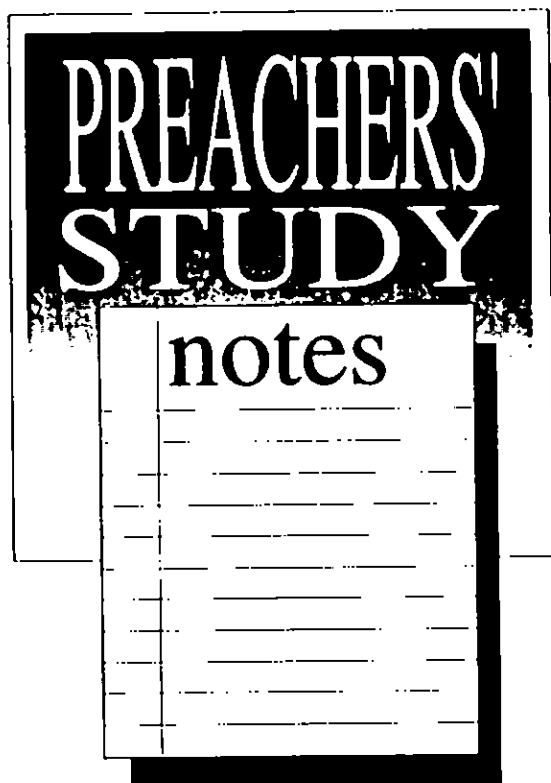


1994



1994 Preachers' Study

held at the Twenty-first Street congregation
of the church of Christ,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
December 19 through 22, 1994

Moderators:

Cliff Arney
Bill Davis

The views expressed in the Preachers' Study Notes are the views of the particular and individual authors, and are not necessarily the views of the editors of the Notes, moderators, host congregation, other participants of the Study, or other authors in this volume. Each article has the address of the author appended if you desire to respond. The editors of the Notes encourage every reader to test all things by the Word of God (1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11). Examine all that this volume contains in that unerring Light and you cannot go wrong.

—The editors of the Preachers' Study Notes

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Since the **Christian's Expositor** assumed the responsibility of publishing the Notes, Brother L. Melvin Crouch's financial assistance and generous donations to the CE have made the publication of these Notes possible from year to year and enabled the CE to carry on without worrying about finances. All those who profit by the publications of the CE are indebted to Brother Crouch on this account, and as managing editor of the CE I want to publicly thank Brother Crouch for his generosity.

Since we set the goal of 100% publication for the study, though not quite attaining it for reasons already mentioned, we ended up transcribing several articles. Since there is usually quite a difference between the spoken word and the written word, a great deal of editing had to be done on these parts of the volume. In the editing process we took great care to make the presentations that were transcribed readable, and yet we went to great pains not to alter the meaning of the speakers. Only what was redundant was omitted. I believe we have faithfully reproduced those presentations that were transcribed.

We send forth this volume with the prayer that it will accomplish only good and no harm to the Cause we hold dear. We hope that you, dear reader, will profit from our labors and those of the Study participants and organizers.

Smith Bibens

Foreword

The 1994 volume of the **Preachers' Study Notes** marks the thirteenth in a series to be published. This is the seventh in the series to be published by Christian's Expositor Publications. The published Notes of the last twelve years contain a wealth of information on a wide range of scriptural subjects. I believe that the 1994 volume continues and enlarges that tradition.

The Preachers' Study is a valuable means of studying the Scriptures, and the written Notes, by preserving the fruit of brethren's research and knowledge, is a valuable tool for Bible study. Like any Bible study tool, the timeless admonition of 1 Thessalonians 5:21 applies: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

The congregation at Twenty-first Street in Oklahoma City has been one of the hosts of the Preachers' Study since its inception, and the brethren are to be commended for the hard work they have put into hosting the Study over the years. Cliff Arney of the Twenty-first Street congregation, assisted by Bill Davis of the Capitol Hill congregation in Oklahoma City, planned and moderated the study.

The selection of topics did not follow a particular theme, but they were of such quality and diversity as to ensure that the Study was a very good one. As you glance through the table of contents, you may spot several topics that will excite your own special interest. It is to be hoped that the lessons gained from these pages will be a blessing to our readers, and will particularly be of help to those who may be struggling with some of the difficult questions that are addressed here, or be used to help teach others the truth on these timely questions.

Two of the studies offered December 19-22 of 1994 did not make it into these pages due to constraints of space and budget. (We have to limit this 1994 volume to about 225 pages.) "The Importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls" (Smith Bibens) will be presented on the pages of the **Christian's Expositor** sometime in the future, Lord willing. "Approaches to the Interpretation of Revelation" (Ron Courter) was recorded and is available from Allen Bailey, whose address appears on page 82 at the end of his study. In fact, all the studies were recorded, along with the question and discussion sections, and are available from Allen Bailey.

Higher Criticism

by Carl M. Johnson

In each great epoch of church history, the church has been forced to grapple with one facet of the Christian faith that has had a real bearing on the future direction of the church.

In the first century, the Apostles and elders in the church in Jerusalem were faced with the controversy of whether circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15). That was a watershed issue that changed the direction of the thinking of many, especially Jewish Christians in the first century church.

A couple of centuries later, the church was faced with a controversy concerning the nature of Christ. A heretic by the name of Arius taught that Jesus was not of the same substance as God, but a created being exalted above all other creatures. Arianism became widespread, but a church council met at Nicaea in A.D. 325 and condemned Arianism and adopted the Nicene Creed which reconfirmed the biblical teaching concerning the Godhead.

The Reformation conflict came several centuries later. The most significant contributions of this conflict were the successful protests against the dominance of the Catholic Church and the fact that the Bible was placed back into the hands of the common people.

Next, came the Restoration era. Church restorers made a plea for religious unity based solely on the Bible. A movement was made to rid churches of man-made creeds, and to have no other authority than the Bible. "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent," became the battle cry of the Restoration movement.

Today, the church is faced with another watershed controversy—the reliability of Scripture.

Of all the doctrines connected with the Christian faith, none is more important than the one that has to do with the basis of our religious knowledge. For anyone who professes the Christian faith the root question is: "From where do I get my knowledge on which my faith is based?" The answers to this question are varied, of course, but for the Christian it always comes back to the Bible. When all has been said and

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done, the only true and dependable source for Christianity lies in the book we call the Bible.

Since Christianity is indubitably related to and rooted in the Bible, another question follows inexorably. This is, simply stated, "Is the Bible a reliable guide to religious knowledge?" "Is the Bible trustworthy?" There are three possible answers:

The first possibility is, "The Bible is not at all trustworthy." If this answer is correct, then Christianity stands upon a false foundation. Anyone who professes a faith founded on a source that cannot be trusted is a fool, is naive, or is deluded. Certainly no thinking or honest person would embrace, recommend, or propagate a religion based on what he knows to be untrue.

The second possibility is that "The Bible can be trusted as truthful in all its parts." By this I mean that the Bible is infallible or inerrant. It communicates religious truth, not religious error. But there is more. Whatever it communicates is to be trusted and can be relied upon as being true. The Bible is not a textbook on chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, or medicine; but when it speaks on matters having to do with these or any other subjects, the Bible does not lie to us. It does not contain error of any kind. Thus, the Bible, if true in all its parts, cannot possibly teach that the earth is flat, that two and two make five, or that events happened at times other than we know they did. The Bible could not, if it is trustworthy, say that Julius Caesar was emperor when Jesus was crucified, or that Caesar Augustus perpetrated the sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If it did these things, it then would be conveying information to us that is palpably false.

The third possible answer to the question of the reliability of the Bible is "The Bible contains some truth and some error." Part of what it says can be relied upon, and some of it must be regarded as false. In other words, the Bible is neither completely trustworthy, nor completely false.

For two thousand years, those who claim to be Christian have agreed that the Bible is completely trustworthy; it is infallible, or inerrant. But, in recent years there has been a marked departure from that point of view to the third one mentioned, that "The Bible contains some truth and some error."

The change of position with respect to the infallibility of the Bible is widespread. It pervades learned societies, publishing houses, theological

seminaries, Christian colleges, fundamental and evangelical denominations, and even churches of Christ.

Biblical Criticism

The precursor to this controversy over the reliability of the Bible is a literary research methodology which was initiated by German scholars 300 years ago called Higher Criticism.

The word criticism denotes, primarily, a judgment, or an act of judging; its derivation from a Greek verb (*krino*) meaning to discern, or to to pass judgment upon, or to determine, gives it this signification. As applied to literary matters, it conveys the idea, not of fault-finding, but of fairly and justly estimation both merits and defects. In other words, it is simply an impartial judgment, or as nearly such as the given critic can render, on whatever question is under consideration (McDowell 35).

This kind of study can be applied to the Bible and is therefore called biblical criticism. It is defined by the *Christian Encyclopedia* as: "The science by which we arrive at a satisfactory acquaintance with the origin, history, and present state of the original text of Scripture" (206).

Biblical criticism has been divided into two kinds: Textual (Lower) Criticism and Higher Criticism.

Textual Criticism

Textual criticism seeks by comparison and study of all available evidence to recover the exact words of the author's original composition. The autograph copies of the books of the Bible are no longer in existence. What we have today are copies of the autograph manuscripts, and copies of copies. Textual critics have exhaustively compiled and examined all the available manuscripts in order to determine the exact words of the original writings. In this regard, textual criticism has done a wonderful service for Christianity. It allows us to hold the Bible in our hand and confidently assert that "This is the Word of God, given by Divine revelation, made known through inspiration, and preserved Providentially through the ages without essential loss or alteration."

Higher criticism

Higher Criticism is devoted to the study of authorship, date of composition, and historical value of any given biblical document. The variables

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studied include form, method, subject, or arguments of the different books; the nature and connection of the context; the relation of passages to each other; the known circumstances of the writer, and those of the persons for whose immediate use they wrote.

The questions of the Higher Criticism are questions of integrity, authenticity, credibility, and the literary forms of the various writings that make up the Bible.

History Of Higher Criticism.

Although higher criticism as an exacting science had been applied to some classical literature before the nineteenth century, J.G. Eichhorn, a German rationalist of the late 1700's was the first to apply the term to the study of the Bible. He introduced the second edition of his *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (O. T. Introduction) in 1787 with these words:

I have been obliged to bestow the greatest amount of labor on a hitherto entirely unworked field, the investigation of the inner constitution of the particular writings of the O.T., by the Higher Criticism (a new name to no humanist)

Eichhorn has been called the "Father of O. T. Criticism."

Schools Of Higher Criticism.

It would be impossible to discuss all of the disciplines that could be listed under the general heading of Higher Criticism, so I shall examine four that have had a monumental impact upon biblical studies in the last one hundred years.

Bear in mind that higher critics deliberately ignore the influence that the Holy Spirit had upon the composition of Scripture. They reason that they are looking at the Bible from a historian's point of view, not a theologian's. Consequently, higher critics ignore the miraculous superintendence of the Holy Spirit upon the composition of the Bible, and use strictly literary and historical parameters in their research.

Documentary Hypothesis

Julius Wellhausen in 1895 added the finishing touches to a hypothesis which is prevalent in modern theological circles. The hypothesis is known as the Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP hypothesis). Using literary criticism as its basis for argument, this hypothesis sets forth the idea

that the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) was not written by Moses, as the Bible claims, but was completed years after Moses died.

Those adhering to the Documentary Hypothesis teach that the first five books of the Bible were written close to one thousand years after Moses' death and were the result of a process of writing, rewriting, editing and compiling by various anonymous editors or "redactors."

Citing literary variations within the text (divine names, doublets, repetitions of accounts), style and diction, the Documentarians assert that there are four different documents, J, E, D and P, which make up the Pentateuch. The J stands for the divine name YHWH which is the name for God characteristically used by the anonymous J writer. This writer had a flowing style and a peculiar vocabulary. E denotes the Elohist document which is known for its use of Elohim as the name for God. J and E are often difficult to separate within the text so they are often referred to as one source, JE. The letter D describes the Deuteronomic code which was found in 621 B.C. Finally, P represents the Priestly writer. This writer was the last compiler to work with the OT. He put the finishing touches on it. P is characterized by its use of the name Elohim for God and its acrid style. "Its language is that of a jurist, rather than a historian." P is not to be confused with the Elohist document which has a fresh flowing style (McDowell 29).

Answers

The premise that the use of two different Hebrew names for God in the Pentateuch (Jehovah and Elohim) is evidence that there was more than one author, is clearly a faulty premise.

The name Jehovah is generally used to refer to God when He is mentioned in connection with the Hebrews. The name Elohim is used when God is mentioned in connection with the whole of creation. The name Elohim is also used in reference to idols. It follows then, that the reason two different names are used for God in the Pentateuch is because the Holy Spirit carefully instructed Moses to use precisely the proper name of God to fit the occasion.

Another major premise of the Documentary Hypothesis, that diversity of subject matter, style, and diction within the Pentateuch necessarily implies a multiplicity of authors, is also a faulty premise. These variables can be legitimately accounted for without resorting to composite authorship.

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Any one author will use different styles for different subject matter. A lawyer, for example, will use a different style in a letter to his mother than in a brief he has prepared. Again, a clergyman uses a different style talking to his children in the morning than he does in his benediction. In the same vein, the technical description of the ark in Genesis is no more evidence of different authorship from the surrounding narrative, than a naval architect's style of describing a vessel makes him a different author than the the same architect writing a love letter to his fiancée.

Source Criticism

It was not long before higher critics applied the same methods used on the Pentateuch to the New Testament. Early in the nineteenth century, another New Testament criticism was developed by German scholars. It is called Source Criticism.

Keep in mind that higher critics arbitrarily ignore the superintendence of the Holy Spirit upon the production of these writings. Therefore, Source Criticism evolved as a result of trying to ascertain the actual source of an author's material. When this approach is applied to the first three Gospels, called the Synoptic Gospels, because they give the account of the life of Jesus from the same perspective, it becomes quickly apparent that they, ostensibly, all had the same source. Nearly all of Mark can been found in Matthew and Luke.

To express it statistically, of Mark's 661 verses Matthew includes 606, Luke 320; only 24 verses in Mark do not occur in either or both these Gospels. In both these Gospels, about one-half of Mark's verses are taken verbatim, while the other half are only slightly altered in wording" (Pritchard 18).

This striking similarity in the Gospels, along with some apparent discrepancies, has resulted in what critics have called the "Synoptic Problem." Source critics, discounting the fact that the Holy Spirit directed these men to write as they did, concluded that Matthew and Luke must have had a copy of Mark in front of them as an outline as they wrote their own accounts. A. T. Robertson says matter-of-factly, "It is now known that Matthew and Luke made use of Mark for the framework of their Gospels" (vii). This logic also resulted in what is called the "Primacy of Mark"—the conclusion that Mark must have been the first account of the Gospel written.

In addition to using Mark as a source, Source Critics believe Matthew and Luke also had another unnamed written source from which they

drew similar material that was not found in Mark. The German scholars who led in such critical studies called it "The Source," and referred to it as "Q," the initial letter of *quelle*, the German word for source.

It is amazing that these theories of source critics have become so widely accepted, because they are founded on speculation and imagination. It is significant that textual critics have never found any evidence that the so-called original source "Q" ever existed. It further seems absurd that Matthew, an apostle and eye-witness of the life of Jesus, would need a copy of Mark in front of him to guide his own writing.

Form Criticism

In the ancient world both Jewish and Hellenic education made extensive use of rote memorization. A Jewish rabbinical saying was that a good student is like a well-plastered cistern that never loses a drop. From classical Greek education came the practice of memorizing the Homeric poems. The fathers of the church in centuries following the New Testament era were able to cite the Psalms and the entire New Testament from memory. Private libraries were few. In the Hellenistic world a man had to rely heavily upon his memory; and since he read little by our standards, he had a much more tenacious verbal memory than is common today.

Moreover, oral accounts were preferred to written records among the Christians; as the practice of Paul attests and as the practice of Christian leaders well into the second century shows. For the first four decades or so of the church's expansion, many of the speakers on the faith were eyewitnesses of Jesus' career or had heard eyewitness accounts of it. These accounts their retentive memories would store up and pass on with a tenacious recollection of the wording that would be almost unheard of today. Although the introduction to Luke attests the existence of earlier written accounts in some number, undoubtedly the early church relied heavily for several decades upon word-of-mouth transmission of the Christian message.

The oral tradition had been tacitly ignored by the source critics, whose attention was fixed upon documentary records. Since the end of World War I, however, German scholars have led others to consider the characteristics presumably present in this early oral Christian tradition. Pioneers in this study were Rudolf Bultmann, who published his *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (History of the Synoptic Tradition) in 1931, and Martin Dibelius, whose *Die Formgeschichte des*

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Evangeliums (Form Criticism of the Gospel) appeared in 1935. Earlier publications by these men had prepared the way for the statements of these books, and by the time they had appeared British and American scholars had already taken up their theories.

They assumed that the original oral tradition behind the Gospels took shape as they did in any folklore traditions (China, India, Persia, Greece) which were moulded by constant repetition. The first aim of the form critics, then, was to discover the laws of oral tradition in the "twilight period," when the tradition was still circulating "orally as a series of disconnected units, anecdotes, stories, saying, teaching, parables, and so on."

The second aim of the form critics was to arrive at the actual happenings and sayings of Jesus and thus resolve any doubts about the trustworthiness of the knowledge concerning the historical Jesus. Back of this aim stood the skepticism of Wrede and his principle of the "Messianic Secret." The form critics assumed that the traditions about Jesus had been transformed by the collective consciousness of the primitive Christian community, that the Gospels are expressions of the community's faith. But by following the form critical method they felt that they would know the Jesus of history as He was before the Gospels were written.

As Bultmann and Deibelius applied the form critical method to the Gospels, the process comprised three operations:

1. The oral units were classified according to a form.
2. The forms were assigned to a life setting in the community or group which created them (*Sitz im Leben*, "life situation," "creative milieu").
3. The historical value of each unit was assessed.

Bultmann's listing of the forms are as follows:

Apothegms- (may be controversial or biographical, practically the group called paradigms by Dibelius). Bultmann writes that he "should reckon as part of the tradition of the sayings a species of traditional material which might well be reckoned as stories—viz., such units as consist of sayings of Jesus set in a brief context. I use a term to describe them which comes from Greek literature, and is least question-begging—'apothegms'." Some characteristics of Bultmann's apothegms:

1. "The interest of the story centers on a saying of Jesus."
2. "The narrative is simple and brief, just long enough to make the story intelligible."
3. "The biographical interest, lacking in many of the narratives, forms an ingredient of the stories. Generally, the parties concerned are vaguely described."
4. "The narrative ends in the saying or an act of Jesus."

Bultmann concedes that the background for the form may be true but the apothegm is not an historical report; it is a Church construction.

Sayings -- which he divides into five groups (wisdom words, "I" words, prophetic and apocalyptic words, law words and community rules, and parables).

1. *Logia* or *Wisdom Sayings* were born as the result of community needs. Jesus was a wisdom teacher similar to other wisdom teachers in Israel, Judaism, and the Orient.
2. *Prophetic Sayings* "proclaimed the arrival of the Reign of God and preached the call to repentance, promising salvation for those who were prepared, and threatening woes upon the unrepentant."
3. *Sayings* consist of all the sayings that are attributed to Jesus where He speaks of His work or His destiny or Himself. Bultmann alleges that Jesus did not speak of Himself in the first person, but he admits that it is impossible to prove this.
4. *Legal Sayings* are formed by Jesus' words regarding the Law, to which have been attached many sayings setting forth the regulations of the community . . . Though the formulation of one or another of them may be due to the church, as a whole these words of conflict with legalism, and expressing a spiritual obedience to the will of God, go back to the prophetic personality of Jesus. Even though many of the sayings may have originated in the community, the spirit that lives in them goes back to the work of Jesus.
5. *Parable* is defined as a concise and simple story which is much like a popular story in its concrete language, its use of dialectical language and soliloquy, and its repetition. It is a story told to call

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forth judgment on the part of the hearer; a judgment is made regarding the story of everyday human affairs and relations, then the judgment is applied in the realm of the spiritual life.

Miracle stories—are those in which the miracle constitutes the main theme and is described with considerable detail, such as the healing of the Gerasene demoniac, the cure of the woman with the issue of blood, the raising of the daughter of Jairus from death, the stories of the stilling of the storm, of walking on the sea, and others.

Legend—is a narrative which is both religious and edifying. It is not a miracle story or a history as such, but it may contain elements of both. Historical stories and legends are treated together by Bultmann, due to an inability to separate the two. Bultmann accounts as historically trustworthy only about forty of the group that he lists as Sayings, none of the Miracle Stories, and none of the Legends. He rejected the idea that the Gospel traditionists "had any kind of historical intention," and characterized the materials of the tradition about Jesus as the legendary or mythological fabrications of the primitive Christian community, which gave objective expression to its faith in concrete stories regarding Jesus.

Answers

Form Criticism has done a service by pointing out that the Oral Tradition existed for several years before the written Scriptures. Further, there is nothing wrong with reading the Gospels and classifying the materials according to literary form (parables, miracle stories, sayings, et. al.), but to assume that the literary form of a statement determines whether it is true or false is invalid.

Healing stories from all over the world follow a recurrent form stressing the intractability of the disease, the completeness of the cure, and the effect on the spectators. But the fact that a story follows this stereotype tells us nothing about its historicity. The classification of sayings of Jesus according to their form tells us little about their authenticity.

Forms do not give the related material a relative historical value. Form is in no way related to truth or falsity. Nothing can be inferred from stereotyped forms other than that the church was accustomed to tell stories about Jesus in a certain way. A. M. Hunter says that one "must never forget that the form in which a story is told can never tell us whether the substance of the story is true or false. The whole method is too subjective and speculative to afford us much sure guidance."

T. W. Manson acutely observes that

a paragraph of Mark is not a penny the better or the worse for being labelled "Apothegm" or "Pronouncement Story" or "Paradigm." In fact if Form criticism had stuck to its proper business, it would not have made any real stir. We should have taken it as we take the forms of Hebrew poetry or the forms of musical composition.

Vincent Taylor, along with Bultmann and Dibelius, have had the greatest impact upon biblical studies as form critics. Although there are similarities, each form critic has his own categories of forms which he finds in the Gospels.

It is noteworthy that these form critics often find fault with the forms of their colleagues, while other scholars find many of the form divisions to be unreliable.

Again, the historicity of a saying is not determined by its form. By way of illustration, let's assume that I like antiques. As I am looking through the classified ads, I come across an advertisement (form) about an antique auction. The ad says there will be plenty of early American antiques. I attend the auction and find out there is only one antique up for auction. Everything else is mere used furniture.

Now, if the form (in this case the classified ad) determined the accuracy of the content, then I would automatically reject all classified ads about antique auctions. In reality, the form does not determine the reliability of its content. One must examine further than form to determine the dependability of content.

As mentioned earlier, form critics do not regard the Holy Spirit's superintendence of all the written and oral processes of composition of the Gospels a necessary hypothesis, possibly because they try to work as historians rather than as theologians. Classical criticism questions the possibility of divorcing the sciences completely, and affirms that the Holy Spirit's activity not only guided the writing of the Gospels, but also the preservation of authentic written and oral sources for the writers.

Redaction Criticism

One other New Testament criticism that has recently grown out of Form Criticism is called Redaction Criticism. Redaction means "editing," hence, these critics focus on the "editorial work" done by the writers of

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the Synoptic Gospels. This discipline is hardly distinguishable from Form Criticism, except that redaction critics believe that each of the Synoptic writers had a particular theological message that they wanted to convey, and that this influenced their decisions about which materials they selected to put into their accounts of the gospel. Whereas form critics examine small segments of the Gospels, redaction critics take a "macro-perspective"—looking at each Gospel as a whole in order to see the overall theological theme intended by the author.

