

A Quarterly Religious Journal
(Presented by email)

“LIGHT FOR OUR AGE”

Bob Oliver, Editor

(Please use the following email to contact me.)

boboliver32446@gmail.com

January, 2012

**Volume 4
Issue #1**

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

Feature One: Editorial

CAN YOU LIST YOUR PRIORITIES?

A few days ago I was reading the following text:

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

What did Jesus mean in this text? I went back to look at the context. The thought begins with verse 19 where Jesus introduces the topic by telling us to lay up our treasure in heaven and not on the earth. At this point we see Jesus beginning to teach us about our priorities. I am afraid we sometimes get it backward here in this life.

Many of you know I taught school for many years. I know the importance of a good education. I stressed education in my own family. I believe God teaches we should do this. After all, we are told in Romans to be, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord". (Romans 12:10).

But according to our text, our education to prepare us for this life should never come before our education for eternity. While most congregations have a Bible school program, often there is no orderly curriculum. Parents should look as carefully at the curriculum in the Sunday and Wednesday Bible school program as they do their secular education. If you had a child in elementary school, and your child came home from his first day at school and told you that they were not going to study math or science this year because the teachers would rather teach English and social studies, what would you do? Or what would you do if your high school student came home for the third year in a row studying the same set of novels, and avoiding other novels in English class? We are concerned that our children study all of the subjects and have an enriched program.

How many years in a row has your child studied one book in the Bible to the exclusion of others? Is the curriculum designed to help a child reach maturity with a full knowledge of God's word, or is your curriculum just

whatever the teacher wants to teach? Are your Bible class teachers truly concerned about his or her students, or were they put in the class just to get them to attend services?

What kind of Bible lessons are being taught? Are you aware that much of the literature congregations of the Lord's church purchase are not written by members of the church? 21st Century Christian, Gospel Advocate, and perhaps others purchase denominational material and put their own labels on it to keep you from knowing the origin of the lessons. That is why so many congregations observe Christmas and Easter. For years we have been buying denominational literature that had the birth of Christ at Christmas and the death, burial, and resurrection at Easter. Even when preachers were saying from the pulpit that we do not observe these days religiously our members learned in their childhood classes that we do. Now many of our brethren including our preachers have no idea why it is wrong to observe these dates religiously. With these two examples you can see how easy it would be over the course of a generation to change the doctrine of Christ to another doctrine. Remember the warning of Paul in Galatians 1:6-8, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Not only must there be a curriculum that actually teaches our children how to become Christians and to live Christian lives, but we need to understand the importance of seeing that they do not miss any classes. They need to be taught by example that worship and Bible study take priority over school work and sporting events. Unfortunately, there is so little time for our

religious teaching when we meet together. Often teachers have as little as thirty minutes of teaching time. That means our children formally get between one and two hours of Bible teaching each week at our church services, but they get approximately thirty-five hours each week for their secular education. To put that in perspective, two weeks in school will equal more than one year of Bible classes.

Parents that fail to see their children attend their classes are derelict in their duties as Christian parents. It would be the same as allowing their children to miss school because they don't want to go to school, they don't like their teacher, or there is something else they would rather be doing.

This is where our text comes to play. Jesus demands that He must come first. Perhaps many have even made their religion their hobby. Think about it. We love our hobbies. I have known responsible men and women that loved to play golf. They would play as much as they could. But they would not miss work to play golf knowing it would cost them their jobs. Often they would spend large amounts of money on this hobby, from the cost of the clubs and equipment, to the cost of playing on the courses. Yet, they would not put so much into the hobby that they couldn't pay their bills. Golf, while important, could never be first in their lives. Be sure that while you love to attend church services, and you even give freely of your means, that your love of Christ is always your first priority. Make sure your children know that when difficult decisions need to be made that Christ always comes first.

Jesus demands first place. He will not settle for second. Remember, he let the young man walk away. Let me close with what I believe to be a powerful story on this point. It is found in Matthew 19:16-24.

Matthew 19:16-24

16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Feature 2: an article by R. C. Oliver

**July, 1955 edition of *Light*
Objections to Baptism Considered**

In the preceding edition I have given you my reasons for believing baptism in water to be essential to your salvation; however, I am not unmindful of the fact that many objections have been raised against my views on baptism. In order not to leave any stone unturned in search of truth, we shall in this article study some of the more salient objections which have been made against baptism and a reply to each shall be given.

