

A Quarterly Religious Journal

(Presented by email)

“LIGHT FOR OUR AGE”

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Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:105

Feature One: Editorial

“And Be Kind to One Another”

I was told of a fellowship meal held by a congregation of the Lord’s church. There were several in the congregation that were poor. Several of these poor brethren made it a point to be toward the front of the line. They filled their plates, and it wasn’t long until they were back for seconds. At the end of the fellowship these same members went back to the food table and piled food on a plate to be taken home. Some of the other members of the congregation were complaining that this often happens and that these people never bring food themselves. They never stopped to think that these brethren really needed the food.

A young preacher returned to his dorm at one of our Christian colleges many years ago and told what happened at the little country congregation where he was preaching. It seems that they finally had the resources to build a much-needed new building in which to meet. After services that Sunday, two of the key men of the congregation actually got into a fistfight in front of the building. They disagreed as to where to put the front door on the new building.

So often members are critical of the preacher, the elders, a Bible class teacher, or even a member trying to do good in some way. What does the Bible teach about such matters? Let me begin by considering a few passages from God’s word.

Ephesians 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away

from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man....

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

The Ephesian text tells us we grieve the Holy Spirit if we are "ugly" toward other Christians. We are instructed to forgive each other just as Christ has forgiven us.

James instructs us that we should not judge others of our brotherhood for their attire or income. Jesus used the poor to teach valuable lessons. Remember the widow that gave all she had? She was lifted up by our Lord as an example to all even though the amount she gave was less than one penny.

Paul wrote to the church in Rome that Christians should always prefer other Christians. Being kindly affectioned means we should love each other.

Finally John wrote that if we don't love one another we do not know God. If we are born of God we will love one another.

I believe the early church had the same problems we have in this regard. We should never let ourselves be involved in showing meanness of spirit toward other Christians. Loving the brotherhood is an essential part of being a Christian.

Feature Two: *an article by R. C. Oliver from Light Magazine*

February 1956

Seven Thousand Have Not Bowed To Baal

I fear that we who are Christians too often feel as Elijah once felt: we feel that the whole world has gone to the dogs, “and I even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away”. – 1 Kings 19:10.

Whether the person be in or out of the church makes little difference, we are inclined to think that no other person is quite so honest as we are. We have little or no confidence in the integrity of the man, who lives next door, or across the street, or around the corner. They are not honest, we tell ourselves. And in an attempt to justify ourselves we even rationalize sometimes: the man who hopes to change such a dishonest lot by conversation with the man on the street, the highway, the bus, or in any one of the many other relationships that this crazy, twisted, and dishonest world presents, is simply doing some wishful thinking. It cannot be done, for such a view is too much in common with those of that frightened, despondent and erratic prophet to whom God said: “I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal.” – 1 Kings 19:18.

I feel sure that there are literally thousands of people, both in and out of the church, who are just as honest, just as sincere, and just as anxious to learn the truth as I am. And for one to overlook this point is to forever disqualify himself as a competent teacher of others. Confidence in the other man's integrity is a necessary antecedent condition to teaching him. Knowing this, the successful Christian will build instead of tear down his confidence in others. Also, he will go about seeking every opportunity possible to meet and befriend the honest man in order that he might teach him what be the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Before writing more, I am now ready to state that this brief essay has been inspired by a current event involving just such people as my paragraph above portrays: one who is wiling to teach whenever the opportunity presented itself, and another who was honestly wanting to learn what the will of the Lord is. And as I relate the narrative embracing this event, I trust it will impress upon us, more than ever, the importance of that passing word, or look, that goes together with others to formulate the whole of life. It is not always the long conversations that do the more good, or evil, but it is sometimes just a passing word.

Not long ago two ladies chanced to meet on a bus as they were traveling between Richmond and Berea, Kentucky. The one was carrying a little box, in which she was taking up a collection for her church. The other lady, being approached by the first, was asked if she would care to contribute to this worthy cause, The second lady, who incidentally is a member of the church here (*North End congregation in Parkersburg - RTO*), seeing a wonderful opportunity to teach the truth about giving, took advantage of the occasion and a conversation ensued the effect of which

might well extend into eternity; for her new friend's thinking has been greatly altered, Furthermore, she was so grateful to the member here that shortly afterwards she sat down and wrote to her the following letter:

Dear Sister:

My little note concerns the conversation we had about collecting for the church, as we came on the bus from Richmond to Berea, Kentucky.

You were right, I came by the church and turned in the collection. I had \$23.44 in that box. I ask for, and also looked up in my Bible, 1 Corinthians 16:1, the very words you quoted to me. So we stopped collecting right then and there.

The pastor and his wife said that it is not stated in the Bible that we are not to collect, but we quit anyway.