As stated earlier, one of the problems presented by source and form critics is that they are forced to virtually ignore the influence that the Holy Spirit had upon writers of Scripture. There is no need to speculate whether Mark was written first, and whether Matthew and Luke used Mark as an outline to write their accounts, if the New Testament's claim of inspiration is accepted. Each of the Gospels is absolutely independent, no one of them relying in any sense upon what the others wrote. Since they were all inspired, there was no need for Matthew and Luke to copy from Mark, nor for Mark to copy from them. Further, there was no need for any of the authors to make editorial revisions, alterations, and additions to the works of the others.

Impact Of Higher Criticism

The major effect of Higher Criticism has been skepticism and unbelief. After all, if Moses did not write the Pentateuch (even though in the Gospels Jesus says that Moses is the author), and if the only part of the Gospels we can accept as credible are about forty of the sayings of Jesus, then we have nothing reliable upon which to base our faith. Harold Lindsell explains the consequences in his book *God's Incomparable Word*:

If God is to infallibly accomplish His purpose, which is to save men, even that cannot come about unless there are some parts of the Bible that are both true in themselves and trustworthy. In other words, there must be statements in the Bible that are dependable. If there are not, then we are saved by a God we are not sure exists, who may or may not have had a Son, who may or may not have been born of a virgin, who may or may not have died on a cross, who we think may possibly have risen from the dead, and on whom, possibly, we may or may not believe with no assurance that we have been saved. We only hope so (93).

Modernism and Theological Deterioration

It is impossible to calculate the devastation wrought by modernism. Today, many religious people equate modernism with a full-scale denial of the Bible and Christianity. It is impossible to stop theological deterioration once the inerrancy of the Bible is abandoned. Here are a few case studies:

Unitarian Universalists. The Unitarian Universalist denomination is the grossest illustration of how far a group can depart from historic Christianity when the full trustworthiness of Scripture is discarded. The Unitarian defection in New England began early in the last century. The Unitarian denomination was formed from the Congregational churches in New England. Basically, the schism occurred over Christology. The Congregational churches that did not defect remained Trinitarian; the Unitarian churches did not. The latter denied that Jesus Christ is God and they repudiated the person of the Holy Spirit as the third member of the Godhead. This defection resulted from a denial of the plain teaching of the Bible. In due season it led to the denial of other cardinal doctrines of Christianity. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was denied. The vicarious blood atonement of Jesus and the virgin birth were no longer believed. Gradually the denomination became humanistic.

The Universalist denomination had an earlier history in New England. One of its chief beliefs was universal salvation, the notion that all men will be saved. When the Unitarian and Universalist denominations joined to form the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961, the merger was one that brought together two church groups of similar beliefs, or should I say, unbeliefs? Today, the consequences of the denial of biblical infallibility are apparent to all. This denomination has gone beyond humanism into agnosticism and atheism. Everyone is free to believe anything he chooses, or nothing at all. There is no basic doctrine of the Christian faith that is held by this denomination. It is thoroughly and completely apostate, with no belief in heaven or hell. For this organization the Bible is truly irrelevant, the gospel an anachronism, and the worship of God a travesty. It is difficult to see how any denomination could go beyond the place where the Unitarian Universalist Association now stands.

Presbyterians. The General Assembly of what was then the Presbyterian Church in the USA adopted the famous "five points" in 1910. By this adoption the church committed itself to the following beliefs in an official sense: (1) the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures; (2) the

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virgin birth of Jesus Christ; (3) the vicarious and substitutionary atonement of Jesus; (4) the bodily resurrection and subsequent ascension of the Lord Jesus; and (5) the reality of the miracles of our Lord. In the 1920s the denomination was faced with a revolt against this sort of teaching. The Auburn Affirmation was put together and signed in 1924 by clergymen who decried the necessity for any ordinand who wished to be ordained to the Presbyterian ministry having to assent to these five fundamentals. All of these are in Scripture and all of them appear in the Westminster Confession of Faith. And every Presbyterian clergyman was required to assent to the system of doctrine contained in the Confession, not to mention his assent to the belief that the Scriptures are wholly truthful. The Presbyterian Church took the fateful step when its General Assembly decided that it was no longer necessary for a prospective clergyman in the denomination to assent to these propositions. Thus the denial of biblical infallibility opened the door wide to a denial of other basic doctrines of the faith and to further defection from the truth.

Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Charles Augustus Briggs took his doctorate at the University of Berlin, working under A. I. Dorner, the professor of higher criticism.

It was the University of Berlin that turned the New Yorker into a fiery apostle of German theology." His conversion to modern theology was "complete before returning to America . . . He caustically remarked that the Americans were far behind the times. He added he now knew that his mission in life was to return to America and modernize theological studies in his own country. This he would attempt to do by disseminating German critical methods through American seminaries.

Through the years Union Seminary has had a profound influence on Presbyterian churches. There is not a single theological seminary in the denomination today that is committed in principle and practice to historic orthodoxy. There are a few members of the faculties of these institutions who are truly evangelical, but their number is small and their ultimate influence minuscule (Lindsell 1976, 197).

Southern Baptist Convention. There is a division within the Southern Baptist Convention. The conflict is over who is going to control the denomination, and from whom their President is selected—the liberals, who do not believe in the complete inerrancy of the Scriptures, or the conservatives, who do believe in inerrancy.

Churches of Christ. The fruits of Higher Criticism have also been found in churches of Christ. Dr. James Bales, in his book **The Trojan Horse In The Church**, documents cases where the reliability of the Bible is being called into question.

Bible Colleges. Students in Bible colleges who take courses on the history of the Old and New Testaments will, of a certainty, be forced to pay homage to Wellhausen, Bultmann, and Dibelius. For years the hackneyed phrases "Documentary Hypothesis," "JEDP," "Moses didn't write the Pentateuch," "Form Criticism," etc. have been heard again and again in the classrooms of our universities.

Today, it often seems that a theory is accepted because of its place in a textbook and its continued repetition and recognition.

Often, repetition is a foible of scholarship. One scholar notes:

Another common and natural phenomenon is the repetition of hypotheses once proposed. As in other fields, so in Bible study, what begins as a very tentative guess becomes by repetition an assumed fact and represents "the consensus of scholarly opinion" (McDowell).

Conclusion

Given the biased nature of the presuppositions upon which Higher Criticism is based, it is baffling to me how their conclusion that only a part of the Bible is reliable, is so widely accepted. The Bible claims to be an inspired product. Consequently, when higher critics arbitrarily ignore the role of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Scriptures, the whole exercise is invalidated. The critical process of determining what parts of the Bible are reliable becomes nothing more than a boondoggle.

Regretfully, there are many in the field of Bible study that would rather go along with the boondoggle than to be considered ignorant by their academic peers. They would do well to read Hans Christian Andersen's children's story, "The Emperor's New Clothes," which is about a couple of con artists that worked a scam on the Emperor and his subjects. The scoundrels told the Emperor that they would make him the most beautiful clothes using gold and silk as materials. The crooks pocketed the materials, but to cover themselves, they told the Emperor that the clothes they were making were magical, and that they would be invisible to everyone except the intelligent and those who were performing their jobs well. The Emperor and all his subjects fell for the boondoggle. When

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the "magical" clothes were supposedly completed and put on display, nobody could see them, but they would not admit it for fear of being thought stupid or incompetent in their jobs. Finally, as the Emperor was ostensibly wearing his new "magical" garments, and showing them off in a parade through the kingdom, a little child made the honest observation, "The Emperor's not wearing any clothes!" It was only then that the people had the honesty to say to themselves, "The child is right. He's not really wearing any clothes."

It is time to speak up again and declare "the Emperor is not wearing any clothes!" In other words, Higher Criticism is a boondoggle. I pray that Christians today will not be duped into going along with this fraud simply because they are afraid that they will be thought stupid or incompetent in their jobs. *1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820.*

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Freemasonry

by Wm. Mark Bailey

The purpose of this study is to make members of the churches of Christ aware of some of the practices and beliefs of the Masonic Lodge that contradict the practices and beliefs of the Lord's church. This study deals primarily with one of the many secret societies in our country today, Freemasonry. Freemasonry is the largest secret society in the world. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*:

There are more than five million Freemasons in the world who belong to regular lodges. Most of the members are in the United States (about 3.5 million) (p. 432).

The Masonic organization is considered the mother of all secret organizations; therefore, they all stand or fall together. A thorough discussion of one of these fraternities is a study of every one, because they are all fashioned after the same idea. Wagner says,

The whole secret society system with its countless lodges and their organizations, is an outgrowth of Masonry. All the secret societies even the so-called minor orders, have assimilated and incorporated more or less of the fundamental principles of Masonry (*Freemasonry: An Interpretation*, p. 23).

These Masonic related organizations are separated for men, women, boys, and girls. All of these secret organizations stand or fall together.

Secret Boy's Organizations

1. Order of De Molay
2. The Boy Builders

Secret Girl's Organizations

1. Order of Job's Daughters
2. Order of Rainbow Girls
3. Daughters of the Nile

Secret Men's Organizations

1. The Scottish Rite
2. The Knights Templar
3. The Shrine
4. Tall Cedars of Lebanon

Secret Women's Organizations

1. Order of the Eastern Star
2. Order of the Amaranth
3. Order of True Kindred
4. Rebecca

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Other lodges that reflect Masonic influence are the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE), the Loyal Order of Moose (LOOM), Odd Fellows, and Woodsmen of the World.

All clubs are not associated with the Masonic fraternity. For example: Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions Club, American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). These are not religious groups having religious goals and should not be associated with Masonry. However, that these clubs are not associated with Masonry does not make them right. All organizations should be carefully examined in light of scriptural authority before associating with them.

Before Christians join organizations of this world they must be careful not to be misled; they must understand the organization, its requirements, and its goals. The purpose of this research is to enlighten Christians of the works of darkness found in the institution called Freemasonry. For Masonry to be an evil work it is necessary to prove that a Christian cannot be a Mason and live consistently with God's Word. Therefore, the doctrines of Masonry must face the test of God's Word.

Origin of Freemasonry

There are two divisions of Freemasonry—operative and speculative. The word "operative" means "a skilled worker" (**American Heritage Dictionary**, p. 871). The operative masons were stone masons by trade. Their work can be traced back to the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). Their work is also seen in the building and rebuilding of Solomon's Temple between 950 B.C. and 520 B.C. The majority of the skilled craftsmen who built Solomon's temple came from the country of Phoenicia (now called Lebanon). The religion of this country was Baal worship; therefore, originally, stone masons were idolaters. Jack Harris says,

The Phoenician stone masons (cedar cutters) of Tyre and Sidon were used to build the temple of Solomon, employing Jewish labor. Their pagan practices greatly influenced the Jews in Jerusalem during Solomon's reign and thereafter caused them to fall into idolatry, which was at its height during the reign of King Ahab. King Ahab allowed his wife, Jezebel, to bring in 450 priests of Baal from Egypt to practice pagan worship in Jerusalem. Thus, the stone builders of the tower of Babel, the pyramids and Solomon's temple were for the most part idol worshippers (Harris, p. 22)

In the fourth century A.D., Constantine, Emperor of Rome, desiring to keep the skilled craftsmen in Rome, passed a law that would not allow any craftsman to leave his trade or dwelling place. Sons were forced to learn and practice their fathers' trades. Harris says,

These craftsmen were responsible for the transmission of stone cutting and setting skills through the ninth century to cathedral and castle builders throughout Europe. Practicing stone masons met in lodges, or guilds as sometimes called, where they found fellowship with others of their crafts (Harris, p. 22).

The word "guild" means "an association of persons of the same trade" (**American Heritage Dictionary**, p. 581). These were not necessarily religious groups. Instead, these lodges of masons were similar to labor unions of today. However, these are the first known Masonic lodges.

By the ninth century, the majority of stone masons had changed from paganism to Roman Catholicism. These lodges became inactive during the Reformation in 1517. By 1717 the operative stone mason guilds (lodges) were almost extinct. There were only four known lodges remaining. However, another group called Freemasons was increasing rapidly. Their desire was to rid the lodges of Roman Catholicism and revive the pagan festivals of the old lodges; therefore, they formed an institution called Speculative Masonry.

James Anderson (1680-1739), a Presbyterian minister in Swallow Falls, England, with the help of John T. Desaguliers (1683-1744), a Protestant minister and philosopher, decided to apply symbolic meanings to the stone builders' tools for moral instructions in a Mason's life. They also applied biblical terminologies to the ancient pagan mysteries of Egypt and other rites, using them in the Masonic rituals of the first three degrees of Masonry.

Masonic authorities disagree about the date of the original lodge. Some claim that the Masonic lodge has been in existence almost since the creation. Speaking of its creation, Darrah says,

God planted in the heart of man a desire to seek the society of his fellowman and this yearning for companionship has been a large contributing factor in the beginning of masonry (Darrah, p. 6).

Others become so bold as to claim that God established Masonry. Blanchard says,

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When the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; when the Great Jehovah ordained the creation of the world; when the first Sun rose to greet with its beams, the new morning and the august command was uttered: 'Let there be light.' The lips of deity breathed Masonry into existence and it must live forevermore; for truth is eternal, and the principles of truth are the foundation of Masonry (*Scottish Rite Masonry Illustrated*, Volume II, p. 290).

Pike says,

[Masonry] is still that which it was in the cradle of the human race, when no human foot had trodden the soil of Assyria and Egypt, and no colonies had crossed the Himalayas into Southern India, Media, or Etruria (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 153).

Other Masons claim King Solomon as the founder of Masonry. However, of all these Masonic authorities, Mackey appears to be closer to the truth by saying,

[Masonry's] connection with the Temple of Solomon, as its birthplace, may have been accidental—a mere arbitrary selection by its inventors—and bears therefore, only an allegorical meaning (Mackey, pp. 226-227).

Despite the claims of most Freemasons that Masonry came "from the ancient priesthood" (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 333), historically, Masonry began in London, England on June 24, 1717 (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, p. 432). Chase says,

From the Grand Lodge of England, or the Grand Lodge of Scotland, all other existing Grand Lodges derive their origin—most of them from the former (*Digest of Masonry Laws*, p. 15).

Recognized Masonic Authorities

Albert G. Mackey (1807-1881) and Albert Pike (1809-1891) are still considered the two best authorities on Masonic ritual. Mackey, a doctor, spent more than thirty-five years interpreting the degrees of Freemasonry and wrote a book entitled *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*. His Masonic office was "Worshipful Master in the Solomon Lodge" in 1842.

Albert Pike, a teacher, held the highest office in the Scottish Rite Masonry. He rewrote all the Scottish Rite rituals which are still practiced today. He wrote a book entitled *Morals and Dogma*, which is accepted by all masons as true. Pike's views of Masonry were greatly influenced

by his worship of Lucifer. On July 4, 1889, Pike, giving instructions to the twenty-three Supreme Councils of the world, said,

The Masonic religion should be, by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine. If Lucifer were not God, would Adonay (The God of the Christians) whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy, and hatred of man, barbarism and repulsion for science, would Adonay and his priests, calumniate him? Yes, Lucifer is God and unfortunately Adonay is also God . . . The true and pure philosophic religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal Adonay; but Lucifer, God of Light and God of Good, is struggling for humanity against Adonay, the God of Darkness and Evil (Occult Theocracy quoted from *Freemasonry: The Invisible Cult In Our Midst*, p. number not given).

Good Works of the Masonic Lodge

Masonry is a system of ethics and religion in which there are some truths and moral precepts which are beyond criticism. For example:

[The Masonic] organizations do a great deal of charitable work. They maintain homes for senior citizens, orphanages, hospitals for crippled and burnt children, eye foundations, and blood banks. They also award scholarships and make loans to needy students . . . (The Encyclopedia Americana, p. 432).

Darrah says,

The masonic fraternity is a moral institution and therefore to maintain its standing in the world must exact from its members a course of conduct that will be consistent with those things which it teaches about its altar, for preaching without practice avails nothing. Therefore if you are given to the use of *profanity* you cannot continue the habit and be a representative mason . . . If you *gamble* for money you are practicing something which masonry frowns upon and which if continued is likely to cost you your standing in the fraternity . . . If you are in the habit of *frequenting questionable resorts* you are laying yourself liable to the discipline which the fraternity imposes for infractions of the moral law . . . [Masonry] will not tolerate *drunkenness* nor will it condone *loafing in saloons* . . . Masonry sets before each member a pattern of upright behavior . . . It is left to each one to fashion his conduct in accordance with his own will and inclinations, subject how-

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ever, to the chastening rod of the fraternity for wilful violations of its precepts (Darrah, p. 10—italics mine, wmb).

Famous Men Who Support the Masonic Lodge

There have been at least fourteen U.S. Presidents who were Masons: George Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, James Polk, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, James Garfield, William McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt, William Taft, Warren Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Gerald Ford (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, p. 433).

On September 9, 1987, the influence of Masonry in our government was revealed by the Senate Congressional record (*Congressional Record*, Senate, 9 September 1987: S11868-70). Some members of the Senate Judiciary committee questioned the wisdom of appointing Judge David Sentelle as a U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia because he was a Mason. Many Senators who were Masons protested and felt that it was unthinkable to question an appointee over his involvement with Masonry. In these discussions, Masonic Senators Strom Thurmond and Alan Simpson and Senate majority Leader Robert Byrd revealed that Masons constituted the following:

- Forty-one members of the Federal Judiciary
- Half the membership of the Senate Judiciary Committee
- Eighteen Senators (including Lloyd Bentsen, Sam Nunn, Bob Dole, John Glenn)
- Seventy-six members of the House of Representatives
- At least two Senators (Bob Dole and Robert Byrd) are 33rd Degree Masons.

Masonry has some good traits. It is a system defended by many famous men, men of learning, social influence, wealth, and men with both religious and political standing. Considering all these facts, what caused the Senate Judiciary committee to hesitate to appoint Masons to certain political offices? The answer is that, in spite of its good traits, Masonry has also been proven to be guilty of some of the most despicable and disgusting acts that one man can do to another.

I treat this study of Masonry with no animosity toward those who are members of the Masonic Lodge. Masonry is recognized as a religious institution by most all members of the lodge. Their own authorities refer to the lodge as a religious institution in their writings. I have treated the subject of Masonry as I would treat a study of any religious organization.

Therefore, Christians can no more be a member of the Masonic Lodge and be a faithful member of the church of Christ at the same time than they can be a member of one of the several hundred denominations and a faithful member of the church of Christ at the same time.

Masonry: A Cult

The institution called Freemasonry is a cult. In my search for books and printed material on this subject, every bookstore (new and used, religious and non-religious) always pointed me to a section titled "cults." I went to a public library in Arlington, Texas, to research Freemasonry and was instructed to search under "cults" for information. There is a tremendous need to scrutinize the cultic nature of Freemasonry in view of its effect on today's society, and especially its effect on the Lord's church.

Every period of time since the creation the world has been marked with some outlandish wickedness designed to dishonor God and destroy the souls of men. In Noah's day, idolatry was the wickedness that almost destroyed man, pulling him away from the one true God. At the beginning of Christianity, paganism with its many forms of heathen worship was the wickedness Christians had to avoid. In Greece, heathen ceremonies were celebrated by the Athenians in honor of Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, and her daughter Proserpine, who according to legends of heathen mythology, became queen of the world of darkness. Preparation for these heathen feasts were filled with abominable wickedness. Historians say there were secrets belonging to this heathen festival that were "so superstitiously observed, that if any one ever revealed them, it was supposed he called divine vengeance on his head, and the wretch was put to an ignominious death" (Lebbeus Armstrong, *Masonry: A Work of Darkness*, p. 5). Such wickedness was possibly what the Apostle Paul had reference to by saying, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:11-12).

Paul's mention of the "works of darkness" includes any group or organization belonging to systems of moral evil. Such organizations work in opposition to God and lead to the spiritual destruction of humanity through their secrecy. Secrecy should not be a part of a Christian's life. The Apostle Paul says, "... it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). To determine whether or not the Masonic Lodge is involved in the "works of darkness" with its cultic practices, it is necessary to examine Masonry's practices and laws closely.

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Freemasonry: Secrecy

Satan stands in opposition to God and works to destroy souls through the institution called Freemasonry. Masonry, with all of the good qualities that people may attribute to it, is a form of paganism. Masonry has long boasted of the secrets of its organization. The masonic secrets are so concealed that even a candidate wishing to become a mason does not know what the organization stands for. Therefore, many professed Christians who are members of Masonic lodges are in total ignorance of Masonry's beliefs and practices. They are intentionally deceived by the lodge they wish to be a member of. Masons of the Blue Degree (first 3 degrees) are as Pike says,

[are] intentionally misled by false interpretations . . . It is not intended that he shall understand them (the masonic symbols); but it is intended that he shall imagine he understand them (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 819).

The doctrine of Masonry includes the Catholic doctrine of mental reservation. Mental reservation is explained by the Catholic church as: "We are also under an obligation to keep secrets faithfully, and sometime the easiest way of fulfilling that duty is to say what is false, or to tell a lie" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 471). Lying, therefore, is justified by the doctrine of mental reservation. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* further says, "A false statement knowingly made to one who has not a right to the truth will not be a lie" (Vol. IX, p. 471).

Proof that Masonry holds to this practice of condoning lying instead of revealing its secrets is verified by Pike when he says,

Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be mislead; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Lights, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 104-105).

Contrary to the Masonic doctrine, which condones lying, the Apostle Paul says,

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds . . . Wherefore putting away lying, speak every

man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another (Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25).

In Revelation, the Apostle John says, "... all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (22:8).

Freemasonry: Biblically Inconsistent

1. Freemasonry considers others equal to Jesus as a lawgiver.

Speaking of Jesus, the Apostle Peter says, "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). But Pike says,

[Masonry] reverences all the great reformers. It sees in Moses, the Lawgiver of the Jews, in Confucius and Zoroaster, in Jesus of Nazareth, and in the Arabian Iconcolast, Great Teachers of Morality, and Eminent Reformers, if no more: and allows every brother of the Order to assign to each such higher and even Divine Character as his Creed and Truth require ... Thus Masonry disbelieves no truth, and teaches unbelief in no creed, except so far as such creed may ... strike at those great columns of Masonry ... and disregard of the active duties of the Order (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 525).

J. D. Buck (a Masonic writer) says,

In the early church, as in the secret doctrine, there was not one Christ for the world, but a potential Christ in every man. Theologians first made a fetish of the Impersonal Omnipresent Divinity; and then tore the Christos from the hearts of all humanity in order to deify Jesus; that they might have a god-man peculiarly their own (*Symbolism or Mystic Masonry*, p. 57).

2. Freemasonry distorts the Scriptures.

In Christianity the Bible is recognized as God's Word. However, Masons do not restrict God's Word to the Bible only. Some lodge members (Jews, Muslim, etc) do not believe the Bible (the Old and/or New Testament) to be God's Word. Therefore, Mackey says,

Masonically, the book of the Law is that sacred book which is believed by the Mason of any particular religion to contain the revealed will of God ... Thus, to the Christian Mason the Book of the Law is the Old and New Testament; to the Jew, the Old

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Testament; to the Mussulman, the Koran; to the Brahman, the Vedas; and to the Parsee, the Zendavesta (Mackey, pp. 78-79).

Masons are taught to show reverence, not only to the Bible, but, to all so-called sacred books of religion.

The Bible, so rich in symbolism, is itself a symbol . . . thus, by the very honor which Masonry pays to the Bible, it teaches us to revere every book of faith in which men find help for today and hope for tomorrow, joining hands with the man of Islam as he takes oath on the Koran, and with the Hindu as he makes covenant with God upon the book that he loves best (Front of the Masonic Bible).

"Masons . . . do not employ the Bible as a profession that we as a Society accept all its teachings and doctrines" (Little Masonic Library, Vol. I, 129; Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia, p. 520). Even the Masons who do believe in the Bible do not claim that it is God's Word, but that it is only a symbol of His Word and can be replaced and altered at one's will. Pike says,

Whatever one firmly believes and conscientiously believes, is truth to him . . . [Masons] absolutely deny the right of any man to . . . condemn another's faith and opinions as deserving to be punished because of heretical (Morals and Dogma, pp. 160-161).

