reality (Cf. Ex. 19:20-24; 20:18-21). God's nearness to the children of Israel, in contrast to his relation to other nations, is called "face to face" (Num. 14:14). The Lord spake "unto Moses face to face" (Ex. 33:11), yet Moses did not literally see God's face (Ex. 33:19, 20). It meant a clearness and fullness of revelation to Moses,

beyond that given to the other prophets (Num. 12:2-8). A partial revelation is called seeing "through a glass darkly" (I Cor. 13:12a), but a full-revelation is "face to face" (I Cor. 13:12b). Second, when Jesus said that "no man hath seen God," he meant that he had never been as fully and clearly revealed as he was about to declare him. Jesus later said, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . ." (John 14:9). Third, Jacob saw God through the angel that was God's representation.

(9) II Samuel 24:9 vs. I Chronicles 21:5 - "And Joab gave up the sum of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men." "And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and hundred thousand that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand that drew sword." How does one explain the difference in the numbers? First, it could be an error of the copyists in one or both cases. Second, in I Chron. 21:5 mention is made of the tribes of Benjamin and Levi. "Although this fact is mentioned in this place, where the number given is the larger one, it should be considered in the account in II Samuel, where the smaller number is given. It seems that Joab obeyed the king's order in the main, but finally became provoked at the whole project, and left off two tribes in his return. The larger account includes all the tribes; but when he came to deliver the report to David, he gave the number, less those of the two tribes."<sup>17</sup> Third, Collet states that Chronicles gives emphasis to "all Israel were 1,100,000"; while Samuel selects only the warriors, and states that "there were in Israel 800,000 valiant men. He further states that Samuel emphasizes "all the men of Judah were 500,000"; while Chronicles merely mentions the men that drew the sword" as being 470,000, implying there were some who did not draw the sword.

(10) I Samuel 15:29 vs. Genesis 6:6 - "And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." "And it

repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." How can God repent, yet not repent? First, Jeremiah 18:7-10 is a very explicit statement of God's plan or rule of conduct in dealing with men:

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at that instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Second, man repents because he needs to change his mind about sin and to change his life. God does not repent, in this sense, because "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. . ." (Num. 23:19). Third, repentance basically involves a change. This does not mean a change in God - "his attitude toward sin and sinners, on the one hand, and toward goodness and the good on the other, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It is precisely because God is immutable, that his relation to men, and his treatment of them vary with the changes in their character and conduct. In a word, he changes because he is unchangeable."<sup>18</sup> When Israel sinned at Mt. Sinai God willed that they be destroyed, but when Israel turned from their evil way God repented, i.e., he willed that the decree to destroy the people be changed so that they not be destroyed (Ex. 32:1-14). God made Saul king of Israel, but when Saul became disobedient, God said "it repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king . . ." (I Sam. 15:11). God decreed that the kingdom be taken from Saul (I Sam. 15:24-28). In this context it is said that the "Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent . . .," i.e., he was not going to will a change in his decree.

(11) I Samuel 31:3-5 vs. II Samuel 1:5-10. I Samuel 31:3-5 states that Saul fell on his sword and killed himself, while II Samuel 1:5-10 relates the story

of the young Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul. How did Saul really die? First, I Samuel 31:3-5 is a true record of how Saul really died. He had been wounded and, afraid of capture by the Philistines, asked his armorbearer to kill him. When his armorbearer refused, he killed himself. Second, it is true that the events recorded in II Samuel 1:5-11 took place, but what the Amalekite told is not the truth. How does one explain that the young Amalekite just happened to be wandering around on Mount Gilboa and met Saul (II Samuel 1:6)? Furthermore, it is not likely that Saul would have asked an uncircumcised Amalekite to kill him, since he had earlier expressed alarm at being thrust through and abused by the uncircumcised (I Samuel 31:4).