First Objection: If baptism is essential why didn't Jesus say: "He that believeth not and is baptized not, shall be damned?" (*Verse reverence Mark 16:16*) Reply: Jesus did not say "he that believeth not, and is baptized not

shall be damned,” because “and is baptized not” would be superfluous here. It would be like saying, “He that eateth not and digesteth not his food shall die.” “digesteth not” is superfluous here, for if one doesn’t eat he will not have any food to digest. Even so, if one isn’t a believer, then it is impossible to administer to him Bible baptism! Before one can be baptized “according to the scriptures,” he must be a believer! Baptism is the act that puts the penitent believer into Christ; to a non-believer, or an unbeliever, baptism could not be administered according to the scriptures, therefore, such baptism could not be valid.

Second Objection: Baptism is a work of man, and “all man’s righteousness are as filthy rags.” (*Isaiah 64:6*) Reply: It is true that all righteousness originating with man is as “filthy rags.” However baptism is neither a part of the righteousness of man, nor is it the work of man. All God’s commandments are God’s righteousness (*Psalms 119:172*) Baptism is a command of God (*Acts 10:48*) Therefore, baptism is the righteousness of God and is not the righteousness of man! Furthermore, baptism is a work of Christ, and not a work of man; for in John 4:1 it is stated that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; however, Jesus did not personally baptize anyone. His disciples did it for him. The disciples were his agents, and he was their principal. The baptisms are attributed to Christ and not to the disciples. When I baptize a man today in the name of Jesus Christ, I am Christ’s agent, and he is baptizing the man through me. This is another objection that will not stand the test.

Third objection: Baptism is a work, but we are saved by grace through faith, and not by works; therefore, baptism is not necessary to life. Reply: It is true that Paul says we “are saved by grace through faith...not of work, lest any man should boast.” (*Ephesians 2:8-9*) It is equally true that James says:

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.”
(*James 2:24*) How to harmonize this apparent contradiction is the Bible student’s task, and a moment’s observation will reveal how simple the task is, for instance, in Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul is talking about the works of the law of Moses, and it is true that we are not saved by the works of that law. In James 2:24 our author is talking about the works of the law of faith, and it is true that we cannot be saved without observing these works, one of which, incidentally is faith itself (*John 6:29*). Here is another objection that will not stand.

Fourth objection: Water baptism was a part of the “gospel of Peter”, and was for the Jews only. It was never a part of ‘the gospel of Paul,’ which gospel is for the Gentiles. Reply: Jesus commanded that water baptism be preached to the end of the world, not to the Jews only, but to every creature in every nation. (*Matthew 28:19-20*). This includes the Gentiles as well as the Jews (*Acts 2:36-39 cf. Acts 10:47-48*). Furthermore, Paul preached exactly the same gospel that Peter preached, though the one preached chiefly to the Gentiles whereas the other preached chiefly to the Jews; and both preached water baptism! For proof of this you may read such passages as: Acts 2:38-39; 10:48; 19:1-7; Galatians 1 and 2, etc. So our fourth objection has been “weighed and found wanting.”

Fifth objection: Paul preached the gospel of Christ, but he did not preach baptism (*1 Corinthians 1:17*); therefore, baptism constitutes no part of the gospel of Christ. Reply: the text does not say that Paul was not sent to *teach* baptism, it teaches that he was not sent to personally administer baptism. Nevertheless, baptism played such an important role in his ministry that when no one else was present to administer the baptism for him, Paul did it himself (*1 Corinthians 1:14-15*). Now, by whose authority did he do

this? It had to be either by the authority of god, or the authority of Satan. We have but two ultimate authorities in religion, If Paul baptized by the authority of Satan that would disqualify him as an apostle of righteousness, and if by the authority of God, that proves that everyman who teaches that Paul did not preach baptism as a condition to eternal life is wresting the scriptures to his own destruction! Where do you stand on this issue my friend? I am sure that you believe Paul was a preacher of righteousness sent from God; for this reason I the more earnestly urge you to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins. Do not delay, it's later than you think. Tomorrow may not come.