Furthermore, Pike says, "all truths are truths of period, and not truths for eternity" (p. 37). Therefore, Masons believe, as Mackey says,

The Bible is used among masons as the *symbol* of the will of God, however, it *may be expressed* and therefore, whatever any people expresses that will be used as a *substitute for the Bible* in a Masonic lodge. Thus in a lodge consisting entirely of Jews, the Old Testament alone may be placed upon the Altar, and Turkish Masons make use of the Koran. Whether it be the Gospels of the Christians, the Pentateuch to the Israelite, the Koran to the Mussulman, or the Vedas to the Brahman, it everywhere Masonically conveys the same idea—that of the symbolism of the divine will revealed to men (Mackey, p. 77—italics mine, wmb).

Contrary to these statements, Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" and, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Jn. 17:17; Mt. 24:35).

Many of the Masonic signs, passwords, and degrees are taken from the Bible, making it appear that Masonry is founded on the Word of God. Each degree of Masonry uses Bible verses to support the ritual. For example, before entering the lodge the Mason must give three distinct knocks on the door. In certain ceremonial rituals, the mason is asked, "What do those three distinct knocks allude to?" The proper response must be: "A certain passage in Scripture, wherein it says, 'Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' "

3. Freemasonry commissions death to those who reveal secrets.

True Christians can never become Masons because they are required to swear to God never to reveal the secrets of the organization. However, Jesus says,

Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black (Mt. 5:34-36).

The oaths and penalties that candidates for each Masonic degree must take should be reason enough for Christians to have no desire to join this organization. Every oath taken is concluded with the words "So help me God, make me steadfast and faithful to perform the same." Therefore, every oath is taken by swearing to God.

Violation of any part of Masonic obligations points the perpetrator to the punishment of some form of uncivilized death. For example, the penalties of revealing any part of the secrets of a particular degree of Freemasonry is as follows:

a. First Degree (Apprentice Mason)

Binding myself under no less penalty than to have my throat cut from ear to ear, my tongue torn out by the roots, and with my body buried in the rough sands of the sea, a cable length from shore, where the tide ebbs and flows every twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this, my solemn obligation as an Entered Apprentice, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same (Light on Masonry, p. 27).

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b. Second Degree (Fellow-Craft Mason)

I (NAME), of my own free will and accord, in presence of Almighty God, and this right worshipful lodge erected to Him, and dedicated to the Holy Saint John, do hereby and hereon, solemnly and sincerely, promise and swear, I will always hail, forever conceal, and never reveal, any of the secret arts, parts, or points, of the mysteries of the Fellowcraft degree . . . I furthermore promise and swear, that I will not wrong a brother Fellowcraft . . . I furthermore promise and swear, to keep and perform the same, without any equivocation, mental reservation, or secret evasion of mind, in me whatever, binding myself under no less a penalty, than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked out, and with my body left to the vultures of the air, should I ever knowingly or willingly, violate this, my most solemn obligation, as a Fellowcraft, so help me God, and keep me steadfast, in the due performance of the same. (He then kisses the Bible twice to seal his commitment to his oath.) (op. cit.)

c. Third Degree (Master Mason)

Under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken thence, and with my body burned to ashes, and those ashes scattered to the four winds of Heaven, so that there might not remain name, trace nor remembrance of so vile a wretch as I would be, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate this, my most solemn obligations, as a Master Mason, so help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same (op. cit.).

d. Knights of Malta

(Taking wine in a human skull) This pure wine I now take in testimony of my belief in the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul and may this libation appear as a witness against me both here and hereafter—and as the sins of the world were laid upon the head of the Savior, so may all the sins committed by the person whose skull this was be heaped upon my head, in addition to my own, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate or transgress any obligation that I have heretofore taken . . . to any degree of Masonry or order of Knighthood. So help me God (op. cit.).

e. Tenth Degree—Scottish Rite

In failure of this my obligation, I consent to have my body opened perpendicularly, and to be exposed for eight hours in the open air, that the venomous flies may eat of my entrails, my head to be cut off and put on the highest pinnacle of the world and I will always be ready to inflict the same punishment on those who shall disclose this degree and break this obligation, so help me God and maintain me (op. cit.).

f. Shrine

In willful violation whereof I may incur the fearful penalty of having my eyeballs pierced to the center with a three-edged blade, my feet flayed and I be forced to walk the hot sands upon the sterile shores of the Red Sea, until the flaming sun shall strike me with livid plague, and may Allah the God or Arab Muslim and Mohammedan, the God of our Fathers support me to the entire fulfillment of the same (op. cit.).

These barbarous acts are voluntarily accepted by the candidate wishing to become a mason of these different degrees. He voluntarily swears upon the Bible, compass and square, swearing to God that these things are to be carried out upon him if he reveals even the nonsensical secrets of the Masonic Lodge. For example, a Mason forfeits his life by disclosing the Masonic secret that the name of the grip of the Entered Apprentice Degree is "Boaz"; or revealing the secret that the password of the next Degree is "Shibboleth" or the name of the grip is "Jachin"; or that the password to the Master's Degree is "Tubal-Cain"; or that the Master's word is "Mah-Hah-Bone."

People Murdered for Revealing Masonic Secrets

There is documented proof that these penalties have been inflicted by Masons on other Masons revealing the Masonic secrets.

1. William Morgan

A Mason by the name of William Morgan wrote a book entitled, **Illustrations of Masonry**. In this book, many Masonic secrets were revealed and he was put to death in September 1827 because of breaking his oath.

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In reference to Morgan's death, John Quincy Adams wrote,

Look at the government of New York, struggling in vain for five long years to bring the perpetrators of the murder to punishment. See the judges, sheriffs, witnesses, jurors, entangled in the net of Masonry, and justice prostrated in her own temple by the touch of her invisible hand . . . Go to the records of the court; you will find witnesses refusing to testify upon the express ground of Masonic obligations, avowing that they considered those obligations paramount to the law of the land (*Sermons and Addresses on Secret Societies*, pp. 4-5).

Today, a monument to Morgan stands in New York, reminding the public of the Masonic Lodges' actions. On the south side of the monument, these words are inscribed:

Sacred to the memory of Wm. Morgan, a native of Virginia, a captain in the war of 1812, a respectable citizen of Batavia, and a martyr to the freedom of writing, printing and speaking the truth. He was abducted from near this spot in the year 1826, by Freemasons, and murdered for revealing the secrets of their order.

On the West side of the monument, these words are recorded:

The Bane of our civil institutions is to be found in Masonry, already powerful, and daily becoming more so . . . I owe to my country an exposure of its dangers—*Capt. William Morgan (The Facts Stated)*.

2. William Miller

The death of William Miller was explained by Samuel G. Anderton in a written affidavit before John W. Quincy, a justice of the peace in Boston, Massachusetts. The affidavit reads,

In the year 1809, he [Anderton] was made a Mason . . . and became acquainted with a Mason by the name of William Miller . . . On the morning of the 4th of June (1813) he had a conversation with his friend William Miller. That Miller then told him that "the Masons had offered to make him a Knight Templar free-of-charge, and that he had been strongly urged to attend that evening, which he had agreed to do." Mr. Anderton had agreed also to attend the same meeting . . . Some time in the evening he was informed that there was to be a Masonic execution that night; that a Mason had violated his Masonic obligation, by saying "That a book entitled 'Jachin and Boaz' as

a true book" . . . Struck with horror, Mr. Anderton wished to leave the room, but was peremptorily denied permission to retire, being told "that is never allowed on such occasions." Lot was cast who should be the executioners. The lot fell on a Dane, on a Swede, and on Mr. Anderton. Learning that William Miller was the person to be executed . . . Mr. Anderton was excused from the Masonic duty of being an executioner of his friend . . . The hour of midnight darkness arrived, the executioners took their stand near, and at the left hand of the presiding Masonic officer. All things being in readiness, Mr. Miller, mistrusting no danger, but with expectation of receiving a degree of Masonry, according to the promise made to him, was led into the room . . . The question was asked and repeated, agreeably to Masonic custom, "Who comes there? Who comes there?" The answer was bawled out, as the executioners seized him, "A [??] traitor who has broken his Masonic obligation." As the cap of death came over his head, he had just time to cry, "O my God! Are you going to murder me? O my wife! My children!" when his cries were stopped short by the suffocating cord drawn round his neck . . . the victim fell to the floor in the agonies of death. The executioners bracing their feet against his body, continued their tug at the rope with increasing violence, while others of the fraternity fell upon the body, cut the throat, and then his left side and breast open, so as to show his heart; during which horrid scene, some of the thirty-five or forty persons in the room, exhibited signs of sympathy; but the greater part . . . used the most profane, revengeful language, with their fists clenched, grinned with horrid approbation! (*Sermons and Addresses on Secret Societies*, pp. 19-21).

Freemasonry and Injustice

If a Master Mason is guilty of crimes, his secrets are to be kept by all Masons who knows of his crime. Masons must swear to God the following oath:

I promise and swear that a Master Mason's secret, committed to me as such, and I knowing him to be such, shall remain as inviolable in my breast as in his own, Murder and Treason excepted (*Sermons and Addresses on Secret Societies*, p. 25).

If a Masonic Lodge member of the Royal Arch Degree is guilty of any crime, including murder and treason, his secrets are to be kept by all Ma-

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sons who know of his crime. His oath is the same as the above except the last clause says, "murder and treason not excepted."

Situations may also arise in which a Mason must help a fellow lodge member of the Royal Arch degree even if he is doing wrong. Masons must swear to God:

I promise and swear that I will aid and assist a companion Royal Arch Mason whenever I see him engaged in any difficulty, and espouse his cause so far as to extricate him from the same, if it be in my power, *whether he be right or wrong* (Sermons and Addresses on Secret Societies, p. 30—italics mine, wmb).

A Religious Institution

Some members of the church, who are also Masons, will often deny that Masonry is in any form a religious institution. However, other Masons will readily acknowledge Masonry as a religion. It is necessary, therefore, to go to the writings of Masonic authorities to learn the truth on this important point. In his chapter entitled, "The Essence of True Religion," Darrah says,

There are two classes of masons who deny that masonry is a religion: (1) those overly devout churchmen who want the churches to have a monopoly on all the morality in the world and to compel those who desire to be good to do it under the restrictions which they provide and (2) those masons who refuse to acknowledge it a religion because to do so might *make it necessary to change some of their practices* in order to be consistent members of the society (Darrah, p. 9—italics mine, wmb).

The Masonic religion contradicts the practices of the true religion of Christ. Therefore, a man must change some of his other religious practices in order not to be an inconsistent Mason. Darrah continues his teaching on the "Essence of True Religion" by saying,

If a belief in God, the practice of prayer, the acceptance of the Bible as the rule and guide of conduct, and an all-abiding faith in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man are not religious elements and which, blended as they are in Freemasonry, do not constitute a religion, then many other so-called religious societies should renounce their claims to distinction in that particular (Darrah, p. 9).

Unquestionably, Masonry is recognized as a religion by its authorities. Other Masons claim that Freemasonry is not only a religion but "is the parent of all religions" (**Freemasonry: The Invisible Cult In Our Midst**, p. 100). This religion is claimed to be an universal religion, not based upon the Bible, but based solely on nature and reasoning. Pike says,

Masonry propagates no creed except its own most simple and sublime one; that *universal religion*, taught by Nature and by Reason. Its Lodges are neither Jewish, Moslem, nor Christian (**Morals and Dogma**—quoted from **The Sower**, Vol. 19, May 1973, Eugene Britnell).

Concerning this universal religion, Dr. Buck says,

Masonry is not only a universal science, but a world wide religion, and owes allegiance to no one creed, and can adopt no sectarian dogma as such, without ceasing thereby to be Masonic . . . Masonry is the universal religion only because and only so long as it embraces all religions . . . (**The Genius of Freemasonry and the Twentieth Century Crusade**, no page number given).

The Masonic religion is not claimed to have come from Christ but "its religion comes from the ancient priesthood" (Mackey, p. 333). Actually, the ceremonies (worship services) developed from paganism. Mackey says,

When masonry established its system partly on the ancient rites and partly on the Jewish ceremonies [a pagan-Jewish hodge-podge], it founded its third degree as the Adytum [forbidden place] or holy of holies of all its mysteries, the exclusive place into which none but the most worthy—the priesthood of Masonry—the masters in Israel—were permitted to enter (**Masonry Defined**, p. 156).

People who are not members of the Masonic religion are designated by Masons as "profane." While speaking about the Mason's Monitors (instruction books), Mackey says,

We have never heard of any evil effects arising from the reading of our Monitors . . . they have been the means, in many instances, of inducing the **profane**, who have read them, to admire our Institution, and to knock at the "door of Masonry" for admission (Mackey, p. 317).

Mackey continues to explain who the "profane" are by saying, "In its ordinary use 'profane' signifies one who is irreligious and irreverent . . ." (p. 317). The "irreligious and irreverent" people are those who are not members of the Masonic Lodge. Throughout Masonic writings, they refer to two classes of people: "Masons" and "the profane."

Masonic Worship

Pike says, "Masonry is a worship" (Pike, p. 526). The actual activities of worship are very obscure because they, as so many other details of Masonry, are kept secret. However, Mackey indicates that the secret ceremonies within the lodge comprise the worship. He says,

[The Masonic altar] is a sacred utensil of religion, intended, like the altars of the ancient temples, for religious uses, and thus identifying Masonry, by its necessary existence in our Lodges, *as a religious institution*. Its presence should also lead the contemplative Mason to view the ceremonies in which it is employed with solemn reverence, as being a part of a really *religious worship* (Mackey, p. 65—italics mine, wmb).

Masonic Religious Teachings

Masonry recognizes that religions must have specific teachings. Therefore, Pike says,

Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion; and *its teachings are instruction in religion . . . This is the true religion* revealed to the ancient patriarchs; which Masonry has taught for many centuries, and which it will continue to teach as long as time endures (*Morals and Dogma*, pp. 213-214—italics mine, wmb).

These Masonic teachings are held sacred to all Masons. Pike says, "The laws of Masonry point out the true way" (p. 187). Masons teach that obedience to the Masonic teachings will give them a home in heaven, i.e., heaven is reached by being a good lodge member. Mackey says,

Heaven, the future life, the higher state of existence after death, is the foreign country in which the Master Mason is to enter (Mackey, p. 104).

Senior and Junior Wardens of the Masonic lodge are charged:

Perform the duties of your respective stations . . . and you will receive from your Almighty Father an inheritance incorrupti-

ble and undefiled, that fadeth not away (Tennessee Craftsman, p. 21).

Not only does the Masonic religion teach that Masons will enter heaven, they teach that only Masons will reach heaven. Pike says,

Let him who toils complain not, nor feel humiliated. Let him look up, and see his fellow-workmen there, in God's Eternity; *they alone surviving there* (Pike, p. 343—italics mine, wmb).

Masonic Religion's Acceptance of Other Religions

Masonry's basic concept of other religions is stated by J. S. M. Ward, a masonic authority, as he says,

I consider Freemasonry is a sufficiently organized school of mysticism to be entitled to be called a religion . . . Freemasonry . . . teaches that each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God, and thereby achieve salvation. It holds that there be many paths that lead to the throne of the all-loving Father . . . though these paths appear to branch off in various directions, yet *they all reach the same ultimate goal* . . . I boldly aver that Freemasonry is a religion, yet in no way conflicts with any other religion, unless that religion holds that no one outside its portals can be saved (Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals, pp. 185, 187—italics mine, wmb).

Masonry and the Bible

As we have learned, Masonry is not the religion spoken of in the Bible. Instead, as Mackey says, the "Blue Lodge Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible; if it was it would not be Masonry; it would be something else" (Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, p. 207).

Masonry teaches that there is not only one Bible, but that the sacred teachings of religion are determined by which religious group you are involved with. Mackey says,

Masonically, the book of the law is that sacred book which is believed by the Mason of any particular religion to contain the revealed will of God . . . thus, to the Christian lodge member the book of the Law is the Old and New Testament; To the Jew, the Old Testament; To the Mussulman, the Koran; To the Brahman, The Vedas, and to the Parsee, The Zendavesta (Mackey, pp. 78-79).

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Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). In spite of this statement, Pike says, "What is truth to me is not truth to another" (pp. 165-166). Pike makes this statement because Masonry teaches "everything is truth of period not truth of eternity" (p. 37). This doctrinal view of Masonry contradicts Jesus statement, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35).

Masons are taught not to condemn and not to even attempt to convert people of other religions. Pike says,

[Masons are instructed] to respect all forms of worship, to tolerate all political and religious opinions; not to blame, and still less to *condemn the religion of others; not to seek to make converts;* but to be content if they have the religion of Socrates; a veneration for the Creator, the religion of good works, and grateful acknowledgement of God's blessings (Morals and Dogma, p. 333—italics mine, wmb).

Masons do not attempt to convert people from other religions because, as Mackey says,

God is equally present with the Pious Hindu in the temple, the Jew in the synagogue, the Mohammedan in the mosque, and the Christian in the church (Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Vol. 1, p. 301).

Masonic's Plan of Salvation

God's Word teaches that the plan of salvation is belief in Jesus (Mk. 16:16), repentance of our past sins (Lk. 13:3), confessing Jesus as the Son of God (Mt. 10:32), and being baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Contrary to this teaching, the Masons have their own plan of salvation. Pike says,

Step by step men must advance toward Perfection; and each Masonic Degree is meant to be one of those steps (Pike, p. 136).

Likewise, the cleansing of man's heart is necessary for all humanity. The Apostle Peter says,

Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently (1 Pet. 1:22).

According to the Scriptures, our hearts are purified by faith (Acts 15:9). However, Masonry teaches differently by saying,

The lessons which he [the entered apprentice] receives are simply intended to *cleanse the heart* and prepare the recipient for that mental illumination which is to be given in the succeeding degrees (**Masonry Defined**, p. 211).

"Master," "Worshipful Master," "Right Worshipful Master"

Masonry follows the pattern of the Jews of old that Jesus spoke of when He says,

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (Jn. 12:42-43).

Proof that Masons are looking for the praise of man is easily recognized by noticing that the head of each local lodge is called "Master." At other times he is called "Worshipful Master," and still at other times he is called "Right Worshipful Master." When certain services are in progress, members of the Lodge use the formula "Brethren, behold your Master." This statement does not refer to Christ, but to the head of the Masonic Lodge. This is sin. Jesus says, "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ" (Mt. 23:10). These titles are given that the members of the Lodge would show honor and praise to man instead of Christ.

Masonic Baptism

The religion found in Masonry has its own baptism. Pike says that in certain ceremonies Masons are asked the question:

"What are the symbols of the purification necessary to make us perfect Masons?" The proper answer that must be given is: "Lavation with pure water, or baptism" (Pike, p. 538-539).

Jesus teaches that the new birth is found in Christian baptism (Jn. 3:1-6). However, Masons say that the new birth is found by becoming a Masonic lodge member. The Masonic **Kentucky Monitor** says,

There you stood without our portals, on the threshold of this new Masonic life, in darkness, helplessness, and ignorance. Having been wandering amid the errors and covered over

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with the pollutions of the outer and profane world, you came inquiringly to our doors, seeking the *new birth*, and asking a withdrawal of the veil which concealed the divine truth from your uninitiated sight . . . There was to be not simply a change for the future, but also an extinction of the past, for *initiation is*, as it were, *a death to the world and a resurrection to a new life* (p. 26—italics mine, wmb).

Masonic Communion

The Masonic religion has its own "communion." Pike says that Masons are asked, "What is to us the chief symbol of man's ultimate redemption and regeneration?" The proper response is: "The fraternal supper, of bread which nourishes, and of wine which refreshes" (Pike, p. 538-539). The purpose of this fraternal supper is explained by Pike:

Thus, in the bread we eat, and in the wine we drink tonight may enter into and form part of us the identical particle of matter that once formed parts of the material bodies called Moses, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, or Jesus of Nazareth (Pike, p. 539).

The Masonic communion also symbolizes the unity of all Masons. Mackey says,

Consecrated bread and wine, that is to say, bread and wine used not simply for food, but made sacred by the purpose of symbolizing a bond of brotherhood, and the eating and drinking of which are sometimes called the 'communion of the Brethren,' is found in some of the higher degrees (Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, p. 140).

Testimony of America's Men of Renown

President Finney

God demands and the world has a right to expect, that the church will take due action and bear a truthful testimony in respect to this institution. She cannot now innocently hold her peace. The light has come. Fidelity to God and to the souls of men requires that the church, which is the light of the world, should speak out and should take such action as will plainly reveal her views of the compatibility or incompatibility of Freemasonry with the Christian religion.

George Washington, September 25, 1788

[Speaking of his illness] Allow me to add little more than thanks for your kind wishes and favorable sentiments except to correct an error you have run into of my presiding over the English lodges in this country. The fact is, I preside over none; nor have I been in one more than once or twice within the last thirty years.

President James Madison

I never was a Mason, and no one perhaps could be more a stranger to the principles, rites and fruits of the institution. From the number and character of those who now support the charges against Masonry, I cannot doubt that it is at least susceptible of abuses outweighing any advantages promised by its patrons.

Daniel Webster, November 20, 1835

I have no hesitation in saying that however unobjectionable may have been the original objects of the institution, or however pure may be the motives and purposes of the individual members, and notwithstanding the many great and good men who have from time to time belonged to the order, yet, nevertheless, it is an institution which in my judgment is essentially wrong in the principles of its formation, that from its very nature it is liable to great abuses; that among the obligations which are found to be imposed upon its members there are such as are entirely incompatible with the duty of good citizens, and that all secret associations, the members of which take upon themselves extraordinary obligations to one another, and are bound together by secret oaths, are naturally sources of jealousy and just alarm to others, are especially unfavorable to harmony and mutual confidence among men living together under popular institutions, and are dangerous to the general cause of civil liberty and good government. Under the influence of this conviction it is my opinion that the future administration of all such oaths and the formation of all such obligations should be prohibited by law.

Governor John Hancock

I am opposed to all secret societies (Sermons and Addresses on Secret Societies, pp. 20-21).

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President John Q. Adams

I saw a code of Masonic legislature adapted to prostrate every principle of equal justice and to corrupt every sentiment of virtuous feeling in the soul of him who bound his allegiance to it. I saw the practice of common honesty, the kindness of Christian benevolence, even the abstinence of atrocious crimes, limited exclusively by lawless oaths and barbarous penalties . . . I saw slander organize into a secret, widespread and affiliated agency, fixing its invisible fangs into the hearts of its victims, sheltered by the darkness of the lodge room and armed with the never-ceasing penalties of death. I saw self-invoked imprecation of throats cut from ear to ear, of hearts and vitals torn out and cast off and hung on spires. I saw wine drank from a human skull with solemn invocation of all the sins of its owner upon the head of him who drank it . . . Notwithstanding these horrid oaths and penalties of which a common cannibal would be ashamed, the general Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the U.S.A. forbade their abandonment. That Masonry sanctions these barbarities is therefore proven beyond a question (*Freemasonry: An Interpretation*, p. 164).

Conclusion

Masonry teaches that "Freemasons are brethren, not only by common participation of the human nature, but as professing the same faith" (Mackey, p. 146). True Christians must never be so associated with unbelievers that they are considered of the same faith and practice.

The Apostle Paul teaches what Christians are to do who have become bound with those involved in unfruitful works of darkness. He says,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

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The Way

by Terry Baze

This fellowship is not to be mistaken with The Way International, which was an outgrowth of the "Jesus Movement" of the sixties and seventies, and was started a number of years ago by the late Victor Paul Wierville. The Way International is without question a cult and has nothing to do with the people that we will discuss today. I refer to them as "The Way" and yet they do not really refer to themselves with any official title or name. They usually refer to themselves as servants, saints, disciples, brethren, or friends. Aside from the aforementioned scriptural designations that we are familiar with, the term "friends" is commonly used among them and supported by the following Scriptures:

Acts 27:3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

John 15:13-15 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

3 John 14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

Some have referred to them as the "two by twos." Frequently they will say something like, "When I made my choice to walk in 'this Way' . . ." Therefore, I refer to them as "The Way" for lack of a better description.