I am so glad that I met you, and I ask that you ask God to forgive us. I have asked the Lord to bless you for your message. Our church is in debt is why we were trying.

Goodbye until we meet again. Pray for me and my family and friends.

Yours as ever,

Signed:_____

The above letter I judge to be from an honest heart, and if the conversation she had with our sister here was a blessing to her, I assure here that her letter was an equal blessing to me. It reminds me that there are many honest souls who are groping their way through the darkness of time—souls that are not willing to bow their knee to Baal, but who are groping in search of that light that “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Her letter makes me more anxious to speak to the next man I may chance to meet, with the hope that he too may be as honest as is she; furthermore, my prayers are

that she may not be satisfied with simply learning what the Bible has to say about how we should give, but that she will continue her search for divine light until she comes to a full knowledge of all things that pertain to her salvation, including that church for which our Savior died. And if either she or any other should ever feel that we might help them in their search I want them to always feel free to write to us in care of *LIGHT*. May the Lord bless all of you as you continue to search his word. *(Editor's note: This event occurred many years ago, but the sentiment of my father's last line is equally true today. Always feel free to contact me if I can in any way help you in your search of anything pertaining to your salvation. – RTO)*

Feature Three: Sandy's Women's Corner

"IF YOU DON'T DIE"

There is a precious little girl in our congregation who comes to sit with me sometimes before worship. She started this practice before she was old enough to go to school. She called it her "visiting". She would go around the auditorium and visit the ladies that were there a little early.

I was amazed that this young girl would take time to talk with us, and I have so enjoyed her company for several years. I still look forward to seeing her before each service.

When she was in the first grade, she asked me how soon she would be in my class. I told her that I teach the 4th and 5th grade class, and that she would have to wait a few years. Her comment was, "I can't wait to be in your class, if you don't die." I laughed about what she had said, but she made a good point.

That comment really made me stop and think. First, we all go through our lives thinking and even saying that we will do certain things at a certain time; but we don't take the time to think that we just might not be living to do whatever it is we are planning.

I am sure Ananias and Sapphira had no idea that they would be dead at the end of the day that they sold their land and took a portion of the money to the apostles. Abel didn't know that his angry brother would end his life because of Abel's obeying God by offering his sacrifice. Whether we are doing good or evil, it could be the last thing we ever do.

Second, we fail to make our plans based on God's will. Any time we plan or do anything, we should say, "If the Lord wills I will do this or that". Saying this will be a constant reminder to us that we can only complete our plans if God wills us to complete them.

This time next year my little friend will be in my Bible class, but only if the Lord wills it.

Feature Four: Our Communication:

PowerPoint has taken the place of the black board when we give presentations. There are many things we need to keep in mind, but one basic thing to remember is that electronics will fail from time to time. I remember attending a conference where a speaker planned his presentation around a PowerPoint. After numerous tries to get the PowerPoint to work the speaker walked to the platform and announced the cancelation of his class. He could not give the presentation without the aid of the PowerPoint.

This can easily be remedied. If you are preparing for a class and using a PowerPoint presentation, print off a copy in black and white to be given to

the audience following your presentation. Be sure you have a complete set of notes with you as well. Should the PowerPoint not work, you will have your notes for the presentation. If there are things within the PowerPoint the audience needs to be able to see, you could pass out your audience copy before the lesson. However, it is best not to give your audience the PowerPoint printout before your presentation or they will read ahead and miss much of what you are saying.

Feature Five: Bible Question

I know Christians are to take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, but I just do not feel worthy. I read in the Bible that we must be worthy to partake the Lord's Supper or it will kill us spiritually. I just don't know what to do.

--Signed, A Reader

The passage to which this reader referred is 1 Corinthians 11:27-28:

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

The key to this text is the word "unworthily". There is a major difference between the words, "unworthy" and "unworthily". If someone had to be "worthy" in his or her own right to partake of the Lord's Supper, then I don't believe anyone could ever partake of this Supper. But the word

in the text is not “unworthy” but “unworthily”. This is an adverb of manner and describes “how” one should partake of this Supper. When we partake of the Lord’s Supper our hearts and minds must be focused on Jesus and His painful death. We need to remember the suffering He endured for us. Should we partake of the Lord’s Supper with our minds centered on anything other than his broken body or his shed blood, we are partaking of this Supper “unworthily”.

Humor:

Why Jesus Loves Children

A Sunday school teacher asked her little children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

In Closing:

I trust this little quarterly paper is helpful to you in some way. I really appreciate your letting me visit with you by this medium. As we begin our fifth year of “Light For Our Age” send me your comments and questions. I will be glad to include them in future editions.

In the Master’s service,

Bob Oliver