(12) Acts 13:19, 20 - "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." Difficulty has arisen in trying to reconcile these verses with I Kings 6:1 which says: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt . . . he began to build the house of the Lord." This indicates a longer period of time. What is the explanation? First, "the text from Acts really has no bearing upon the subject, since, according to the order of the Greek in the four oldest and best manuscripts, the correct rendering is, 'He gave them their land as a possession about four hundred and fifty years; and, after that, he gave (to them) judges until Samuel the prophet.'"<sup>19</sup> Second, Anstey, in his Chronology of the Old Testament, shows that the years of servitude, rest, usurpation, and Judgeship, from the first servitude under Cushan to the election of Saul, is exactly four hundred fifty years. ". . . Paul is, however, quite right in using the word 'about,' and he was compelled to use it in order to be accurate, because the period of which he is speaking is the period from the division of the Land to the end of the Judgeship of Samuel. It includes, therefore, the so-called Joshua-Judges chasm



CONCLUSION

"It is my judgement that many of the so-called discrepancies will be resolved as evangelical scholars give their attention to them. It would be foolish for me or for anyone else to assert that all of the difficulties will be answered this side of eternity. They may, or they may not be. But the absence of a solution for even a single remaining problem is no reason to suppose that there is no solution. The fact that there have been dogmatic assertions made about the certainty of this mistake or that only to have the miasma dispelled by a solution suggests that need for critics to be very tentative in charging error against Scripture."<sup>23</sup>

of 13 years, and as this is not specified in the Text of the Old Testament, and not included in the 450 years that are specified. St. Paul is obliged to allow for this space, and he does so quite naturally and quite accurately by describing this period as a period of 'about 450 years.'<sup>20</sup> He further says that the ". . . 480 is arrived at by omitting from the 594 years of the entire period the 111 years of the six servitudes and the 3 years of the usurpation of Abimelech."<sup>21</sup> These years are omitted "because the author is computing the years of the Theocracy, of the government of God, of Isra-El, and during these years Israel was not Isra-El, not governed by God, but under the heel of the oppressor and the usurper. Hence they are not included in the Theocratic years of the reckoning of God, though they are reckoned in the computation of the years of the age of the World."<sup>22</sup> Third, some explain the difficulty as an error by the copyist due to the similarity of letters and blurred images they may have seen.

#### CONCLUSION

"It is my judgement that many of the so-called discrepancies will be resolved as evangelical scholars give their attention to them. It would be foolish for me or for anyone else to assert that all of the difficulties will be answered this side of eternity. They may, or they may not be. But the absence of a solution for even a single remaining problem is no reason to suppose that there is no solution. The fact that there have been dogmatic assertions made about the certainty of this mistake or that only to have the miasma dispelled by a solution suggests that need for critics to be very tentative in charging error against Scripture."<sup>23</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Jevons, Elementary Lessons in Logic, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Wayne Jackson, Christian Courier. Date Unknown.

<sup>3</sup>Rene Packe, The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 148.

- 4B. B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, p. 439.
- 5J. W. McGarvey, Evidences of Christianity (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956).
- 6John W. Haley, An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible (B. C. Goodpasture, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1951), p. 31.
- 7Ibid., p. 36.
- 8David Hartley, A Collection of Theological Tracts, by Richard Watson (London: Evans, et. al., 1791), Vol. V., p. 33.
- 9B. F. Westcott, Introduction To the Study of the Gospels (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1872), p. 393.
- 10Haley, op. cit., pp. 3-29.
- 11Harold Lindsell, The Battle for the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 161.
- 12Haley, op. cit., p. 357.
- 13Ibid., p. 351.
- 14Ibid., p. 380.
- 15Ibid., p. 361.
- 16Ibid., p. 333.
- 17E. M. Zerr, Bible Commentary (University City: Missouri Mission Messenger, 1948), Vol. 2, p. 85.
- 18Haley, op. cit., p. 65.
- 19Ibid., p. 422.
- 20Martin Anstey, Chronology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1973), p. 74.
- 21Ibid., p. 80.
- 22Ibid., p. 80.
- 23Lindsell, op. cit., pp. 181-82.