The Name

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says on pages 3075-6 under the heading of "Way,"

By a very easy and natural figure 'way' is applied to the course of human conduct, the manner of life which one lives (Acts

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14:16; 1 Cor. 4:17; Jas. 5:20). In some cases the language may be such as to leave it indeterminate whether the way or course of conduct is good or bad, though in most cases the Bible writers attach to every act an ethical evaluation. Sometimes this way of conduct is of purely human choice, without reference to either God or good. Frequently the way in this metaphorical sense is characterized by that quality which is its outstanding feature, mention is made of the way of life (Pro. 15:24) of truth (2 Pet. 2:2), of peace (Lk. 1:79), of righteousness (Mt. 21:32; 2 Pet. 2:21), of salvation (Acts 16:17), and of death (Jer. 21:8). Frequently God's purpose or His customary action is described as His way (Mt. 22:16; Acts 13:10). Since all of God's plans and purposes tend toward man's salvation, His provisions to this end are frequently spoken of as His Way, and inasmuch as all of the Divine plans center in Christ He is preeminently the Way (Jn. 14:6). Out of this fact grew the title "The Way," one of the earliest names applied to Christianity (Acts 9:2; 18:25,26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:22) (W. C. Morro, *ISBE*, vol. v, p 3075-6).

Let's look at some of the passages that use the word "way:"

Matthew 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Matthew 21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Matthew 22:16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Luke 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Acts 16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Acts 18:25-26 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in

the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Romans 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known.

2 Peter 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

2 Peter 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Acts 9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

Acts 24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

2 Peter 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Their Influence and History

They exist in every state in America and can be found in every continent and in most countries in the world.

Very little is known about them and even less is documented. I was able to find nothing about their history. For their part, they contend that nothing is recorded. It has been handed down by word of mouth that a

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man named George Walker brought this way with him to America from either Ireland or Scotland about the turn of the century. I was told that it was between 1898 and 1902. Nothing seems to be known further back than that. They contend, however, that "The Way" has always existed. They refer to Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as men who walked in the way of God, and state that there has always been a remnant in every generation who followed the truth. They say that even if there were times when there was no visible evidence of true followers, the seed was within man, though perhaps dormant.

After doing quite a bit of research on the history of Christianity in the regions of England, Scotland and Ireland, I cannot help but think that this movement is an outgrowth of the Separatist and Purist movements, which were a result of rebellion against the Church of England. There were many splinter groups such as the Quakers, Seekers, Familists and others. There is some similarity between The Way and some of these groups, but it is most difficult, if not impossible to discern a connection.

The general purpose that they espouse is to restore the primitive spiritual principles and lifestyle of Jesus.

The single most impressive characteristic is their sweet, kind, gentle, humble, quiet disposition. Anyone that I've ever met that has had any contact with any of their people says the same thing. On the whole, they seem more spiritually minded, have more Bible knowledge, and are more separate from the world than we usually are.

They speak often of Bible patterns and examples that must be followed. They quote Hebrews 13:8 and explain that while all the denominational world continues to change with each generation, the truth does not change, and neither do their practices. They contend that there are absolutely and positively no divisions in their ranks. They all believe and teach the same things and that there is no discrepancy in their faith and practice anywhere in the world.

Some Doctrines and Practices.

Worship. They meet in their homes for worship. They eschew church buildings and rented facilities for the worship. Below are some of the verses used to show that the primitive church met in houses.

Acts 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Acts 7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?.

Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

Acts 12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Acts 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.

Romans 16:5 Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

1 Cor 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

Philemon 1:2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house.

They meet in the home with three or four families to each congregation on each Sunday, except for every first Sunday of the month, when three or four of these house churches meet together for their unity worship. As many as thirty to forty people worship together on such occasions.

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In their Sunday worship, they sing accapella, pray, teach God's Word, and observe the Lord's Supper. They are opposed to the use of instrumental music in their worship services. They observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday with one slice of light bread and one cup of grape juice. They do not contend for unleavened bread, nor are they opposed to the use of fermented wine. They do not believe in a weekly contribution.

In their worship, every member, man or woman, is expected to stand and give a couple of minutes testimony to the rest of the group about something they read or experienced in the past week that will edify the congregation. This is based on 1 Corinthians 14:23-24, 26, 31:

If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all . . . How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation . . . Let all things be done unto edifying. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

Mission. They are evangelistic in a sense, and their method of ministry is one of their most important and distinctive features. They derive their pattern for preaching the gospel from passages in the Gospels where Jesus sent the twelve and then the seventy to preach. They do not usually refer to their preachers as "preachers;" they usually call them "workers" or "servants."

They almost always send them in pairs, and men and women alike fill these roles. They never send a man and a woman together, however. Some of the verses they use to justify women doing this work are:

Philippians 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

Acts 21:9 And the same man had four daughter, virgins, which did prophesy.

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.(KJV)

Romans 16:6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Romans 16:12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Luke 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity.

Revelation 2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

In order to be a "worker" one must give up all earthly possessions, based on the following passages:

Matthew 10:7-13 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Mark 6:7-11 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Mark 10:28-30 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or fa-

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ther, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Luke 9:1-5 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Lk 10:1-11 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

It is very impressive that people actually give up everything in order to preach the gospel. This appeals to many people who are sick of the glitz and glitter of modern "religion", and money hungry televangelists. If the worker has a need, then whoever they are staying with provides that need. Whether it is a pair of shoes, a coat, food, medical attention, an automobile, or anything else, the need is met. The people count it a great honor and privilege to care for the workers. They even take care of those who may be prevented from working because of age or failing health. They do not believe in the workers retiring. Once a worker, you set your hands to the plow and don't look back—you are a worker till death.

Romans 10:14-15 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

1 Thessalonians 5:12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. (The NIV says here, "respect those who work hard among you.")

Acts 16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Acts 16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Acts 16:40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Acts 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

3 John 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

The people have such a high regard for the workers and they are always considered to be people of the highest character and purest motives. The workers are esteemed highly for their work's sake. Most of the members consider their evangelistic responsibility as simply living a good life and influencing others. When they create interest in others, they invite them to "Gospel Meetings." They have Gospel Meetings either in their homes or sometimes in a rented or borrowed facility. They do not consider these meetings to be worship services, and therefore allow mechanical instruments to be played there. Their Gospel Meetings are held whenever they feel there is a need. The local workers conduct the meetings. These Meetings are sometimes held nightly, but mostly they are held one or two days a week. So the members do very little personal evangelism. They simply introduce people to the workers.

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Doctrines

1. Becoming a follower of "this way." When someone attends the Gospel Meetings and becomes interested in "walking in this way," they stand at the invitation. This is called "making your choice" or "making your profession."

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).

1 Timothy 6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.

They do not say anything, but simply stand silently. Afterwards an appointment is made to see the workers. They believe that the Spirit of God must work in the heart of those who hear the Gospel, and they cite the conversions of Cornelius (Acts 10) and Lydia (Acts 16) as examples. They believe that through hearing the Word and praying, one who is seeking the truth will have a revelation that "this way" is the mystery of God and the way of truth. These revelations are not a miraculous manifestation, vision, dream, or audible voice, but an understanding and agreeing within your spirit that what the Spirit has revealed to you through the Word is true.

2. Baptism. Once one "makes his choice" he begins attending the Sunday worship services and participates as the others do in every part of worship except for the Lord's Supper. Usually for a period of several months the individual goes through the process of growing spiritually and consequently dying to self. He is bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. At some point during this process, one desires to obey God in baptism, as he realizes his growth and death toward sin. He chooses then to be baptized in order to show what has taken place in his life. That he is now dead to sin, therefore buried (immersed) in the waters of baptism, and resurrected to a new life. When asked what if one should die in this state of growing, before he could be baptized, they believe that God's mercy will save such ones, as He did the thief on the cross.

They believe the only acceptable mode of baptism is immersion. They believe it is an emblem of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. One explained to me that as the bread and the fruit of the vine are the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus, and not the literal body and blood, so too, baptism is an emblem of the death, burial, and resurrection that takes place within our hearts. The water doesn't save anyone, but is an emblem of what has happened in the heart of the sinner. They believe that after one is baptized he is a new creation, yet they believe that one is safe during the time between their profession and their baptism. After baptism they are allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper.

3. *The church.* They believe that they are the true church of Christ that is found in the Bible. They believe in the one church that Jesus built. They do not believe in denominationalism. When studying the passages on the church, we agree almost completely.

They seem to have a somewhat different viewpoint regarding the dispensations of the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian ages. They speak of a thread that runs from Genesis to Revelation. As mentioned earlier, they believe a remnant or seed has always existed of those who are the true followers of God. They believe that God chose Israel in order to make His way known through the Law and Prophets that Jesus Christ, His Son would come to redeem fallen man. Jesus is the Way, the only way to God.

Rather than seeing Acts 2 as a key transitional point between dispensations, they seem to run them all together. They consider the events before Acts 2 just as significant as those afterward. They don't like to speak of the kingdom coming on Pentecost, but rather that the kingdom has always existed where men have walked in the way of God. They quote the passages that speak of the kingdom not coming with observation, but being within the heart of man (Mt. 11:12; 12:28; 21:43; Lk. 17:20-21). The New Covenant is more a continuation, or expanding of God's way to all men. Rather than looking at the covenants as being distinctive, a stopping and starting, they look at the new covenant as simply the time when God made known the mystery of His Way to all nations, rather than one. It is difficult to find anything wrong with their ideas here, but there is a real difference in terminology and emphasis. The day of Pentecost and Acts 2 is not given the emphasis that we give it, however in studying with me, they didn't try to refute anything I presented on it.

4. *Lifestyle.* They live quiet, peaceful lives. They stress loving one another and have very strong commitments to family. The congregation

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itself is a very close knit family unit. Their demeanor and disposition is usually of the highest caliber. They have a meek and quiet spirit that is evident almost immediately. They often speak of the blessings of quietness and orderliness. They often talk of the importance of listening to God, or God speaking to you. They speak of an inner light within man (Jn. 1:9). They stress spending large amounts of time in reading the Bible and praying.

As a general rule they do not approve of television or music on the radio. The women wear dresses and let their hair grow long. They do not usually fill their lives and time with worldly activities and pursuits. They do not observe Christmas or other religious holidays.

5. *Organization.* As has already been mentioned, they meet in their homes for worship and one Sunday a month, three or four of the house churches will meet together for worship. In many states, they have what they call "conventions" four times a year. From what I understand, these conventions are very similar to our big regional meetings, like the New Year's and Fourth of July meetings. In Texas, beginning sometime in June, they have a four day convention in Georgetown and then one in Happy. Then later in October, they have one near Midlothian and then one in Texarkana.

There is an elder who oversees each state. There are no national headquarters. There is no one above the state or area elder. These can only be men, who have proven themselves to be true servants full of wisdom. Once a year, the workers have a regional convention, for workers only. The elders communicate with one another and at times move to different states to work. The workers are told where to go by the elders and how long they will stay in an area. Usually for about a month or so at the end of the year, the workers go home to their families to visit.

6. *Eschatology.* They seem to believe just as we do the doctrines of final things.

Conclusion

There seems to me to be many things that we can learn from them. There are many positive aspects of their teaching that we would do well to emulate. It saddens me above all, that in general they seem to be closer to New Testament Christianity in some areas than we are. Especially is this true in regards to their overall spirit and attitude.

Furthermore, it seems that in some ways we are more like the denominations in areas that we call "matters of expediency," than we are like the first century church, and even this group referred to as The Way. It bothers me some, to one day be telling these people that church buildings, patterns of evangelism, and other things are matters of expediency, and then the next day I'm studying with a digressive brother and he's telling me the same thing. In essence, I am contending to both of them, that I am able to determine which areas are matters of expediency and liberty, and which are not, and that they aren't making correct judgments in these areas and I am. I think we should exercise extreme care in these things. Perhaps we have become arrogant and overconfident in our approach to some issues.

In speaking of sin, we talk about staying as far away from the edge as possible so as to avoid the very appearance of evil. Yet in our judgments concerning matters of expediency, we jump to the defense of our traditions however innocent they may be, rather than taking the same approach of staying as far away from the appearance of evil as we possibly can. In matters of expediency, if we choose to look and live more like the current denominations than what we can read of the practices of the early church in the Scriptures, it is no wonder that we are considered by almost everyone as simply another denomination.

The facts are, the digressive brethren have already lost their distinctiveness and we are not far behind. When there are other fellowships who look and act more like Christians than we do, we better make some changes.

The two greatest problem areas these people have, are their beliefs concerning baptism and women preachers.

The Bible teaches that baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism puts one into the death of Christ and into His spiritual body the church (Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13). Without baptism, one cannot be saved from their sins and therefore are not children of God (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:16).

The Bible teaches that women are to keep silent in the church. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any woman ever filled the role of an evangelist or taught in the assemblies of the church.

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1 Timothy 2:11-12 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

1 Corinthians 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church (NIV)

1 Corinthians 14:35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

1 Timothy 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Strong's # 2980 *laeo* (lal-eh'-o); a prolonged form of an otherwise obsolete verb; to talk, i.e. utter words: KJV—preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter. compare 3004.

Strong's #149 *aischron* (ah-ee-skhrón'); neuter of 150; a shameful thing, i.e. indecorum: KJV—shame.

1 Timothy 2:11 Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection (ASV)

1 Timothy 2:12 But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness (ASV)

1 Timothy 2:12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent (NIV)

Appendix

1. The following verses indicate that the apostles did not sell all their possessions to go and preach:

Matthew 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

Luke 4:38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

Luke 5:29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

Acts 28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

John 19:27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

John 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Act 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

2. Their workers typically move about from house to house every few days.

Luke 10:7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

3. Their workers in evangelism are both men and women. But those who were sent by Jesus were men.

Matthew 10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Mark 10:29-30 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

4. Those sent by Jesus in the limited commissions went only to Israel.

Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

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5. The Way ignores the organization of the church.

Ephesians 4:11-12 And he 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:

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

6. They have a single elder over each state or region, but the Bible does not teach this.

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (Cf. Titus 1:5).

7. In the New Testament church, the preacher sometimes supported himself and did not live with the brethren.

Acts 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

8. An aspect of 1 Corinthians 14 that The Way overlooks: there seems to be some regulation about the number who spoke.

1 Corinthians 14:26-34 How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

9. The early church did not always evangelize by twos.

Acts 8:5 And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ (ASV).

Acts 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Acts 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Acts 9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

Acts 10:23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along (NIV).

Acts 12:25 When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark (NIV).

Acts 13:1-5 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

Acts 13:13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem (NIV).

Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.

Acts 15:25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

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Acts 15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

Acts 15:34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Acts 18:26-27 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

Acts 19:21-22 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Act 19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

Act 20:4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

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Jehovah's Witnesses

by Richard Bunner

The religious groups that we are discussing in our study have been labeled today as cults, but by definition this proves to be too broad a subject to present to you in the time allotted. A cult, according to the dictionary, is "any system of religious worship or ritual." A more narrow definition is found in the text, *These Also Believe*, by Charles Braden:

By the term "cult" I mean nothing derogatory to any group so classified. A cult, as I define it, is any religious group that differs significantly in some one or more respects as to belief or practice from those religious groups that are regarded as the normative expression of religion in our modern culture.

Walter Martin adds that a cult might also be defined as,

a group of people gathered around a specific person or person's misinterpretation of the Bible. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses are, for the most part, followers of the interpretations of Charles T. Russell and J. F. Rutherford. The Christian Scientists of today are followers of Mary Baker Eddy and her interpretation of Scripture. And the Mormons, by their own admission, adhere to the interpretations found in the writings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

The focus of my topic is the religious group called, "Jehovah's Witnesses." If a person is in religious error, the consequences will be the same. We use different labels to identify folks in error: sectarian, digressive, denomination, cult, etc., but if a person is in any of these situations, he is in a very precarious place. It should be our desire and interest to bring people out of the situation if they are in it.

I have received a great deal of advice and comment on how I should deal with this subject. Someone commented, "I guess you will be bashing the JW's today." Others have shared with me their method of dealing with the Watchtower Society when they approach their door. For example, one individual said that he always shares with them the plan of salvation, while another said that he merely mentioned the name "church of Christ," which sent them walking in another direction.

Each of us probably have our own way of dealing with folks who come to our house carrying a green Bible or a copy of *Awake!* or *The*

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Watchtower, asking us if we would like to study the Bible, or expressing their concern about the spiritual condition of our society. The normal approach to this situation is a spiritual ping-pong battle in which we will throw an argument at them and they will throw an argument at us, both sides walking away feeling that they have won the battle. This becomes a war of semantics with little real progress.

Members of the Watchtower Society are in a dilemma because of the things that they have been taught. First, they have been taught that what we believe and practice (viz., anyone outside the Watchtower Society) is something that they do not want to have any part of. Second, they have been taught that if it is written by their publishing company (i.e., if it is written in *Awake!*, or *The Watchtower*, or similar publications), then they can rely on it. Let me emphasize this from their own writings.

When a fellow human tells us, "Do not read this" or "Do not listen to that," we may be tempted to ignore his advice. But remember, in this case *Jehovah* is the One who tells us in his Word what to do. And what does he say about apostates? Avoid them (Rom. 16:17-18) (*The Watchtower*, March 15, 1986).

The article then compares any religious tract that would be given to them to pornographic material that should be discarded immediately. Thus, those who think that it is a good idea to distribute tract material to Witnesses when they knock on the door, need to realize that the material will be thrown in the nearest trash can. Witnesses believe that it is spiritual fornication to read material published by any religious organization other than the Watchtower Society.

Further, the Witness organization promotes reading Watchtower material over reading the Bible.

Each treatise [of Judge Rutherford's writings] can be read in just fifteen minutes, and more genuine satisfaction and profitable pleasure derived therefrom in that length of time than can be gotten from studying the Bible by yourself in a whole year (*Vindication*, III, p. 383).

Again, the Witness organization claims that independent Bible study is not profitable, but that one should focus on reading the Watchtower material.

No very clear understanding of the Bible was reached during all these centuries [before the establishment of the Watch-

tower Society] . . . If now the Lord has blessed us with clearer views of His Word, it behooves us to remember that we did not get it because of the four hundred years of independent Bible study . . . We should seek for dependent Bible study rather than independent Bible study (The Watchtower, September 15, 1911).

We find that people cannot see the Divine Plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the **Scripture Studies** [a Watchtower publication] aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the **Scripture Studies** with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures (The Watchtower, September 15, 1910).

A Simulated Study With a Witness

In my remaining time, I am going to conduct a study that I would have with a Jehovah's Witness who would come to my door. Instead of trying to study with the individual(s) immediately, I say, "I am glad you came to my door. Look, I know that you probably want to get to as many doors as possible today, and besides that, I am busy at the moment. Could you come to my house on Saturday when I will have more time to sit down to listen to what you have to say." Generally, Witnesses will agree to return at a later appointed time.

When the individual returns, I invite him in and assure him repeatedly that I am glad that he has taken the time to study with me. Further, I assure him that I am interested in what he has to teach me and what the Watchtower Society publishes. "I have been reading some back issues of Witness publications, and I have some questions that I am sure that you would be willing to help me with. In fact, I was impressed with a back issue of the *Awake!* that reads, 'Any organization should be willing to submit to scrutiny and criticism. All who criticize have the obligation to be truthful in presenting the facts, and fair and objective in assessing such. In both respects we try to live up to that obligation' (August 22, 1984). I appreciate any organization that is willing to live by this motto. Are you willing to answer my questions and scrutiny as this publication suggests?" (Yes)

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"I am interested in an issue of the **Watchtower** that I was reading recently. It asks the question, 'Does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of dangers and to declare things to come?' It then answers the question by saying, 'The prophet was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christ witnesses. Of course, it is easy to say that this group acts as a prophet of God. It is another thing to prove it. The only way this can be done is to review the record. What does it show?' (**Watchtower**, April 1, 1972, p. 197). Does the Watchtower Society still regard itself as God's prophet?" (Yes).

"Well, in another issue, the Watchtower condemns a certain California preacher who prophesied that Armageddon would come in April 1957. The issue describes the man as a "false prophet" because he prophesied of an event that did not take place (cf. Deut. 18:18-22) (**Watchtower**, October 15, 1958, p. 613). And in an issue of **Awake!**, I find this statement: 'True, there have been those in times past who predicted an end to the world, even announcing a specific date. Some have gathered groups of people with them and fled to the hills or withdrawn into their houses waiting for the end. Yet, nothing happened. The end did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying. Why? What was missing? Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that he was guiding and using them' (October 8, 1968, p. 23). Do you agree that a would-be prophet, who prophesies of events that do not take place, is a false prophet and lacks a connection with the truths of God?" (Yes).

"Good. I am also interested in what the Watchtower Society says about inspiration. In a copy of the **Good News** I read the following commentary on 1 Peter 1:21: 'It was because they did not write of their own impulse, but were inspired by God. What is here meant by the word "inspired"? It means that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, moved these men by his spirit or invisible empowering force, putting into their minds what they should write down as his word or message for mankind' (1976, p. 14). I agree with this commentary. But then I read that the Watchtower Society claims to be moved by the Spirit to deliver divine messages, just as the prophets of old. The Society says, 'It is announced with confidence that the Lord uses the columns of **The Watchtower** to transmit to his consecrated people things that he reveals to them and provides for them to know. It is the privilege of **The Watchtower** to publish explanation of the prophecies, which explanation is based upon the

physical facts that exactly fit the prophecy and show that the explanation is correct' (1935 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, p. 52). Is it true that the Watchtower Society is guided by God's inspiration, and therefore is reliable as a spiritual guide?" (Yes).

"This brings me to a state of dilemma. The older copies of **The Watchtower** at my disposal prophecy of the end of the age and the beginning of paradise in the year 1914. For example, one issue reads, 'We see no reason for changing the figures—nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but for the end of the time of trouble' (**The Watchtower**, July 15, 1894, p. 226). Another issue reads, 'When, some fourteen years ago, we presented the Scriptural declaration that the Millennium of peace and blessing would be introduced by forty years of trouble, beginning slightly in 1874 and increasing until social chaos should prevail in 1914—few believed, some scoffed' (**The Watchtower**, October 1890, p. 1). Yet another issue reads, 'The date of the close of that battle is definitely marked in Scripture as October 1914. It is already in progress, its beginning date from October 1874' (**The Watchtower**, January 15, 1892, p. 22)."

"Now, what confuses me is that as I continue to read the writings of inspired Society, I do not read of the end of trouble and the beginning of paradise in 1914 as was prophesied. Rather, I find that the Society changed the date of their prophecy to 1918! (cf., **The Finished Mystery**, 1917, p. 404). Can you explain this to me?" (No).

"Well, that is o.k. Maybe there was a slight error in calculation. I can understand that, I guess (though it seems unusual that an organization inspired by God would miss the date of a prophecy). So the year is 1918 for the end of the age. I read, "In the year 1918, when God destroys the churches wholesale and the church members by millions, it shall be that any that escape shall come to the works of Pastor Russell to learn the meaning of the downfall of Christianity' (**The Finished Mystery**, 1917, p. 485)."

"I am now looking at an issue of **The Watchtower** dated 1920; the end of the age has still not arrived. This bothers me, in light of the fact that these individuals are supposed to have divine guidance. First the year was 1914. Then the year was 1918. Now this issue reads, 'Surely the words of the Master are now in course of fulfillment: This gospel ["The World Has Ended—Millions Now Living Will Never Die"] shall be preached in all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come. The Master's inspiring words thrill the heart of the Christian and spur him on

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with greater zeal to give the witness now . . . Suppose we should be wrong in the chronology and that the kingdom will not be fully set up in 1925. Suppose that we were ten years off, and that it would be 1935 before restitution blessings began . . . Whether it be 1925 or 1935, restitution blessings must soon begin, as shown from all the evidence' (*The Watchtower*, Oct. 15, 1920, p. 310). Am I to understand that the date was changed to 1925, with an understanding that the end might not come until 1935?" (Yes).