Feature 3: Women's Corner (A new feature beginning this year)

Editor's note: I have asked my wife, Sandy, to write this feature for our paper. Sandy has written for several of our brotherhood papers, including World Evangelist, Mailbox Swap Shop, and Christian Bible Teacher. She currently teaches the fourth and fifth grade Bible class at East Ridge, as well as a Tuesday evening ladies class and has conducted Bible School workshops in Florida, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, and West Virginia. Sandy has also spoken to ladies classes at the Ohio Valley lectureship and Freed-Hardeman's Christian Training Service.

THE PRIVILEGE OF TEACHING

I have been blessed with the privilege of teaching God's Word since I was sixteen. I have taught children most of those years, but I have also been blessed to teach ladies.

At sixteen, a wonderful elder's wife discovered the desire in me to teach children. She mentored me and asked the elders to give me a class. She sat willingly with me each week while I learned how to manage a Sunday

morning class of 4th and 5th graders.

When I look back on those first classes, I remember how much I loved preparing those lessons each week, and I loved the look on their faces as I told them the Bible stories from God's Word.

I often hear of people that refuse to teach because they don't have time or don't feel they know enough about the Bible. So the duty of teaching a class may fall to someone with fewer qualifications and less desire for the souls of the children.

What does it take to teach God's Word? First you have to love God and His Word. If you don't love the Word, you won't make a very good teacher. You must also love souls. If you have no concern for the lost, your teaching will be in vain.

It also takes a desire to teach. If you don't have the desire, then you should avoid teaching. When you don't desire to be there, you won't do a very good job.

It certainly takes knowledge of the scripture. If you don't know the scripture, then study God's word to become prepared. Read the Bible every day. Sit in some children's classes to see what happens in the classes in your congregation. Ask someone to help teach you how to teach.

It takes planning and effort to teach a class. Don't say, "I don't have time". We tend to have time for the things that matter to us. If you don't have time, make time!

Prepare your lesson. Don't go into class not having read your lesson or prepared the material. I once knew a preschool teacher that went into her class each Sunday morning and cut out handwork and read through the lesson after the children came to class.

Pray. I try to pray for my students regularly. Some Sundays I go into

my classroom before services and talk with God about each of my students. With the diverse situations we have: learning disabilities, broken homes, even same sex homes, our children need our prayers; and we need the Lord's guidance as we prepare to teach.

Keep studying and learning. You never reach the point that you don't need to study. I learn something new every time I teach a lesson.

I am blessed to be a Bible teacher. Won't you be one too?

Feature 4: Our Communication:

Provoke not your children to wrath...

This will be a strange usage of this text, but I believe it is worth sharing. When watching the speech development in little children, parents often do not realize that a child's thinking ability usually progresses ahead of their ability to formulate the words. Think for a moment what you must do just to say one word. The mouth position must be correct. A child must control numerous muscles including turning on and off the vocal cords if the sound is "voiced" or "silent". It is really very complicated.

This often causes a child to stammer in the developmental process. This may be especially true if the child is excited about something. I have known of parents reacting to this by telling the child not to stutter but to stop and think about what they are going to say.

If children are told over and over by their parents that they are stuttering, the child may progress from stammering into stuttering. There is much about stuttering that is psychological.

Be patient with little children. Let them work through this phase without believing there is something wrong with them. It is a very normal

phase in childhood development. By the time a child reaches school age, if the stammering persists, then most schools will recommend some speech therapy. I never cease to be amazed as to how little children learn something as marvelous and as complicated as language.

Feature 5: Bible Questions

Editor's note: The following question was submitted to the 1955 January edition of Light Magazine and the answer was given by R. C. Oliver.

“In the Lord’s prayer why do we say ‘Lead us not into temptation’? surely never would He lead us into anything wrong?” –L.B.S.

Answer: God is said to do a thing which He only suffers or permits to be done. The idea therefore is this: Suffer us not to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. I know that god promises to do this, even as He promises bread to His people; nevertheless, in order to show our dependence upon Him, we are told to pray for both bread and protection.

Humor:

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, 'If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?' A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, 'I think I'd throw up.'

In Closing:

As we begin our fourth year in this effort I want to thank you for letting me come once again into your home. I wish for you and your family a very happy new year. If you have friends not receiving this little e-paper, and you

enjoy it, ask them if they would like to receive it.

In the Master's service,

Bob Oliver