"This seems to coincide with the following Watchtower publication, 'That period of time beginning in 1575 before A.D. 1, of necessity would end in the fall of the year 1925, at which time the type ends and the great antitype must begin. What, then, should we expect to take place? In the type there must be a full restoration; therefore the great antitype must mark the beginning of the restoration of all things . . . There will be a resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other faithful ones of old, and that these will the first favor, we may expect 1925 to witness the return of these faithful men of Israel from the condition of death, being resurrected and fully restored to perfect humanity and made the visible, legal representatives of the new order of things on earth, right here in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will become the capital of the world, and out from this nation will flow blessings to all the nations of the earth. Because that time is at hand we can confidently say: Millions now living will never die' (*Golden Age*, March 16, 1921, p. 350, 381). Again, 'Lo, our King is here, and the year 1925 marks the date when all shall see His mighty power demonstrated in the resurrection of the ancient worthies, and the time when millions now living will never die' (*Golden Age*, March 1, 1922, p. 350). What happened? Did the end of the age and the beginning of paradise come in 1925? In 1935? Did the King come for all to see? Did Abraham and other ancients arise from the dead and lead the spiritual revolution?" (No).

"This poses a problem for me. We read earlier an excerpt from *The Watchtower* that said, 'Of course, it is easy to say this group acts as a prophet of God. It is another thing to prove it. The only way that this can be done is to review the record. What does it show?' (April 1, 1972, p. 197). From what I have seen, the record does not look real good. We also noticed from Watchtower publications that false prophets can be identified when they prophesy events that do not come true. In fact, the Watchtower says that such false prophets have no connection with God's truth! (*Awake!*, October 8, 1968). The Watchtower itself claims inspiration from God. Yet, they have been wrong. They were wrong about 1914.

They were wrong about 1918. They were wrong about 1925. They were wrong about 1935. In later issues of **The Watchtower**, the Society was still looking for the coming kingdom of God (cf., **The Watchtower**, December 1, 1941, p. 355). How many prophecies must fail before one is labeled a false prophet? How can I rely on an organization that prophecies falsely? Do you have an explanation for these prophetic errors?" (No).

"Now, I am further confused when I begin reading publications from the mid-sixties. During the period, the Watchtower Society began prophesying of the beginning of paradise in the year 1975 (cf., **The Watchtower**, August 15, 1968, p. 494). So confident was the Society leadership that they encouraged the Witnesses to quit high school and college in order to pursue full-time ministry! 'Many schools now have student counselors who encourage one to pursue higher education after high school, to pursue a career with a future in this system of things. Do not be influenced by them. Do not let them brainwash you with the devil's propaganda to get ahead, to make something of yourself in this world. The world has very little time left . . . Make pioneer service, the full-time ministry, with the possibility of Bethel or missionary service your goal' (**The Watchtower**, March 15, 1969, p. 171). Again, 'In view of the short time left, a decision to pursue a career in this system of things is not only unwise but extremely dangerous . . . Many young brothers and sisters were offered scholarships or employment that promised fine pay. However, they turned them down and put spiritual interests first' (**Kingdom Ministry**, June 1969, p. 3). When the kingdom did not come at this time, the Society published an apology for inappropriately arousing the people's expectations (**The Watchtower**, March 15, 1980, pp. 17-18).

"Now I have not been reading a book that someone else wrote about what you believe. I am reading your own writings and I am trying to figure out what you really believe. If you want me to believe what you believe, I have to be able to have some confidence in your literature and leaders. But how can I have confidence in leaders who claim to be inspired and yet have consistently offered false prophecies concerning the end of the age? Doesn't this make these men false prophets (Deut. 18:18-22)?"

Conclusion

When we study with people from the Jehovah's Witness organization, the most effective approach is to use their own literature. It is difficult to discuss passages of Scripture with them, for their training as workers includes many hours of memorizing responses to those

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Scriptures that seem to refute their beliefs. As a part of their continuing education, they role-play once per week. Hence, they are not open-mindedly considering the Scriptures in a study, but are parroting the things that they have been trained to say in response to objections.

Normally, this would require a large amount of research. But fortunately, there exists an organization, established by a former Jehovah's Witness, whose aim is to provide evidence of inconsistencies in the Witness Society's publications. This simulated "study" contains some information that I received from them. If you are studying, or will be studying with a Jehovah's Witness (and most of us will have the opportunity to do so), I encourage you to write to the following address:

Witness, Inc.
P. O. Box 597
Clayton, CA 94517

The former "Witness" who operates this organization provides photocopies of past Witness Society publications and points out the many errors that they have embraced. *Rt. 6, Box 313 B, Fairmont, West Virginia 26554.*

Beware of False Teachers

By Allen Bailey

From the lips of Jesus Christ: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mt. 7:15).

From the lips of Paul: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

From the lips of Peter: "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 Peter 2:1-2).

Jude warns: "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 4).

New Testament Christians are warned to "beware of false teachers." My assigned topic is designed to study what the Bible says regarding this very important subject. This lesson will be divided into these areas:

- I. Introduction
- II. Warning against false teaching
- III. False teaching during the first Century
- IV. False teaching during the twentieth Century
- V. Closing observations

False Teachers

I believe in the old adage: "If you play with fire, you will get burnt." Due to this well-known statement, I entered into this study of "False Teachers" cautiously. I felt a genuine need for the topic to get some major exposure but was reluctant to fill my mind and time with specific

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false teaching done during the twentieth century. We are nearly two thousand years removed from the false teaching of the first century, however, the false teaching of the twentieth century is all around us on billboards, television, radio, in cassette tapes, on videos, in varieties of religion, and last, but by no means least, sometimes false teaching is even found among our congregations. This alarms me, for the Scriptures are very plain in stating that false teachers have the ability to deceive the very elect, as well as the hearts of the simple (innocent).

Romans 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

The Greek word "deceive" (Greek, **planao**) means "to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way, to go astray, wander, roam about ;" and is translated in the following ways in the thirty-nine times it is used: deceive (24 times), err (6), go astray (5), seduce (2), wander (1), be out of the way (1). Metaphorically, the word signifies:

- to lead away from the truth, to lead into error, to deceive
- to be led into error
- to be led aside from the path of virtue, to go astray, sin
- to sever or fall away from the truth
- to be led away into error and sin

New Testament Warnings Against False Teaching

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

John 6:66-67 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

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Acts 20:29-30 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Romans 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Galatians 1:6-9 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.

Ephesians 5:6-7 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Philippians 3:2-3 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Avoid every kind of evil. (NIV)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 Timothy . . . charge them that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies.

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2 Timothy 4:3-4 Gives the warning . . . the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables.

Titus 3:10 A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition, reject.

Hebrews 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

James 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober be vigilant for your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

2 Peter 2:1-2 . . . 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.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 John 7, 10 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ . . . If their come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

3 John 9-10 Help Christians who teach truth and watch out for Diotrephes, who was one of the domineering false teachers, who would have nothing to do with John. (NCV)

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 2:2 The congregation at Ephesus was praised because . . . thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

Philemon is the only New Testament book that does not contain warnings against false teachers.

False Teachers

Counterfeits in Religion

Notes from a sermon by Brother Paul Nichols

Counterfeit God	1 Corinthians 8:4-6
Counterfeit Christ	Matthew 24:24
Counterfeit Spirits	1 John 4:1, 1 Timothy 4:1
Counterfeit Angels	Galatians 1:8, 2 Corinthians 11:14
Counterfeit Apostles	2 Corinthians 11:13
Counterfeit Prophets	2 Peter 2:1-2, Matthew 7:15
Counterfeit Teachers	2 Peter 2:2
Counterfeit Gospel	Galatians 1:6-9
Counterfeit Miracles	2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, Revelation 16:13-14
Counterfeit Worship	Matthew 15:9, Colossians 2:23; Acts 17:23
Counterfeit Doctrine	1 Timothy 1:10, 2 Timothy 4:3

False Teaching in the First Century

1. *Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection.*

Matthew 22:23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him . . . (Mark 12:18, Luke 20:27, Acts 4:1, Acts 23:6-8).

2. *"Ye must be circumcised to be saved."*

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

3. *Baptism of John after the baptism of the Great Commission.*

Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-10 Apollos taught people to be baptized with John's baptism. The solution was to baptize them again.

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4. *Sadducees believed in no angels and no spirits.*

Acts 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

5. *Gnosticism.* "A system of belief combining ideas derived from Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and ultimately, Christianity, and stressing salvation through gnosis" (New World Dictionary). You will find some excellent material concerning Gnosticism in the **Contending For The Faith** commentary on **First John** by Brother Wayne Fussell. The information is found in the section noted as "Introduction to First John," pages 215-218.

6. *Baptism for the dead.*

1 Corinthians 15:29 Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

7. *Resurrection is past already.*

2 Timothy 2:18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

8. *Thessalonians misunderstood the truth regarding the second coming of Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope . . . For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

9. *Doctrine of Balaam.*

Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Consequences of Denying the Resurrection First Corinthians 15

Paul dealt with the Corinthians, some of who did not believe in the resurrection. He explained the serious consequences of this false doctrine. Paul's way of handling this false teaching should be followed by us today whenever false teaching is promoted.

If there is no resurrection, Christ did not rise from the dead (v. 13).

If there is no resurrection, the apostle's preaching is vain (v. 14).

If there is no resurrection, our faith is vain (v. 14).

If there is no resurrection, the apostles are false witnesses (v. 15).

If there is no resurrection, we are still in sin (present) (v. 17).

If there is no resurrection, the dead in Christ will perish (past) (v. 18).

If there is no resurrection, the living will also perish (future) (v. 19).

— Commentary on First Corinthians, Mark Bailey

10. Doctrine of Nicolaitans.

Revelation 2:6 [To the Ephesians] But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Revelation 2:15 [To the church in Pergamos] So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

False Doctrines of the Twentieth Century

1. *Ecumenism*. The Ecumenical Movement is a movement to unite all the different so-called Christian denominations into one big, world-wide organization or church body, ultimately to include even the non-Christians bodies of the religious world. It is now taken for granted that all Christendom will eventually be united and that it just a matter of time before this will be accomplished (M. L. Moser, Jr., **Ecumenism Under The Spotlight**, pg. 7)

2. *Promise-keepers Movement*. This is an organization of men, now numbering in the hundreds of thousands strong, who have made a commitment to keep seven promises. This project is spear-headed by Bill

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McCartney, James Dobson, Gary Smalley, and others, who have attempted to band men together to keep seven promises. The popular radio program "Focus on the Family" is involved in this movement. As a matter of fact, they are the ones who assist in assembling and distributing a large part of the material.

The sad part about this is, this could have had a positive impression on thousands of families across America, if it had been kept Bible-based. However, when you get denominational minds together at work, they are going to come up with false teaching. Some of the promises are fine, well, and good but one of the promises in particular is sinful and cannot be tolerated. Men of God cannot become members of "Promise Keepers" and remain loyal to God at the same time.

Before giving the seven promises that men are expected to make and keep, let me remind you that on the tapes and probably in the book the plan of salvation is wrong. The entire tenor of salvation is not Bible based. Good points are made regarding family, responsibilities, men becoming leaders of their home, etc. Christians, however, cannot support the "Promise Keepers." The following material, taken from their literature, gives one an idea what the movement is about.

BECOMING A PROMISE KEEPER

We are offering you an opportunity this weekend to make a life-long commitment to become a promise keeper. We are seeking men who understand that becoming a promise keeper is a process and who acknowledge the grace and strength available through Jesus Christ. Will you agree to commit to the following covenant?

I AM COMMITTED TO:

1. Honor Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to His Word in the power of the Holy Spirit;
2. Pursue vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that I need brothers to help me keep my promises;
3. Practice spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity;
4. Build strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values;

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5. Support the mission of my church, by honoring and praying for my pastor and by actively giving my time and resources;
6. Reach beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity;
7. Influence my world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

My concern is that a number of Christians have attended Promise Keepers rallies and went away thinking they were so great they encouraged others to go. I am thankful for those Christians who have attended Promise Keepers and as a result realizes that no true Christian can keep his allegiance to God and to the Promise Keepers at the same time. Promise Keepers are not promoting true Bible teaching. They have good points but they have some serious errors and we must warn people of them.

3. *Catholic Evangelical Accord.* This twenty five page document is a written agreement between the Pope of the Catholic church and a significant number of Evangelicals of our modern time. This accord agrees among many other things that it would be a sin, in violation of the "Catholic-Evangelical Accord" for a Catholic to try and convert a person from another religion. It would equally be a sin for one of the other religions—Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostals, etc.—to try and convert a Catholic. The Pope is working on agreements at the present time with Hindus, Bulldist, Mohammed and other religious faith to attempt to reach an agreement with them also. This project is an aggressive way of trying to get to the one world religion. More information on this area may be had in *Ecumenism Under The Spotlight* by M. L. Moser, Jr. This book opposes this movement and clearly proves it to be false doctrine.

4. *Calvinism.* The following acrostic helps one remember the five cardinal tenets of Calvinism.

T Total Depravity
U Unconditional Election
L Limited Atonement
I Irresistible Grace
P Perseverance of the Saints

5. *Imputed Righteousness.* Brother Johnny Elmore delivered a great lesson on "Imputed Righteousness" at the 1990 study in Oklahoma City.

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Notes on that lesson are available in the **1990 Preachers Study Notes** available from Christian's Expositor Publications.

We should make the point abundantly clear that the Bible does teach "imputed righteousness," but the religious world has distorted the truth on the subject. Unfortunately, there are those in the church who have been influenced by writers, both in the church and out of the church who uphold an erroneous doctrine on the subject. This false doctrine is supportive of another false doctrine—"once in grace always in grace"—and is just as wrong. This topic fits under Calvinism's "Total Depravity."

I fail to find any lexicographer who defined the word "imputeth" to mean "transfer." Now, if we understand the word "righteousness" to mean "justification," and the word "imputeth" to mean "account," the doctrine of Imputed Righteousness is simply that those who are ungodly are reckoned or accounted justified through faith in Jesus. Obviously, we must understand that sometimes "faith" is a synecdoche, whereby a part of something is named to suggest the whole thing faith, in this case, to suggest the obedience of faith. (Johnny Elmore, **1990 Preacher's Study Notes**, pg. 154)

In a nutshell, righteousness is imputed to us, that is "we are counted righteous" by God through the obedience of His will. Righteousness was never transferred to us. There is a major difference in being counted as righteous and having the righteousness of Christ transferred to us.

6. Grace-Faith-Works Issue. The confusion on this subject has caused a number of people to leave the Church and unite with denominational religions. A number of men could be cited who at one time were considered faithful preachers of the gospel and got confused on this subject, and the consequences, is that some are involved with false religions to this day. Congregations have had to withdraw from members who taught publicly and/or privately the doctrine of all grace and no law. In my first thirteen years of preaching I never had this topic become an issue, but over the past few years it seems to be gaining momentum.

Brothers, sisters, and friends, please listen. I do have some concerns and sympathy toward the confusion on this problem. By and large we have all been raised with law-law-law and little or no grace taught. I was raised in a congregation with three full length gospel meetings every year. I don't remember preachers preaching the subject of grace. I

worked closely with several congregations in Missouri, and though I attended their meetings for thirteen years, I cannot remember one lesson given on grace. I have been preaching for nineteen years and have just recently began to teach on Grace. We must remember that to preach grace is to preach Jesus Christ for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).

I believe there is room for constructive criticism for failing to preach a balance regarding grace and law, faith and works. The position of grace and no law is a false doctrine. The position of law and no grace is equally false. They work together and not in opposition to one another. It is not law or grace, it is law and grace. It is not faith or works, it is faith and works. It is not believe or be baptized, it is believe and be baptized.

Caution should be exercised on this subject. Many have made blanket statements that throw the wrong signal and can easily lead people away from the gospel of Christ. As with any other topic, we must present the proper balance and the truth on this subject and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

7. *Liberal views on fellowship.* I have given a number of topics at these studies that are in print for deeper studies on the subject of fellowship. Please review the Preachers' Study Notes for the years 1990, 1991, and 1992, in which years, respectively, I presented studies on "Church Discipline," "Judging" and "Fellowship."

The liberal view of fellowship today is two fold:

1. The liberal view of those who are baptized believers state "You can fellowship any and all baptized believers even though you do not necessarily endorse their practice." I listened to a man who use to be well respected in the brotherhood deliver his material on fellowship and then I asked him in private if this would be a proper synopsis of what he believes and teaches. He said it was. According to this view, your fellowship begins at the time of baptism; and how they worship, what they believe, how they practice is not a matter of fellowship. This is dead wrong.
2. The denominational view of fellowship is "if you believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God" then you are in our fellowship. It doesn't matter what church you attend, where you choose to worship, or even if you choose to worship. Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and attend the church of your

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choice. This message is what is promoted across the mass media and through mass publications.

8. *The Truth About the Church of Christ*—Hugh F. Pyle

9. *Televangelists*. (T.V. Evangelist Pat Robertson and the 700 club, Oral Roberts, Jim Baker, Jimmy Swaggart, Robert Tilton, etc.). *Christianity in Crises* by Hank Hanegraaff documents and exposes of many T.V. Evangelists, including Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, and others.

10. *Pastor Pete Peters*. This preacher is a white supremacist based in Colorado. His preaching is characterized by strong teaching against the world-wide flood, and the rich man and Lazarus. This false teacher has carried much weight and persuasion in the northern areas of the our country.

11. *John McArthur*. A nationally known Baptist preacher, he is listened to by a number of Christian men and women. He has the ability to be good or even great, and he also has the ability to be very wrong. His teaching on salvation, worship, and several other doctrinal points is dead wrong. I have listened to John McArthur's teaching, and it is extremely dangerous to recommend him to any Christians, especially to the newly converted. This man frequently teaches false doctrine.

12. *J. Vernon McGee*. Author of a popular Bible study program that is filled with false teaching and many Calvinistic ideas.

13. *Many Bibles with study notes*. Such works as the NIV Study Bible, New Open Bible, etc., are heavily influenced by Calvinism. Use with caution.

16. *Bob George*. George is founder and president of Discipleship Counseling services, conducts a daily biblical counseling program broadcast live over radio stations from coast to coast. He is another promoter of false doctrines on many key subjects like baptism, communion, worship, etc.. He teaches eternal security and has had a negative influence on members of the church. Brethren, stay away from those who teach these false doctrines! The risk is great.

17. *Liberalism in the Lord's Church*. Statements and comments have been made, and positions are held by members of the Lord Church, which are disturbing:

1. Don't preach on baptism, communion, one church etc. we have heard this all our life.
2. Don't preach on women cutting their hair.
3. Some have sanctioned missing services for non-emergency reasons etc.

These things must stop to protect souls of the brotherhood.

18. *Radical conservatism.* There are brothers and sisters in our rank who are "conservative to the point of being radical" that are subject to being watched very closely. They teach extreme views such as no birth control, no borrowing money, etc., forcing their opinions to the point of causing confusion in the body of Christ. This attitude of making laws where God did not make any is wrong. For example: some push home school to the point that if you don't do as they do, you are viewed as less spiritual and looked down on and ostracized at times. Attitudes like these can cause division in the body of Christ, and create barriers that should not be present. To this concern, and all others, I sound the alarm—*beware of false teachers!*

Closing Observations

We have learned to exercise extreme caution in order to not be led away by false teachers. It has been proven conclusively that false teachers existed in the first century and have continued to the present twentieth century.

Since we are caught up in this spiritual warfare how do we defend ourselves? To prepare for battle, every Christian needs to "put on the whole armour of God," using the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

I admitted that I was nervous about reading all of this false material and putting this spiritual filth in my mind and in my brain. I cautiously did so in order to present to the brotherhood some valuable information that will arm them for battle against Satan, sin, and evil. I struggled with why am I so reluctant, and I finally realized that I was reluctant to dive into this information because of the serious warning given by Christ—"beware of false prophets." In view of the fact that the innocent or the elect could be deceived, was worrisome to me, and I did not want to be deceived.

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Please listen! You do not have to read all of this garbage to be ready to combat the false doctrines that will arise from time to time. If you will concentrate on reading and studying the Word of God you will be reading and learning how to identify truth from error. Remember that the Word of God is sharp, and more powerful than any two-edged sword. God's Word is truth. Read it, study it, obey it, apply it and you will be prepared to meet whatever comes your way.

It is a physical impossibility to read all of the false teaching anyway. Hundreds of thousands of books are flooding the market and religious book stores. There is no way to read it all, and there is no reason to. If you will spend quality time reading and studying the Bible then you will be geared for combat.

Let us make an application from Paul's writing to the Corinthians "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Never lift yourself up to the position that you do not believe you can fall. I have known great spiritual leaders who have done good things for the cause of Christ who have now "gone astray."

I pray God that we will never be listed among those who have "gone astray;" for those "who have been led away from the right way" (2 Pet. 2:15). I pray that we will be those who are described as "faithful until death;" those "who are fighting the good fight of faith." 1633 *Trinity View, Irving, Texas 75060.*

The Baptismal Formula

by Johnny Elmore

For simplicity's sake, I have called my lesson, "The Baptismal Formula." Actually, I want to consider whether or not there is a baptismal formula; and if there is, should we baptize "in the name of Jesus Christ," as in Acts 2:38, or "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as in Matthew 28:19? These are the questions I want to consider.

Controversy over what should be said when a person is baptized apparently arose when some began teaching that Jesus is the only One in the Godhead, that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (or Ghost) are simply titles of the same One and apply only to Jesus, and that baptism is to be administered in the name of Jesus only. Although there are several religious groups which might be styled "Oneness" people, due to their belief that there is only One in the Godhead, probably the most prominent group would be the United Pentecostal Church. As with other so-called "Pentecostals," they claim the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the ability to speak in tongues, and the power to perform miracles.

The contention of the "Oneness" people that there is only One in the Godhead leads to the view that a precise, exclusive formula must be spoken when someone is baptized, which includes "I baptize you into the name of Jesus Christ." They contend that should the statement be made, "I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (or Ghost)," it would be unscriptural and would make the baptism invalid. Before I take up this question, I want to say something about the origin of this doctrine.

Origin of the View

This once hidden "truth," that is, "Oneness" doctrine and "baptism in the name of Jesus only," was purported to have been revealed through one John G. Scheppe during a night of prayer at a camp meeting in California in 1914. After a sermon on Jeremiah 31:22, "For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth," several preachers accepted this "new thing."¹ The United Pentecostal Church Manual also says:

¹ Arthur L. Clanton, *United We Stand*, p. 15.

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With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the word of the Lord became a new book. Truths which had been hidden for many years were made clear. In the year 1914 came the revelation on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pivotal doctrines of the absolute deity of Jesus Christ and baptism in His name became tenets of faith. God marvelously confirmed our message as the Gospel was preached in its fulness. The power which was hidden in the name of Jesus began to be revealed. Literally thousands were re-baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, and multitudes received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in the water.²

As others have pointed out, this very statement reveals that the teaching is false doctrine, for if it is "new," then it was not "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), was not taught by the apostles (Jn. 16:13), and could not be the truth. I think it is important to consider the "Oneness" doctrine briefly so that we may understand the basis for their contention.

The "Oneness" Theory

The "Oneness" theory can be stated by the most uneducated person among them, but most of them do not realize that their theory is a combination of ancient heresy and what they consider their own inside information. We do not have time to trace this error in history or to discuss the philosophy behind it in detail. In just a moment, I will notice some of the main Scriptures its proponents use to teach their errors, and a brief refutation of the same. First, I would like to note a concise statement of the "Oneness" theory as provided by Gene Frost in his excellent little book:

The overall concept pictures God as a Being expanded throughout the universe and beyond, without any entity or form. He is so vast that He cannot know what He is about in every area except as He can communicate with Himself. God has an "image" that emanated from Him as He spoke; His words in creation came out in a haze outline of a man. With this pattern, God made angels and man. In redeeming man, He took this image, His speech-pattern, and with it formed the flesh of Jesus, who was then born of Mary. With the human spirit of the man Jesus, God moved in and shared the body.

² United Pentecostal Church Manual, 1953, p. 14.

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Thus the Sonship began at the birth of Jesus and ceased or will cease, just when, Pentecostals have not yet decided. God also moves into the bodies of Christians, and in this action is known as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit within each person is exclusively his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is omniscient only as He employs the communication system within Deity to communicate with Himself in every other place.³

Some Proof Texts

To those who think that the "Oneness" doctrine may be dismissed lightly, I would warn you that you had better know your lesson before you engage in Bible study or debate with them. They have a core group of passages committed to memory which can be baffling to the uninitiated. Let us notice just a few.

1. John 10:30. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one."
2. John 14:8-9. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"
3. Deuteronomy 6:4. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."
4. Isaiah 44:8. "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." In chapters 43-45, Isaiah repeatedly asserts that God is *one*, that there is no God before or after Him, and that He *alone* created the heavens and the earth.
5. Colossians 2:9. "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."
6. Job 13:8-10. "Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? . . . He will surely reprove you, if ye do accept persons." The "Oneness" theory here is that God is a "person" (singular), but that we accept "persons" (plural).

These Texts Examined

1. John 10:30. Yes, Jesus asserted that He and His Father are one, but until it can be shown that they are one person, this does not prove the "Oneness" theory. A man and his wife are said to be "one," but not one

³ Gene Frost, *The "Oneness" Doctrine of Pentecostalism and The Bible Doctrine of the Godhead*, Preceptor Publications, 1974.

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person. (If they were the same person, when I get sick, I would make Sally take the medicine and I would get well!) Jesus said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Mt. 19:5). And if, as "Oneness" theologians tell us, the Father and the Son are one, that is, at once the same person, i.e. just two titles for the same individual; how do we explain the prayer of Jesus for believers when He prayed "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn. 17:21)? How can all believers be one as Jesus and the Father are one if Jesus and the Father are the same person? It just simply cannot be, according to "Oneness" theory. Of course, if "one" means a united one, and if it means the agreement that exists between the Father and the Son, then we can see how that can be.

2. John 14:8-9. When Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, He could only have meant that to see Jesus was to see the Father actually, or representatively. Surely, Jesus did not mean that to see Him was to see the Father actually, for John said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jn. 1:18). To see Jesus was to see God representatively, for in no other way can sinful man see God and live.

3. Deuteronomy 6:4. Instead of a refutation of the unity of God, this passage is an affirmation of it. The term for "one" in the Hebrew is *echad*. Gesenius says it is "a numeral having the power of an adjective" and means "one." In its intensive reflexive form, Gesenius says it signifies "to unite, to join oneself together, to collect oneself."⁴ If the verse had meant to mean "solitary" or "only one," another word, *yachiyd*, could have been used which has this meaning. The unity of God is illustrated in the marriage union where two become one: "they shall be one [*echad*] flesh" (Gen. 2:24). When the Greek text records the words of Jesus, "I and my Father are one," the Greek equivalent of *echad* is used, which is *hen* (Jn. 10:30).

Also, in the very passage used to prove that there is only one personality, a plural form for God is used. The *Pulpit Commentary* says, "Though *elohim* (plu.), he is one. The speaker does not say, 'Jehovah is one God,' but 'Jehovah our *Elohim* is one God.'"⁵ This is significant be-

⁴ Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, 1979, p. 28

⁵ The *Pulpit Commentary*, 1975, Vol. 3, p. 118

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cause the word for God in Genesis 1:1 is *elohim*, the plural form of God. To it is attached the singular verb *bara*, "he created," to forestall any conclusion of polytheism. Adam Clarke declared that the term, *elohim*, "has long been supposed, by the most eminently learned and pious men, to imply a plurality of Persons in the Divine nature."⁶

4. **Isaiah 44:8.** It should be obvious that the prophet is not saying that there is one personality, but one God, that is, one Godhead or Divine nature. He is contrasting this truth with idolatry, as seen by verses 9-20, the next few verses, and this is true with virtually every passage which speaks of God as one God.

5. **Colossians 2:9.** Christ does indeed possess all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, but that does not mean that there is but One in the Godhead. The context will show that the Apostle Paul is contrasting the fullness that is in Christ with the emptiness and vanity of the heathen systems of philosophy in vogue at the time. The actual attributes of the whole Godhead dwell in Jesus bodily, therefore they needed nothing from the heathen systems or the Jewish law.

6. It is ridiculous that this argument could be made because we make no "secret" of the position we take about the Godhead. To show the weakness of this argument, the ASV renders it, "Will ye show partiality to him? . . . He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly show partiality."

The "Oneness" Theory Refuted

It is a fact that the Scriptures teach the concept of monotheism, i.e. that there is one God. There is one, unified divine nature. However, the divine nature, that is, the nature or quality which identifies one as deity is shared by three distinct personalities, and these three personalities are characterized in the New Testament as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The word, "Godhead," occurs three times in the New Testament, and its meaning is, "deity, i.e., the state of being God."⁷ The word is also the same as "Godhood." Clearly, there is one, unified divine nature, or one God. Paul says that "God is one," (Gal. 3:20). James says, "Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder" (Jas. 2:19, ASV). The question is: What does Scripture mean by "one God"? Obviously this refers to the divine nature, i.e. the unified set

⁶ Clarke's Commentary, Vol. 1, p. 28.

⁷ Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1977, p. 288.

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of traits or characteristics that distinguish a personality as "God." There is but *one* divine nature, but there are three distinct personalities possessing that unified set of infinite qualities. Those who do not recognize this principle cannot harmonize certain Scriptures and find themselves in a ludicrous position on others! I want to notice briefly some passages which refute the oneness theory!

1. **Matthew 3:16-17.** "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here we have God in Heaven, Christ on earth being baptized, and the Holy Spirit coming from heaven to earth. How could someone be in three places at the same time? Only one of three positions could be taken here: (1) There were three separate personalities present. (2) Each one was but one-third of God. (3) Jesus was a ventriloquist and deliberately deceived John by throwing His voice.

2. **John 14:28.** "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." Jesus often declared He would eventually ascend to the Father. To do this He had to leave the earth. If He is the Father, why did He have to ascend to go to the Father? Following His death, He said He had not ascended to the Father (Jn. 20:17). It follows then, that He is not the Father. Note also that Jesus declared that His Father was greater than He (same verse). If He is the same as His Father, was He not greater than Himself? He said over and over that He did not speak of Himself, but of the Father. But if He is the Father, He did speak of Himself, and His statement is false. In the shadows of Gethsemane and on the cross, Jesus prayed to the Father. Did He pray to Himself? On the cross, He delivered up His spirit to the Father. Did He still retain it? If so, did He die?⁸

3. **Mark 13:32.** "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Note: the Father knows the time of the second coming; the Son does not. This is impossible if the Father and the Son were the same personality. If the Pentecostals argue that the Son here is the *human spirit*, and that Jesus in His *eternal spirit* did know, then they have two spirits in one body!

⁸ Guy N Woods, "Oneness Holiness Doctrine," **What Is Wrong?**, ed. Thomas L Campbell (Ft. Worth, 1950)

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In that case, Jesus could have said, "The Son also knows that day, even though the Son does not." This is ridiculous! Note the following: (1) Only the Father knows that day. (2) The Son knows not that day. (3) Therefore, the Son is not the Father.⁹

4. **Matthew 12:31-32.** "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Note: (1) Only against the Holy Spirit shall blasphemy not be forgiven. (2) Against the Son blasphemy may be forgiven. (3) Therefore, the Son is not the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

5. **John 8:16-18.** "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." Here Jesus said that if He should judge it would be true. In the law it is stated that the testimony of two establishes veracity. Jesus' argument is simply that, according to their own standard, His judgment is true because He is not alone! He is one witness and His Father is the second, hence two witnesses! Williams renders verse 16, "Even if I should judge, my decision is fair, because I am not alone, but there are two of us, I and the Father who has sent me." If "Oneness" theology is true, then Jesus misrepresented the facts: He and the Father, being one and the same, would be just *one* witness! Think about it! Can one personality testify as two or three witnesses by simply testifying under different titles?

Illustration. Imagine a lawyer presenting three witnesses before the court. The first is a man identified as a banker. Then the lawyer calls for his second witness and the same man takes the stand and is identified as a husband. The third witness is the same man who is a father. Absurd, isn't it? But this is the kind of representation given Jesus by "Oneness" theologians.

We could go on and on with much more evidence but I think I have shown the absurdity of the position that would seek to identify as one

⁹ Frost, p. 43.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

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person the members of the Godhead. We are ready to study the questions before us.

Baptism in the Name of Jesus Only

What about the "Oneness" theory that baptism is to be administered "in the name of Jesus only." When we call their attention to the fact that Jesus, in the Great Commission, commanded that baptism be administered "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," they reply that since the terms "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" are simply different titles of Jesus, to baptize in the name of Jesus is to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This becomes more plausible to them when we cannot point to a passage in the New Testament where such a use of the terms is to be found. They emphatically state that where baptism is mentioned in connection with the "name," it is said to have been done "in the name of Jesus" without exception. Then they refer to Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, and 19:5. They say that this was the uniform pattern in the apostolic age and the pattern for us today.

However, when we examine the record, the claim for uniformity fades away. Let me illustrate. If the first passage, Acts 2:38, is offered as a model—"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"—then Peter and John in Samaria, Peter at Caesarea and Paul at Ephesus, (Acts 8:16; Acts 10:48 and Acts 19:5), did not adhere to the model! In each case there is a different arrangement of the name, proving conclusively that there is no precise design for the order of the words intended. The variety is more striking in the Greek, but it is obvious, even to the English reader. Note the uniformity lacking in these phrases:

Acts 2:38: Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:16: The Lord Jesus.

Acts 10:48: The Lord.

Acts 19:5: The Lord Jesus.

Note the variations in the prepositions used to show relation between the name and the baptismal act:

Matthew 28:19: *eis* to *onoma* (into the name).

Acts 2:38: *epi* to *onomati* (literally, upon the name).

Acts 8:16: *eis* to *onoma* (into the name).

Acts 10:48: *en* to *onomati* (in the name).

Acts 19:5: *eis* to *onoma* (into the name).

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If a specific set of words is to be pronounced at the time of a baptism, exactly what are those words? The passages noted contain four different phrases. Which one is to be pronounced at the time of baptism, to the exclusion of the others? The truth of the matter is that none of them has reference to any set of words to be pronounced at the time of baptism! The language is designed to express certain truths, not prescribe a ritualistic set of words. We might also mention that there is not one instance of baptism being performed in the name of Jesus only!

What Does "In the Name" Mean?

For someone to insist on a precise, specific set of words to be spoken at a baptism betrays a woeful ignorance of what God demands of us. What does it mean to baptize "in the name" of Jesus Christ? If we will think about it for a few moments, I think we can all agree that to act in the name of another is to do what he has authorized.

Illustration. If the sheriff takes the butt of his pistol and raps on a door in the middle of the night, saying, "Open up in the name of the law," what does he mean by that? Of course, he means "by the authority of the law." It means that he is doing as he has been authorized by the law to do. And even if he doesn't say those words, he is authorized by the law to do it.

If the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ" implies the saying of those words in connection with the act of baptism, what would Colossians 3:17 require? It reads, "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." If it means what the "Oneness" people are telling us, then we would have to preface every word and act with the phrase, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." That means that every word spoken in our services, every Bible study, and every act of obedience to any command of Jesus would have to be prefaced with this phrase. Jesus said in Mark 9:41, "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Does this mean they would lose their reward if they did not say, "In the name of Jesus Christ"? I think we can see the folly of such reasoning.

To baptize in the name of Jesus is to baptize as Jesus authorized. What did Jesus authorize? Jesus authorized "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19, ASV). Hence, only those who baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit baptize in the name of Jesus, i.e., by the

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authority of Jesus. When I began preaching so many years ago, brother Carlos Smith encouraged me to say at a baptism, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I now baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Brother Smith said, "Now you have made a scriptural statement." The same thing can be said when someone says, "By the authority of Jesus Christ, I now baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," because that is what the first phrase means.

The statements "in the name of Jesus" and "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" reveal a vital and significant difference. To be baptized "upon (epi) the name" or "in the name" of Jesus suggests the *ground* or *occasion* for the baptism. "Into the name" denotes "union" or "communion with." Thayer says that the Greek word *onoma*

is used for everything which the name covers . . . to do a thing 'en onomati tinos, in the name of another, i.e. by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause.¹¹

That means then that when we are baptized, we do it by the authority of Christ because of the relationship we sustain with Him. When we are baptized, if doing it by Jesus' authority, we are baptized into a state of union and communion with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Not Saying But Doing

The name is not the mere designation, a sense which would give to the baptismal formula merely the force of a charm . . . It is equivalent to his person . . . When one is baptized into the name of the Trinity, he professes to acknowledge and appropriate God in all that he is and in all that he does for man.¹²

There are two words in this statement that are objectionable, "formula" and "Trinity." However, Vincent has put his finger on the basic problem of the "Oneness" preachers, as well as others, some even among us. *It is not what the preacher says that is significant; it is what is ac-*

¹¹ Thayer, p. 447.

¹² Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, 1957), Vol. I, p. 150.

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tually done for the penitent believer! Whatever words are spoken do not constitute a charm, the pronouncement of which amounts to an essential formula. We should never lose sight of the fact that it is something *done*, rather than something *said* that makes baptism valid.

Do you know that people used to come to me somewhat irate because I did not say "for the remission of sins" for some I baptized. I finally began saying it, not because I thought the other was in error, but in self-defense! This betrays a basic misconception of baptism, friends! Please understand! My saying "for the remission of sins" does not validate or invalidate baptism. "For the remission of sins" states the end or the purpose of baptism. It is not a charm that must be pronounced exactly right in order for it to work. I recently knew of a 98-year-old lady among us who was "re-baptized" because the preacher did not say "Holy Spirit" when he baptized her so many, many years ago. I sympathize with her desire to be right, but I still feel that this betrays a misunderstanding. I do not know that a person would have to say anything when someone is baptized. I think it well to explain what baptism is for and who commanded it and why we are doing it, etc., but we do not have a formula.

I know of congregations in which nearly every single person has been re-baptized because of some flaw, either real or imagined. Now I know that we should correct a mistake and I think it is possible to act from the wrong motive, but remember this: There can be only one valid baptism. If I come at this stage of the game and am re-baptized, that means that if it is a valid baptism, I have renounced all of my former life's work! 419 K Street S.W., Ardmore, Oklahoma, 73401

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

by Bill Davis

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a controversial subject. Not only is it controversial, but for some reason, it is also an emotional topic. Devout brethren have disagreed about how the Holy Spirit indwells since the inception of the Restoration Movement, and will no doubt continue to do so in the future. To my knowledge, there has never been a division among us over it, and we must always endeavor to keep it that way. We must not allow it to become a fellowship issue. In order to reach some consensus on the subject we should continue to study with open minds, with love and respect for one another, and with a minimum of emotional involvement.

There are two basic positions among us on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. First, there is what is known as the "personal indwelling" position. This means that the person of the Holy Spirit literally and directly dwells in the Christian's body. Second, there is what is known as the "representative indwelling" of the Holy Spirit. This means the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian through an agent. It is not a literal indwelling.

I have been asked to deal with the indwelling as mentioned in Romans 8; the influence of the Holy Spirit before and after conversion; and divine providence as it relates to the Holy Spirit.

The Indwelling in Romans 8

By any estimation, Romans 8 is a difficult chapter to understand. It contains an in-depth study of, and contrast between, the flesh and the spirit. The word "flesh" is used fourteen times in the first sixteen verses and the word "spirit" is used eighteen times. It is not always easy to determine just what the writer means by these terms. I will not begin to reconcile all of the difficulties of this chapter, but it should be studied in order to understand the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (KJV).

The word "*therefore*" in verse one puts the chapter in contrast with something. What is it? In previous chapters Paul has been discussing the inability of the Law of Moses to free men from sin and produce

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righteousness. The contrast is between those under the Law of Moses who were condemned and those in Christ Jesus who were not condemned. Those under the law are said to walk after the flesh and those in Christ after the spirit. The discussion of flesh and spirit actually begins in Romans 7:5. Let us begin there.

Romans 7:5 *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (KJV).*

"When we were in the flesh" refers to the Jewish Christian before their conversion to Christ. It was when they were under the Law of Moses and were Israelites "in the flesh." This has reference to their fleshly connection to Abraham, to fleshly circumcision and to their fleshly (carnal) ordinances. Both Vine¹ and Arndt-Gingrich² says this is the "unregenerate state," i.e. it was their pre-Christian state. Although, when they were under the law of Moses, they were still unregenerate.

James MacKnight³ says, "The Apostle describes the state of the Jews under the law of Moses by their being 'in the flesh' and their state under the gospel, by their being 'in the spirit.'" He also says, "In other passages of Scripture, by men's being in the flesh is meant their being governed by the lusts of the flesh; and by their being in the spirit, their being guided by the spiritual principles of their nature, purified and strengthened by the spirit of God." Besides the two definitions by MacKnight there are also other meanings of the words flesh and spirit. The context always has to determine which meaning is correct. In this verse it would appear that the word flesh refers to the Old Covenant and the word "spirit" applies to the New Covenant.

When these Jewish Christians were under the law, Paul says, *"the motions of sins,"* brought forth fruit unto death. Thayer⁴ remarks that this is passion "that leads to sins." In other words, the desires and passions ("motions," KJV) of the flesh are not inherently sinful. They are sinful only when they lead one to transgress God's law. The phrase *"which were by the law"* does not mean the law of Moses caused or excited sinful desires. The only way that sinful desires were by the law was when the law pointed out that certain desires were sinful, if fulfilled in violation to the law. Paul explains this further in the next few verses.

Romans 7:6 *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (KJV).*

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"Being dead wherein we were held" means they were dead (spiritually) because they disobeyed the law, and once they disobeyed it there was no forgiveness by the law. *"The newness of spirit"* and *"oldness of the letter"* is a contrast between the gospel and the old law. Those serving in *"newness of spirit"* were those individuals who had their inner man renewed by obedience to the gospel. The *"oldness of the letter"* was when they were under the law of Moses and were spiritually dead.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Some may have been accusing Paul of saying the law was sin because he taught that to be free from sin one had to be free from the law. He did not teach however, that the law of Moses was sinful just because it produced spiritual death when men violated it. He here explains that the law only defined sin and he uses his own experience as an example. Paul did not know that covetousness was sin until the law defined it as sin. His desire to covet did not originate with the law. The law only pointed out that covetousness was sin.

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead (KJV).

In this verse, sin is evidently personified for Satan because literally sin is an act, but here it is doing the acting, and is therefore a figure of speech called personification. *"Wrought"* is from *katergadzomai* and according to Thayer⁵, it means "bring about, result in." The meaning of the verse then, is that the command to not covet was actually the opportunity or occasion for Satan to bring about an awareness of covetousness in Paul's life. The law did not produce the covetousness, it only brought about the knowledge of the covetousness. Satan caused the covetousness, and used the law to show Paul that he was guilty of all manner of covetousness. If there had been no law there would have been no sin (Rom. 4:15). Satan could not have caused Paul's awareness of sin or his consequent spiritual death without the law. The same was true of Adam in the beginning, and with all men since Adam.

Romans 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died (KJV).

The only time Paul was alive without the law was when he was not accountable to law. When was that? It must have been from birth until

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the age of accountability. As is true with all men, when Paul became accountable, he soon violated the law, or as he put it, *"when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."* This does not mean sin lay dormant and then revived. Rather, it carries the idea as Alford⁶ translates it "sin sprung into life (not revived)." Arndt-Gingrich⁷ defines it as "spring into life." Sin had it's beginning in Paul's life when he became accountable to the law, and with sin came death.

Romans 7:10 *And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*

"The commandment" may refer by a synecdoche to the entire law of Moses. To obey it perfectly was life, to disobey it was spiritual death. Once disobeyed, the law could not produce life because there was no forgiveness by the law. Paul learned this by experience.

Romans 7:11 *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me (KJV).*

This is the same as verse eight. Sin took the opportunity to deceive Paul when he became accountable to law. The law itself did not deceive him, but sin (Satan) took advantage of the situation and deceived him.

Romans 7:12 *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (KJV).*

Here, Paul answers the question he asked in verse 7. The law was not sin; it was holy, just, and good because it came from God.

Romans 7:13 *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (KJV).*

If the law was good, why did it produce death in the Apostle Paul? His answer to this question is, *"God forbid."* He is emphasizing that the problem was not the law: it was sin that induced men to break the law. The law itself did not cause spiritual death. The law is not to blame if men disobey it and bring punishment upon themselves. But sin (Satan), by using that which is good (law) to bring about death, shows the true nature of sin. When sin uses that which is good and meant for life to bring about death, it displays sin in it's most hideous form.

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Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin (KJV).

In the rest of this chapter, Paul views himself as typical of all men who try to find righteousness by the law. Although he uses the present tense, he refers back to the conflict he experienced while trying to obtain legal righteousness under the law of Moses. These verses do not have reference to Paul as a Christian for the following reasons. First, a Christian is not "*carnal sold under sin*," verse 14. Second, sin does not "*dwell*" in a Christian, verse 17. Third, a Christian is not captured by the "*law of sin*," verse 23. And fourth, a Christian is not a "*wretched man*," verse 24. While it is true that a struggle exists between the flesh and spirit in the Christian (Gal. 5:16-17) that is not under consideration here.

Although Paul presents himself in this section as being under the law, he does so from the standpoint of the Christian faith. As a Pharisee, Paul saw no apparent conflict in his life (Phil. 3:1-9), but as a Christian, he could see his dilemma when he was under the law. Try as he would, under the law he always fell short of its demands, and when he fell short he came under its condemnation.

The law of Moses was spiritual, that is, it was from God who is spirit, but Paul was carnal⁸ ("fleshy," *sarkinos*; "not fleshly," *sarkikos*). The word "carnal" does not, in this verse, refer to the desires of the flesh, but it means "composed of flesh."⁹ Paul seems to be saying he is just a human being, made of flesh, but one who is a slave to sin. He is not saying there is something inherently sinful about the flesh. Jesus was in the flesh, he was human, and he certainly was not sinful. Paul was under the power of sin because he was under the law, but he did not live up to the demands of the law. Once he disobeyed the law, he was under sin's power because he could not be forgiven by the law.

Romans 7:15-16 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good (KJV).

Paul desired to live up to the demands of the law, but could not do it. He did just the opposite of what he wanted; he broke the law. However, by wanting to obey the law, he consented that the law was good. His wanting to live up to the demands of the law was proof that he agreed within himself that the law was holy, just, and good.

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Romans 7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me (KJV).

Paul wanted to be righteous by the law, but failed because he disobeyed it. This was not what Paul wanted, it was sin that caused the situation. Sin continues to be personified here and is said to dwell in Paul. If we can figure out how sin (Satan) indwells a person, perhaps it will help us to understand how the Holy Spirit indwells a person. This is explained more fully in 8:9.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not (KJV).

Remember, this is a man (Paul) trying to obtain righteousness under the law. He had a "will" to obtain it (he was not totally depraved), but he could not do it. The "good thing" which did not dwell in his flesh was righteousness under the law. It was not that he was incapable of doing some good things in life, what he could not do was obtain justification by the law of Moses. The word "flesh" in this verse is not speaking of Paul's "sinful nature." It is referring to Paul, under the law, when he could not achieve righteousness because he fell short of perfection. The "flesh" is a reference to his performance or accomplishment under the law. With his mind or will he sought to obey God's law, but the flesh, under the dominion of sin (6:14), caused him to fail. The "will" and "flesh" are contrasted here in terms of his achievement under law.

Romans 7:19-20 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me (KJV).

The "good that I would" alludes to keeping the law perfectly. "The evil which I would not" is when he transgressed the law and became a sinner, just the opposite of what he wanted. Also, he again states, as in verse 17, that the problem was caused by sin that dwelled in him.

Romans 7:21-22 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (KJV).

The ASV gives the following alternate reading to verse 21: "I find then in regard to the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present." This would make the law of Moses the law under consideration here. The law of Moses has been the subject throughout this context, and there is no reason to think he is suddenly talking about a different law.

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Under the law, there was a desire to obey it, but as a human, Paul was unable to do so. This is the same idea he has presented in the previous verses. Verse 22 simply enlarges upon what has already been said. In his mind, Paul delighted in the law, but could not keep it perfectly.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members (KJV).

Paul now introduces "*another*"¹⁰ (hetros, different) law." This is different from the one he has been discussing so far. What is this different law? It is the "*law of sin which is in my members.*" It is called the law of sin and death in Romans 8:2. It is the law which says when a man sins he dies. It is the rule of sin in the man under the law. "*The law of the mind*" is the law of God (law of Moses) that the inner man delights in (v. 22) or the law that is good (v. 16). He is still speaking here of the law of Moses. Both laws, the law of sin and the law of the mind are personified and are pictured, as in a war. The law of sin is winning the battle against the law of the mind, and brings Paul under its (the law of sin) captivity. It is through the "*law of the mind*" that God seeks to control the appetites of the body. It is through the appetites of the body that Satan tries to control the mind. The body (flesh) is not sinful within itself. It is neutral, and is merely the instrument of the mind. The mind must sin first. Sin always proceeds from within (Mt. 15:19). Man's emotional drives were not meant to control him. His mind, intellect, or spirit, was meant to control, but when the mind has been perverted and subjugated, the bodily appetites become the winner. When this happens man dies spiritually. This is the law of sin in the members.

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (KJV)

The man under the law was in a wretched condition. He could not keep the law perfectly and was, therefore, guilty of sin. He was a slave to sin because the law could not forgive him. Who indeed, could deliver him from the sins which produced spiritual death ("*the body of this death*")?

Romans 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Thank God, there is deliverance. It is found in Christ Jesus. There is life from the body of death. The second sentence of this verse begins with "*so then.*" This refers back to the subject he has been discussing in

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this chapter, which is seeking righteousness under the law. Regardless of how well he served the law of God (Moses) with his mind, he still became a sinner, without forgiveness, because of the flesh. He had a mind to obey the law of God, but because of the law of sin in his members, he fell short.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (KJV).

Paul has been explaining the failure of a person to obtain righteousness under the law. He now begins to show what a person has in Christ under the New Covenant. "Now" refers to the gospel dispensation where a person is in Christ. The phrase "*who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" is not found in verse one in many ancient manuscripts. This will be discussed in verse 4.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (KJV).

"*The law of the Spirit of life*" has reference to the New Testament Scriptures or to the gospel. The gospel made the Jewish Christian free from the law of sin and death. The law of Moses could not free them, but the gospel did what the law could not do. The "*law of sin and death*" brought condemnation to the individual under the law of Moses, but the "*law of the Spirit of life*" brought freedom from condemnation. To be free from condemnation is to be free from sin, and this is accomplished by obedience to the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is here called the "*law of the Spirit of life*" because it was revealed by the Holy Spirit and it brings spiritual life. The words "*in Christ*" show where this freedom is found. Freedom from condemnation is found when one enters Christ by obedience to the gospel.

The "*law of the Spirit*" is the agency used by the Holy Spirit to convict and convert the sinner. For example, Jesus said of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8, "And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (ASV). Conviction means the awareness that one is a sinner. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, but how did the Spirit produce this awareness in a sinner? A good example of how it was done in the early Church can be seen in Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the first gospel sermon to a large audience of Jews. The sermon brought about an awareness of their sins for they cried out, "men and brethren what shall we do?" (v 37). The Holy Spirit convicted them of their sins through the agency of the Word preached

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by Peter. There has never been a case where a person was convicted in any other way.

These people were converted in the same way that they were convicted- by the preaching of the law of the Spirit or the gospel. They were told to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," verse 38, and in verse 41 it says, "they that gladly received his word were baptized." The Word is the medium through which the Holy Spirit produces conviction and conversion. That Word is here called the "*law of the Spirit of life.*"

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (KJV).

What the law could not do was give righteousness to those living under it, because they were weak and did not keep it perfectly. The law itself was not weak, but those under it were weak through "*the flesh.*" This does not mean their flesh was inherently sinful. As already stated, (see Rom. 7:5), the desires of the flesh became sinful only when they were fulfilled contrary to the law. No man was able to live up to the demands of the law perfectly, but what man could not do, Christ did. He came in the "*likeness of sinful flesh,*" but he did not sin. He came "*for sin,*" which means he came to pay the penalty for all sins. "*To condemn sin in the flesh*" refers to the fact that he took away the power of sin over man. This he did by bearing the penalty for sin that should have fallen on sinful man. The death of Christ as a sin offering made available to all the forgiveness of sin. Anyone can remove the condemnation of sin by being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-6) upon their belief and repentance.

Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (KJV).

The righteousness of the law was sinlessness. Under the law none fulfilled this requirement, but it can be done by those who "*walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" There is here an obvious contrast between the law and the gospel. The sinlessness required under the law is fulfilled in those who obey the gospel. When people submit to the gospel their sins are forgiven. When they are forgiven, they are then righteous in the sight of God, something they could never be under the law.

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In this passage, the word "*walk*" refers to how one conducts himself i.e. his manner of life. To "*walk . . . after the flesh*" then means to conduct one's life without the benefit of the death of Christ who condemned sin in the flesh. It is to serve the law of sin in one's members (7:25). It is to be under the dominion of sin. It is to fulfill the desires of the flesh in an unlawful way. It is to depend upon one's own self to obtain righteousness by perfect law keeping.

To "*walk in the Spirit*" is to live in harmony with the "*law of the Spirit*." When the word "*spirit*" is used without the adjuncts "*Holy*," "*God's*," or "*Christ's*," it is up to the context to determine what spirit is meant. In the New Testament, when flesh is contrasted with spirit, it usually refers to man's spirit. If this is the case here, it refers to the human spirit under the direction of the law of the Spirit.

Romans 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit (KJV).

The word "*mind*" means "to think, to be minded in a certain way."¹¹

To "*mind the things of the flesh*" is to give one's thinking over to the flesh in such a way as to seek satisfaction of fleshly desires and ambitions contrary to God's Will. To mind "*the things of the Spirit*," as Whiteside put it, "is to look to the things that fit the spirit for acceptable service to God."¹²

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (KJV).

The results of the two different "*minds*" are here explained by Paul. The person with a carnal mind is spiritually dead, but the person who is spiritually minded is alive to God and has peace.

Romans 8:7-8 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (KJV).

By the very nature of the case, the fleshly mind does not obey God's law. It is therefore impossible to be subject to God as long as a man is carnally minded. This is the reason why those "*in the flesh cannot please God*."

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Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (KJV).

"But ye" (Christians) *"are not in"* (controlled by) *"the flesh"* (desires of the flesh), *"but in the Spirit"* (controlled by the human spirit under the leading of the Holy Spirit). It seems repetitious and unnecessary to say, "you are controlled by the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit dwells in (controls) you." Obviously, "the Spirit" here is the human spirit, in contrast to the flesh.

The *"Spirit of God"* and the *"Spirit of Christ"* may refer to God and Christ as distinct entities, but they seem to refer to the same thing in this verse. Most Bible scholars say this is a reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The word *"indwell"* is the same as in Romans 7:17-20, where Paul said sin dwelled in him. As already mentioned, this is a personification and refers to Satan indwelling him. How does sin indwell a person? Sin must first indwell the mind and then it will manifest itself in action. It is all the same as "minding the flesh" or being "carnally minded." Satan must first gain control of one's thoughts by getting him to believe a lie. He does not indwell people personally, but he does it through the agency of deceit, mental blindness, and sinful thinking. The indwelling of deity is also through agency. God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit do not indwell directly or personally; rather, they do it through agency. They indwell the mind through the agency of the Word of God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is therefore a figurative indwelling rather than a literal one.

One of the rules of Bible hermeneutics is that a word must be understood in its literal sense¹³ unless it: (1) is said in mockery, (2) is said to be figurative, (3) demands actions that are wrong, (4) causes an impossibility, (5) is contrary to common sense, or (6) causes one passage to contradict another.¹⁴

The literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not conflict with the first three of the above, but it does with the last three. The indwelling must be figurative because if used literally it: (1) creates an impossibility, (2) is contrary to common sense, and (3) causes one passage to contradict another.

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First, it creates an impossibility unless the person who is indwelt becomes a divine being. This was what happened in the case of Jesus. A human body was indwelt by deity and it resulted in a God-man. It was a literal, personal indwelling of deity in a human body. If the Holy Spirit is deity and he personally indwells a human being, why would that person not be divine?

The Apostles did not have a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit for the reasons just stated—they would have been divine. What they actually possessed was miraculous power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Lk. 24:29). They were filled with this power on several occasions (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:5; 7:55; 13:9). Also, those upon whom the Apostles laid hands did not have a literal indwelling for the same reason the Apostles did not have it. They, too, received miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, not a personal indwelling.

It should be noted in cases of demon possession in the Bible, there was an actual indwelling of a demon in a human being. However, when one was possessed with a demon, the demon took control. In effect, the possessed person became a demon. Also, it should be pointed out that a demon is not deity and the cases are not entirely parallel.

Second, the indwelling is figurative because it is contrary to common sense. To divide up the Holy Spirit and have him dwell in thousands of people at the same time does not make sense. (No doubt, it does make sense to those who take the personal indwelling position.) The Holy Spirit as a divine Person possesses individuality. An individual cannot be divided into parts and distributed in bits and pieces to thousands of people. To do so causes him to lose his individuality. In this respect, a distinction must be made in the presence of God and the person of God. The Bible teaches the omnipresence of God, but it does not teach the omniperson of God. The person of God is in heaven and is indivisible. His presence, however, is found throughout all creation and is manifested through the medium or agency of different things, such as angels, laws, works, appointments, and so forth.

Third, to interpret passages such as Romans 8:9 literally contradicts other passages which teach the all sufficiency of the Word of God. What does the Holy Spirit do as a result of a literal indwelling that the Word of God does not do? Anything that may be claimed in addition to the Word contradicts 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and other passages. Either the Word is all sufficient or it is not. Also in connection with this, if the Holy Spirit

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indwells personally but works only through the word, the indwelling is unnecessary, and God does not perform unnecessary acts.¹⁵

Because of the above points, the passage now under consideration (and all other indwelling passages) should be interpreted figuratively. The figure involved is a metonymy of the cause, where the cause is put for the effects. The cause is the Holy Spirit and he is put for the effect, which is his influence.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness (KJV).

"The Spirit of Christ" (verse 9) is equated with "Christ in you" in this verse. If having the Spirit of Christ is the same as the Spirit of God dwelling in you, and it refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as most scholars indicate, this can only mean that Christ indwells in the same way the Holy Spirit indwells. There can be no question as to how Christ dwells in the Christian. It is through the Spirit-given word. Ephesians 3:17 states, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." "By faith" in the original is "by the faith," and it refers to Christ indwelling through the medium of the Word of God.

Many advocates of the personal indwelling position say that Christ and God indwell through the Holy Spirit. If this is correct, then God and Christ indwell through an agent (the Holy Spirit). This indwelling then is a figurative one and not literal. This raises the question, do God and Christ actually indwell a Christian? The Bible clearly says they do (Eph. 2:22; Jn. 14:23; Eph. 3:17). The proponents of a representative indwelling of the Holy Spirit are often accused of denying an actual indwelling. The argument of the personal indwelling advocate goes like this: "If the Holy Spirit indwells only through the Word, then the Holy Spirit does not indwell, only the Word indwells." Yet this same logic can be applied to the indwelling of God and Christ. If God and Christ indwell through the Holy Spirit, then God and Christ do not indwell, only the Holy Spirit indwells. According to this, God and Christ do not indwell at all. The truth is, when something is done through an agent, that does not deny that the thing was done.

The clause, "*the body is dead because of sin*" is difficult to understand. It may refer to Adam's sin that caused the body of all men to die. But more than likely, it refers to putting to death the sins of the body. As Paul said in Galatians 5:24, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust." From this viewpoint, the phrase would mean the

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body is dead to sin, i.e. it is not active in sin because of the indwelling of Christ.

"The Spirit of life because of righteousness" is speaking of the human spirit being made alive because of forgiveness. When one is forgiven of his sins, he is then righteous and has spiritual life.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (KJV).

When the Spirit of God indwells a person, not only is his spirit made righteous, but his body is also quickened to spiritual activity. This verse is probably not a reference to the resurrection at the last day. That resurrection has nothing to do with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The bodies of all men will be raised at the last day whether they have the Holy Spirit or not.

Again, this is not a literal or personal indwelling for the reasons given above. It is talking about the effects of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. The cause is put for the effects.

Romans 8:12-13 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (KJV).

"To live after the flesh" was to follow the desires of the flesh, and this meant spiritual death. *"The deeds of the body"* are put to death by the spirit having control over the flesh. The spirit is able to control the flesh by being under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit directs by the Word of God.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (KJV)

How does the Holy Spirit lead? The view that the Holy Spirit leads people (saint or sinner) independent of the Word of God is not a biblical theory. The Holy Spirit has always used words to lead and influence man. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 says,

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

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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.

These verses teach that:

(1) man could not know the things of God unless God revealed them.

(2) God did reveal them through the Spirit.

(3) The Apostles were the chosen vessels through whom the Spirit made this revelation.

(4) It was made in the words of the Spirit. Words are the vehicles of thought.

The Holy Spirit communicated the thoughts of God to man with words. This was done through inspired men—the Apostles. The inspired Scripture is where we find that revelation (Eph. 3:2-5; 2 Tim. 3:16). Man is lead by the Spirit when he follows the message of inspiration.

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (KJV).

"The spirit of bondage" cannot refer to a person, and neither does *"the spirit of adoption."* "The spirit of adoption is not speaking of the Holy Spirit, for what possible reason would the Holy Spirit have for calling God, *"Abba, Father"*? The phrase "Spirit of adoption" has reference to the attitude or disposition of sonship, as opposed to the attitude of slavery. The Christian is an adopted child of God as a result of being in Christ (Eph. 1:5) and because of that he can call God Father.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (KJV).

Man's spirit and the Holy Spirit bear joint witness that one is a child of God. The witness of the Spirit is by his teaching that a Christian is a child of God, and the witness of a man's spirit is when he obeys God with the disposition of a son.

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Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

These verses are not speaking of what the Holy Spirit does for the Christian as a result of an indwelling. It is rather speaking of what the Holy Spirit does for the Christian in heaven.

If the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is required for Christians to pray, what happens when a Christian sins? If the Holy Spirit leaves a Christian when he sins, how does he get the Holy Spirit back? He cannot pray for the Holy Spirit to return because he cannot pray without the Holy Spirit in the first place. On the other hand, if the Holy Spirit remains in the Christian in spite of his sin, this implies that sin does not cause him to fall from grace or be lost. In effect, this is a "once saved, always saved" doctrine. Either way, that the Holy Spirit must indwell personally to intercede in prayer for the Christian is a serious dilemma. It seems far less complicated to view the intercession of the Holy Spirit in prayer as something done in heaven, and not in the heart of man.

The Holy Spirit and Providence

Providence means that God provides for his creation. It also means that God, by special providence, participates in the lives of Christians. They receive special blessings. This, however, has nothing to do with a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If it did, then God indwells the sinner, because he also operates in their lives providentially.

Providence is what God does for us, not what He does to us. It is something done on our behalf from heaven, rather than something done directly to us because of a personal indwelling.

There are, no doubt, countless things that God does for us through providence. In this, He always works through natural law. He is the creator of natural laws and can regulate them to bring about events in our lives. However true this might be, we can never know beyond doubt that a given event in our lives was the result of providence. We can believe, based upon His promise in His Word, that He blesses us, but the exact "how" of it must be left in the realm of faith. The reason for this is obvious. If we knew when and how He blesses us, we might well serve

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Him for what we could get out of Him. God wants us to serve him because we love Him.

Conclusion

The Scriptures plainly teach that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian. It seems to me that the principal of agency best explains the various verses involved. The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian through the agency of the Word of God. This does not deny that the indwelling is any less real or actual, but it does deny that the indwelling is literal or personal. 17 S.E. 23rd, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73129.

Endnotes

- 1 W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1953), p. 108.
- 2 William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press., 1957), p. 752.
- 3 James MacKnight, *Apostolical Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House., 1947), p. 91.
- 4 Joseph Henry Thayer D.D. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 472.
- 5 Ibid., p.339
- 6 Henry Alford, D.D., *The Greek New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), vol. 2, p. 380.
- 7 William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 53.
- 8 R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1969), p. 272.
- 9 Joseph Henry Thayer D.D., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 569.
- 10 Ibid., p.254

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11 W. E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words** (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1953), p. 108.

12 Robertson L. Whiteside, **A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saint's at Rome** (Denton, Texas: Published by Miss Inys Whiteside, 1954), p. 172.

13 D. R. Dungan, **Hermeneutics** (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Co.), p. 184.

14 Ibid., pp.195-202

15 H. Leo Boles, **The Holy Spirit: His Personality, Nature, Works** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co. 1956) pp. 85-86.

Evangelism and The Work of An Evangelist

by Art Lynch

I. What Is An Evangelist? What Does This Person Do?

A. Definitions: **Euaggelistes**—a preacher of the gospel. **Euaggelizo**—"to announce good news," from **eu**, "well" + **angelos**, "messenger" (from, **ago**, "to lead; bring; drive; go; induce").

B. **Smith's Bible Dictionary** says:

1. "(Publisher of glad tidings) An order of men in the Christian Church. They were not attached to any particular locality but worked wherever there was a field, by preaching or writing. Philip and Timothy and the four, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John are examples." (Heb. **KOHELETH**) "A public instructor of the Gospel (Preacher) (Minister). (Heb. **MESHARETH**) "One who serves another; the term to distinguish from master; Solomon's servants and ministers. 'Moses rose up and his minister Joshua.' He who administers an office. 'God's ministers.'" "Ministers of Christ." "Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Minister "of the circumcision."
2. **PHILLIP THE EVANGELIST**. A resident (in the latter part of his life) of Cesarea where he had a wife and family, of whom 4 daughters are mentioned as singers. He was one of the seven deacons of the Church in Judaea. After Stephen was stoned he went to Samaria, where he baptized the magician Simeon. From there he was sent by Peter to Gaza and on the way (at Ain Karem?) he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. His tour extended from Azotus to Caesarea, where he settled and was visited by Paul, Agabus and others. His death is not recorded.
3. **TIMOTHY**. Is first mentioned in Acts 16:1 where he is described as the son of a Greek by a Jewish mother. The father's name is unknown; his mother's was Eunice and his grandmother's Lois. The family resided either at Derbe or Lystra which is uncertain. He became a disciple of Paul during his first visit to Lystra, A.D. 48, and was his friend and companion in his journeys and shared for a time his imprisonment at Rome and left by him at Ephesus to continue his work. He possessed the confidence and affection of Paul.

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E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words

1. **EUANGELISTES** = Literally, "a messenger of good (eu, "well," + angelos, "a messenger"), denotes a preacher of the Gospel, Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11, which makes clear the distinctiveness of the function in the churches: 2 Tim. 4:5."
2. **EUANGELIZO**, "to proclaim glad tidings," and **EUANGELION**, "good news, gospel." Missionaries are evangelists since they are essentially preachers of the gospel.

F. **Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon**—"A bringer of good tidings, an evangelist . . . This name is given in the N.T. to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles: Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5."

G. **Young's Concordance**—"One who announces good tidings, Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, 2 Tim. 4:5."

II. What Are the Biblical Qualifications of An Evangelist, If Any?

2 Timothy 4:1 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.

(NIV) In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge.

(RSV) I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

Paul starts off by charging Timothy; giving him his responsibilities. The Greek word is *diamarturomai*, "to attest or protest earnestly." This was a direct responsibility of Timothy to carry out, not the duty of others. It comes from a Greek word which means "to be a witness, testify" (*martureo*). Thus, Paul highlights that being an evangelist means that God is attesting to and witnessing the work that you are about to undertake. He uses the term "therefore," which simply means "certainly." Certainly what? "Before" (*enopion*, "in the face of") God! He is conveying that the charge to become one who does the work of an evangelist is accepted while standing in the face of God—looking God in the face with God looking back! What a sobering thought! God is watching to see how we carry out the work! But it is not just in the face of God, but also someone else—The Lord Jesus Christ. I hope that the picture of responsibility

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is becoming clear! It is a charge before the Witness that has created all things. It is a charge before the One who died for all mankind. It is a awesome responsibility! The two mentioned know how desperately this old world needs the gospel preached to it. They know how many or few years this world has left to turn. And they want to be witnesses to the Gospel preached by us as Evangelists. How do we view the charges from God and Christ?

Why is it significant that we look at the individuals that are bringing forth the charges? Because they shall judge! The word "judge" means "to try, distinguish, to condemn." Thus, we realize that we shall receive a greater condemnation. Who will be judged? The living and the dead when He comes back. Do not ever forget that He is coming back! The evangelist must work like the Lord is coming back! Is that how you have been carrying out the vocation you are a part of? (1 Cor. 16:22; Eph. 4:1). What will we say when Jesus appears? The evangelist must be the kind of person that looks for Christ to appear!

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

(RSV) preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

(NIV) Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

The evangelist must be able to "preach" (*kerusso*, "to herald"). What is the preaching comprised of? The Word of God! "Word" is from *logos*, "something said, including the thought." (Note: There are a lot of people that can preach, but only a few who will preach the Word.) How can you preach the Word if you have not learned it or what it says? You cannot! (Cf. 2 Tim. 2:15).

Next, Paul says that one must be "instant" (*ephistemi*, "to stand upon, be present"). We would say it today as "Stand up and be counted!" Jude says, "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). What are we to stand up for? The Word and the preaching of it! When is it appropriate to stand up for the Word and the preaching of it? When it is in season, or as the Greek conveys, when it is well timed, when folks want to hear what you have to say! Sometimes we run into the people who actually want to know what the truth is! But there are other situations where people just do not want to hear the truth, but they need to!

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Paul says "out of season" preaching is required by the evangelist also. What does he mean?

- Out of season (**akairos**, "inopportune"), (**akaireomai**, "to be inopportune; to fail of a proper occasion").
- Reprove (**elegcho**), "to confute; admonish (correct)."
- Rebuke (**epitimaō**), "to tax upon; censure; admonish."
- Exhort (**parakaleo**), "to call near" it comes from the root word which conveys the idea of **keleuo**, "to incite by word."

I really like the way that the Lord set this up for the evangelist. Preaching the gospel is to call folks closer or near to God! It is to excite them using the words of the gospel! How can we get folks excited about serving the Lord? Preach the Word! What happens when evangelists do not incite by word? You get a group of folks that have more important things to do than listen to the gospel. Something else incites them. We must realize that as evangelists.

What is the goal of this preaching? To give instructions in righteousness with patience.

2 Timothy 4:3 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.

(NIV) For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

(RSV) For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings.

"The time will come"—Paul starts to give the reasons why preaching the Word is so important to Christianity. There is an occasion coming when, from a human standpoint, it is never proper to teach the gospel! The occasion exists when people will not endure (**anechomai**, "to hold oneself up against; put up with") sound doctrine. The thought here is that they will refuse to be measured by the standard of God, the gospel. They will not put up with the truth!

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- Sound (**hugiaino**, "to have sound health"; from **hugies**, "healthy"; from **auxamo**, "to grow; enlarge").
- Doctrine (**didaskalia**, "instruction").
- Own (**idios**, "pertaining to self").
- Lusts (**epithumia**, "a longing").
- Heap (KJV) (**episoreuo**, "to accumulate further").
- Itching ears (**knetho**, "to scratch"). The thought is that if we are scratching our ears then we are distorting the hearing capability that we have. Simply put, we do not hear well when we are scratching our ears!

2 Timothy 4:4 *And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

The evangelist must be keenly aware that not only will some people not want to hear the truth, but they will want to hear something! The evangelist must realize that usually the people that we preach to will be in one of two categories: (1) they will say "Tell me the truth and nothing else," (2) or "Tell me lies, fables, stories, and nothing else."

"Turn away their . . ." (**apostrepho**, "to turn away or back"). This phrase is used twice in this verse and comes from one word in the Greek. The first usage indicates that they would depart from the truth and turn again to the fables!

Fables (**muthos**, "a tale"). These have extreme popularity in our society these days. Look at the impact TV has had in our culture today. Millions of folks around the world want to hear about the "myths" that are portrayed on things like the soap operas, science fiction, and other melodramatic shows. Why what do you think would happen if one day they replaced the soaps with preaching of the truth? Ratings would plummet, sponsors would protest, and viewers would scamper to turn off their TVs! Today, for far too many folks, the rule is no fable = no interest! Evangelists must realize what the competition is!

2 Timothy 4:5 *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

(NIV) *But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

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(RSV) As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

(NKJV) But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

"Watch" in the Greek conveys "clear thought." Clear mindedness is required for one to function as an evangelist. The Greek shows that the partaking of wine distorts that clarity (*nepho*, "to abstain from wine").

Next we are told that the evangelist must "endure afflictions." This is one that you won't hear taught on frequently, but none the less, it is a requirement! I'm not talking about where someone just made you mad. I am talking about doing as the Greek conveys-- *kakopatheo*, "to undergo hardship" (from *kakos*, "worthless" + *pathos*, "suffering, passion"). The evangelist must put himself in a position to undergo hardship, suffering, and the passion of pain. How would Paul rate us as evangelists today?

The next term used by Paul is "toil" (*ergon*). This is representative of the migrant workers or a group that works in the field from sunrise to sunset—not the 9-5 work ethic that is followed today!

The key word in the verse is *euaggelistes* ("a preacher of the gospel"). It has a root word which helps us understand what is meant by the term "preacher"—*euaggelizo*, "to announce good news."

How was the preaching to be done? What is the responsibility that Paul tells Timothy to take on? Timothy is to *plerophoreo*, "to carry out fully," the duties and obligations laid upon him as a preacher of the gospel. The last part of this word is from *phoreo*, "to have a burden." Is being an evangelist going to be the life of prestige and esteem from mankind? Not according to Paul!

What was Timothy to try to attain? He was to establish the trust and confidence so that the Word of God could be effective and have the necessary credibility! What about us today? Paul uses the word *plerophoria*, "entire confidence." It is derived from the Greek word that we just looked at, *plerophoreo*, "to carry out fully." How do we become effective as evangelists? By fully completing our mission to preach the gospel.

Here the evangelist is said to have a ministry, not just any ministry but "thy" (personal) "ministry" (*diakonia*, "attendance as a servant; aid; service). You have a personal service that must be rendered. You must therefore have a personal commitment to serve and aid those in need of

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the gospel! You must "prove" (plerophoria, "entire confidence") that you are a servant or aid to the Lord! Brethren, what does your personal commitment and service prove to the Lord?

Acts 21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

(NIV) Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

(RSV) On the morrow we departed and came to Caesarea; and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

As an evangelist, Phillip shows the importance of being hospitable. He must have recognized that there may be angels in his midst (cf. Heb. 13:2) and so he took the company of folks into his dwelling. Here the word "evangelist" is *euaggelistes* ("a preacher of the gospel"). Thus we learn that he was a preacher of the gospel, but also that he was one of the Seven. In Acts, we read the following concerning this:

Acts 6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch.

This was not a new practice for the people of God to use in putting forth leadership candidates for the work of the Lord. Listen to the writings aforetime (cf. Rom. 15:4)—

Deuteronomy 1:13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The qualifications for being a leader were similar to the ones used in the New Testament. Let's look at them for just a moment:

Old Testament (Deuteronomy 1:13)

- A. Take you wise men
- B. Take you understanding men
- C. Take you men known among your tribes

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New Testament (Acts 6:3, 1 Tim. 3:1)

A. Look ye out from among you:

1. Select *men of honest report*
2. Select *men full of the Holy Ghost*
3. Select *men full of wisdom*
4. Select *men of good report*

III. Ordination: Is It Necessary? If So How Is It To Be Performed?

A. ORDAIN, "To order, constitute, appoint, found, or establish, as a priest or a deacon over a church."

1. Hebrew

- a. YASAD, "founded" in 1 Chr. 9:22;
- b. KUN, "to establish;"
- c. MENAH, "to set or to number;"
- d. NATHAN, "to give;"
- e. AMAD, "to raise up;"
- f. ARACA, "to set in order;"
- g. PAAL, "work;"
- h. KUM, "to confirm;"
- i. SUM, "to appoint;"
- j. SHAFATH, "to set;"
- k. ASAH, "to make"

2. Greek

- a. Diatasso, "to arrange;"
- b. Kathistemi, "to place;"
- c. Kataskouazo, "to prepare fully;"

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- d. **Krino**, "to separate;" and "to judge" (80+ times);
- e. **Horizo**, "to bound;"
- f. **Poieo**, "to make;"
- g. **Proorizo**, "predetermine;"
- h. **Tasso**, "to set in order;"
- i. **Tithemi**, "to lay;"
- j. **Cheirotoneo**, "to stretch;"
- k. **Ginomai**, "to begin to be" (700 times in the NT);
- l. **Prographo**, "to write before;"
- m. **Proetoimazo**, "to appoint."

Matthew 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*

(NIV) *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

The command is to "Go!" For the apostles, this is a responsibility that none was exempted from! "Go ye" is from *poreuomai*, "to traverse," which is from *peira*, "a test."

The preaching of the gospel was a test or work that they had to constantly apply themselves towards to accomplish. The next thing said is "therefore" (*oun*, "certainly")—it must be done! What must certainly get done? Teaching (*matheteuo*, "to become a pupil; to disciple"). Get done the work of making pupils and disciples! Make folks learners of what the gospel contains! What folks need to learn the gospel? All nations! Every one on this old earth! The Greek word for "nations" is *ethnos* ("a race; tribe"). This shows that no special group of folks are selected—all must submit to the gospel call!

The evangelist must practice baptism to be scripturally honouring his work responsibilities! Baptize is from *baptizo* ("to make fully wet," from *bapto*, "to whelm; cover wholly with a fluid; to stain as with a dye"). Thus, he is not afraid of the saving power of water (1 Pet. 3:21).

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Evangelism is only sanctioned by the Lord if it is in His name, therefore, it is easy to see that the Lord will accept nothing less in the requirements that He has set for baptizing the learners of the gospel!

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Luke 24:46-47 And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

- "Repentance" is from *metanoia* ("compunction; reversal;" from *metanoëo*, "to think differently;" from *noieo*, "to exercise the mind").
- "Remission" is from *aphesis* ("freedom, pardon").
- "Preach" is from *kerusso* ("to herald").

The evangelist must preach the proper subject matter prescribed by Christ! What does this consist of?

1. Preaching repentance
2. Preaching remission of sin
3. Preaching to all of the world!

Luke 24:47-48 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

John 4:35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

(NIV) Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

The evangelist must have the ability to look at the fields and recognize a mature crop. The evangelist must know when to look at the fields. The evangelist must want to harvest the fruit. The evangelist must learn there is more fruit to harvest than there are harvesters!

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Luke 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.

John 4:36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

(NIV) Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.

(RSV) He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

The KJV indicates here that one who reaps or harvests a crop gets pay for services. He then says in addition that the one who gets paid also does something else, what is it? He "gathereth fruit!" The Greek here means "to lead together." Thus, one that gets paid to work, works in leading along with others of the faith. The evangelist that works knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord! By carrying out the duty of gathering fruit for eternal life, the evangelist can bring joy to himself and to the sower also. Both may rejoice in eternity!

1 Corinthians 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

2 John 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

John 4:37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

(NIV) Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true.

(RSV) For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'

The evangelist must understand that if he continues to sow the seed of the kingdom he will see the benefits. This does not mean that he will be the one who does the reaping. Two examples: I had some studies with two men who seemed to understand the gospel. On a Sunday morning, one man and his wife came forward to be baptized after a les-

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son by another brother. I was overjoyed that they obeyed the gospel. In the other situation, I studied and studied with certain persons with no results. Finally, I moved out of the city, and the first Sunday that I was gone they obeyed the gospel. I greatly rejoiced at the news!

John 4:38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

(NIV) I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.

(RSV) I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.

As an evangelist, you do not have to create the efforts from scratch; we have the one who has laboured already, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He has done the hard work (kopiao, "to feel fatigue")! The evangelist is only reaping the benefits of Christ's labour! For example, think of how nice it would be if someone offered you a job stacking heavy objects all day long and they agreed to pay you \$25 per hour. When you came to work you found all of the objects stacked already, and the supervisor said, "I already stacked them up for you. All you have to do is straighten them up and I will still pay you \$25 per hour." You would be thrilled, and if that happened every day you would think about how good you really have it! But that's just what Jesus has done for the evangelist! This thing was not done in a corner! Jesus was not kept secret! Most folks have heard of him! He has done the hard work for us! We have it so good!

John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

John 4:39 (NIV) Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."

(RSV) Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."

Here, the substantial religious awakening was caused by a woman with an evangelistic attitude, that we evangelists sometimes lack or let grow dim. How often do we let slide by us the opportunities to tell someone that "He told me all that ever I did." How was her evangelistic attitude manifest to others? By word (logos, "something said, including the thought"). We must speak up as a witness for Christ for a religious awakening to result!

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The evangelist must have the following qualifications:

1. He must be sound in the faith! (1 Tim. 1:19).
2. He must be apt to teach (2 Tim 2:24).
3. He must be sound in doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16 ; Titus 2:1).
4. He must be an example of good works (1 Tim. 4:12).
5. He must show zeal in using gifts possessed (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).
6. He must have courage to rebuke sin (1 Tim. 5:20).
7. He must be willing to endure persecution (2 Tim. 2:3).
8. He must strive to fulfill all of the responsibilities of the work (2 Tim. 2:15-22).

The following verses highlight other responsibilities and examples that we should consider when we are examining the vast responsibilities of the work of an evangelist!

Acts 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

(NIV) "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

(RSV) "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

The angel was clear about the expectations that God had of the apostles in that day! Go and stand in the temple! Why? To speak to folks all the words of this life! We must tell people about this life to win them to Christ! When was the last time that you went and stood in the another religious organization's building and told folks the words of this life? Have you ever done this before?

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

This verse clearly teaches that the preaching was left as a responsibility to us since Christ was "ordained" (horizo, "to mark out or bound") by God to be the judge not the evangelist of the quick and the dead!

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Thus, the evangelist must set in order without the harsh judgment of the living. Things can be set in order using love!

Acts 22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.

Romans 1:15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 5:14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Ephesians 3:8-9 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

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Ephesians 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 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.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2 Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

In conclusion, there are numerous duties that we haven't even touched on but I hope that we will always remember that indeed the harvest is plenteous but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore . . . And do the work of an evangelist! 6110 W. Corrine Dr., Glendale, Arizona 85304

Is There A Command for Collection and Treasury?

by Mike Whitworth

Is there a command for a collection for an ongoing treasury, or was the command given and intended for a specific need?

Naturally, the first place one would go in the Scripture concerning this question is 1 Corinthians 16:1-2—

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

This Scripture has been studied in depth from many angles and approaches. Thus, there is probably not anything that I will present today that has not been considered before.

When discussing this topic it is important to keep in mind that as long as the church has been in existence, and as long as it does exist, there have been, and will be, specific financial needs facing it, and each individual congregation must meet these needs. Widows indeed, financially oppressed saints, preachers, elders, the general spreading of the gospel, and perhaps other needs; all these are perpetual needs that the Scriptures teach are to be financially supported and upheld. The main question that keeps cropping up is, "How is it to be done?" The continual searching that goes on is an indication that the answer may not necessarily be easy to find. However, it does indicate a genuine earnestness on our part to seek the will of God.

In this study I would like to deal first with the second half of my question— "Was the command given and intended for a specific need?"

There could not be a good argument given to dissuade one from believing that Paul is referring in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 to the distressed saints in Judea. However, 2 Corinthians 9:14 seems to indicate that their bountiful gift was provided to others as well. For Paul mentions that the saints in Judea "would praise their generosity in sharing with them and everyone else" (NIV).

In about A.D. 43, the prophet Agabus (Acts 11:28) prophesied of the great famine that would come upon the Roman world. That, coupled

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with the great persecution the church sustained in Jerusalem, were probably the primary reasons for the saints' struggles in Judea. In an effort to draw Gentile and Jewish Christians closer together, and because of his compassion for suffering saints, Paul told the churches in Galatia, Macedonia, Corinth, and Rome of this financial need. I believe he planned to collect this support during his third missionary journey.

But was it a command? No. One thing for certain is that Paul was not commanding the Corinthians to give the collection to the needy saints in Judea. However, he does remind them of their previous decision to do so (2 Cor. 8:10-11; 9:5). And in 2 Corinthians 8:6-7, Paul refers to the support as an "act of grace on their part;" in 9:2, "an eagerness to help;" and in verse 5, "the generous gift." These are sufficient to show that the brethren decided to give on their own.

In 2 Corinthians 8:8, Paul says, "I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love" (NIV). The word "commanding" here is the Greek word *ἐπιτάγη* (*epitagē*), which W. E. Vine says is akin to the verb *ἐπιτάσσω* (*epitasso*), "command; to put upon one as a duty; to enjoin." He says *ἐπιτάγη* ("commandment") "stresses the authoritativeness of the command." Thayer defines the word as "an injunction, mandate, command" (p. 244); Arndt and Gingrich as "command, order, injunction" (p. 302).

Thus, the answer to the second half of my question, "Was the command given and intended for specific need?", is that the command given was not that they had to give to a specific need. But if the word "command" has a different meaning than this, then Paul could have given and intended for the specific need.

Now, I will turn to answer the first half of the question, "Is there a command for a collection for an ongoing treasury?"

To answer this question, I believe we have to ask another question. Was Paul giving a commandment or was he establishing an organized arrangement? For the answer to this we need to study the meanings of the words "have given order" and "so do" in 1 Corinthians 16:1.

The word for "have given order" is *διατάσσω* (*diatasso*), which has a somewhat different meaning than *ἐπιτάγη* that we looked at earlier. *Διατάσσω* is used sixteen times in the New Testament. This word carries with it the idea of an arrangement, prescription, appointment, and ordination, rather than an injunction. If we think of the word "command" in

the question of my topic in light of this definition, then I would say that the answer is "Yes." Let me explain.

Thayer defines διατάσσω as "arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order" (p. 142). Arndt and Gingrich say "order, direct, command" (p. 189). The *Analytical Greek Lexicon* gives the definition for 1 Corinthians 16:1 as, "to arrange, to make precise arrangement, to prescribe."

The Greek word ποιεω (*poieo*), translated "so do," is defined by Thayer as, "to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind; *a.* to act rightly, do well" (p. 562).

So I believe that Paul directed the churches as to an arrangement by which the collection should be taken on *every* first day of the week, as one had been prospered. Interestingly, most translations use the word "every" with "first day of the week" in 1 Corinthians 16:2.

However, based upon the definitions, we should be careful about making this a mandate or injunction upon the people.

Let me illustrate by using a passage from 1 Corinthians 9, which uses διατάσσω, and in nearly every translation it is translated "commanded" rather than "ordained," as in the King James Version. In verse 14, Paul said, "Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (NKJV). Paul is here speaking about financial support for preachers, and Paul said the "Lord" commanded (διατάσσω) that those who preach should be financially supported or should receive support. However, Paul goes on to say in verses 15 and 18 that he is not going to take it. Now, was Paul breaking a command of the Lord by not taking support, thus sinning, or was he just deciding not to exercise a Lord ordained arrangement? So you can see why I say we should be careful about making 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 a mandate or injunction.

We turn our attention now to the word for "storing up" or "laying by in store." The Greek word θησαυρίζω (*thesaurizo*), Vine says, means "to lay up, store up (literally, storing)." Arndt and Gingrich, "a place where something is kept, literally, treasure box or chest." The word θησαυρος, from which θησαυρίζω is derived, is defined by Thayer as "a place in which goods and precious things are collected and laid up" (p. 290).

So what did these early Christians understand and do? On the first day of every week they gave an offering when they came together, according to an amount predetermined in their minds. The individual's gift

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was based upon how he had been prospered. And this offering was stored up to meet the needs of the local church and the church's work as a whole.

Having a treasury laid up (θησαυριζο) to be used for specific needs as they occur (and they will) does not violate any Scripture, but rather, is supported by it. Thus, there is a command (διατασσο) for the collection for an ongoing treasury. 1454 Hornecker Dr., Wichita, Kansas 67235.

May We Give Financial Support to Elders?

by Dan Wissinger

Elders May Be Supported Financially

First, I would like to show from the Scriptures that elders may be supported financially from the church treasury.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

In addition to the qualifications which are required for him to be an elder, he must: (1) labor in the Word, and (2) labor in the doctrine (διδασκαλιᾶ) or teaching. Paul then quotes the Old Testament Scripture, "a labourer is worthy of his reward."

Earlier in this chapter, Paul taught regarding the care of widows by saying in verse 3, "Honor widows that are widows indeed." However, she must meet several qualifications. David Lipscomb, in the Gospel Advocate commentary series writes,

The word "honor" contains the idea not only of respect and consideration, but also in such a connection as this, that of temporal support. It suggests that such relief is not to be dealt with as paupers in a manner so as to degrade them, but as Christians whom the church holds in honor and to whom it thus shows honor (p. 164).

Care for the widows was a marked feature in the Old Testament (Ex. 22:22-24). In the apostolic churches it was made prominent very early (Acts 6:12).

The Greek verb τιμάω means, "to fix a value upon, to esteem, to honor." The noun form of this verb is used in 1 Timothy 5:17 regarding elders. Commenting on this verse, Coffman writes,

It is true enough that financial remuneration seems to have been a part of the honor owed, as evidenced in the next verse. But the writer agrees with Gould who says that "it is difficult to believe

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that this means a double stipend as the New English Bible renders it" (Coffman, Commentary on 1 Timothy, p. 198).

Regarding "double honor," Lipscomb writes,

They are entitled to the respect and honor of the members of the church and are entitled to support while in the work. The elders who devote their time to the service of God through the church must be supported. The honor bestowed on them is not only respectful treatment and deference but support (Lipscomb, Gospel Advocate Commentary on 1 Timothy, p. 171).

Greg Gay taught in the 1989 Preachers' Study regarding 1 Timothy 5:17,

While it is quite likely that it would be accepted for all elders to receive some pay because of the honor of the office, those who work especially hard in the congregation in preaching and teaching, could and should be paid much more for their labor (1989 Preachers' Study Notes, p. 177).

Paul Nichols wrote with reference to 1 Timothy 5:17,

Paul teaches, first of all, that an elder is to be honored because he is an officer. Secondly, he is to be honored with support, that is, if he spends full-time laboring in the word and doctrine (Christian's Expositor Extra [October 1994], p. 27).

Robert R. Taylor, Jr. Writes,

In the first century some elders gave all their time to the proclamation of the word, to the teaching of sound doctrine. Those thus engaged were eminently worthy of receiving the honor of full and generous financial support, just as gospel preachers (The Elder and His Work, p. 206).

Since it is clearly taught and understood by most that an elder: (1) is to feed the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2-3), (2) labor in teaching and preaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18), (3) edify the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12); he surely would be included in Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 9:7-14,

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes,

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no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Paul illustrates the right which he knew ministers had to be supported financially. Although the apostle chose at times not to accept support, this does not mean that everyone who preaches should not receive support. Alexander Campbell chose not to accept support for various reasons, but this does not mean that preachers should not accept support. Paul teaches that those who preach the gospel have a right to be supported financially.

Paul argues first from the nature of the case: (1) soldiers have the right to their wages, (2) one who plants a vineyard has a right to the fruit from the vineyard, (3) one who feeds the flock has a right to milk from the flock. He then argues from the authority of Scripture, "For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth the corn" (v. 9, quoted from Deut. 25:4). Paul then illustrates this principle by noting the actions of the priests who partake of the sacrifices brought to the altar (v. 13). And finally, he argues from the authority of Jesus Christ, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (v. 14).

However, one of the qualifications of an elder is that he not be greedy of filthy lucre (not a lover of money, NIV) (1 Tim. 3:3).

Almost all will agree elders may be supported financially from the church treasury.

Elders Should Be Supported

The elder must: (1) feed the church of God (1 Pet. 5:2), (2) take oversight of the church (1 Pet. 5:2), (3) watch for the souls of the church (Heb. 13:17), (4) give an account to God for their work (Heb. 13:17).

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Daniel Webster said, "The most important thought I ever had was that of my individual responsibility to God" (*New Testament Elders*, p. 89). Now add to that the responsibility one may have for the eternal salvation or punishment of others. This is the situation in which an elder finds himself.

Elders must be business managers, but also shepherds. They can usually give an account for every dollar of the treasury, but they must also give an account for every sheep.

Eldership is a work, not a retirement. This is work-time, not retirement time. To view the eldership as a retirement office is to limit potentially qualified leaders. Paul wrote,

And he 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 (Eph. 4:11-12).

Elders have the responsibility to "perfect" the saints. That is, they are to bring the flock to maturity in character, righteousness, and holiness. Elders have the responsibility to *work* in the ministry. That is, they are to be servants, providing for those who are needy and helpless. And elders are to edify the body of Christ. That is, they are to be teachers, building up the body in faith and converting the wanderer.

In Paul's list of offices, apostles and prophets were temporary and fulfilled their purpose in the first century. Evangelists and pastors are still needed and their work continues perpetually. However, with reference to the local congregation, the work of the evangelist is temporary and gives way to the elders to take over the care of the congregation. This releases the evangelist to work elsewhere. The work of the evangelist is summarized in Acts 14:21-23: to preach the gospel, to confirm the souls of the disciples, to ordain elders in every congregation. The permanent arrangement is qualified elders.

Practical Observations

There is a vast difference in the scriptural authorization to support elders financially and the practical practice of such in the brotherhood. I have heard some excellent sermons urging brethren to ordain elders in which not a word was said about providing for their financial support. Most of the articles written about the importance and authority of elders make no mention of supporting them.

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1 Timothy 5:17 states clearly that hard-working elders are worthy of double honor. I am certain that this means "respect," but also financial support. Yet, in practice, we have not honored such men financially.

Elders will never achieve the prominence described in the Scriptures as long as the membership and the brotherhood view the eldership as a non-paying, part-time job.

Some feel that you can only slice a pie so thin, but they do not realize that when we follow God's system, He will make the pie bigger.

When we plan an evangelistic effort and a preacher is selected with the idea of sending him to a field of labor, the first thing considered is, "How do we support him?" But elders are ordained with never a thought or word of support for the work. Yet, they are expected to faithfully discharge their duties, and receive the blame if time does not permit them to discharge such duties adequately.

Objections to Supporting Elders

1. Jesus stated a proverb in John 4:4, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country." Some see this as a reason not to support local elders.
2. Some congregations consider the eldership as long-range commitment, and are reluctant to enter into such an arrangement. Some believe, "once an elder, always an elder." This is no more true than "once in grace, always in grace." I would suggest a specific length of time be determined.
3. Some reason that since an elder does not travel across the country, he has no need of financial support.
4. He should be retired and self-supporting. This is neither realistic nor scriptural. Usually a man who does not do the work prior to retirement will not do it after he retires.
5. The objection of "no funds" seems logical on the surface. But as the church develops, the funds will be there. Are we saying that God's system will not work because of a lack of funds?

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Conclusion

The honor will always go to the one who continually teaches and preaches. The elder will continue to develop these skills when his needs are provided for him to devote time to study and make preparation to teach. Dean Buchanan writes,

Elders should do the work of elders and preachers the work of preachers. If the church wants a full-time man in the work of an elder, let them pay one or more of their elders full-time (*Spiritual Sword* [April 1978], p. 46).

Elders oversee the local congregation. The Apostle Paul said, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). As an apostle, Paul had the care of all the churches on his shoulders. There is no position like this today. But we do have elders who care for the local congregation.

Remember, we do not oppose the "pastor system"; we oppose the "one-man pastor system." 1309 S. Berkshire, Springfield, Missouri 65804.

May Benevolent Work Be Done From the Treasury for Unbelievers?

Maurice Chandler

The question that I will deal with is "May benevolent work be done from the treasury for unbelievers?" I would like to make a few comments before we go into the main discussion.

We can read in Scripture that the treasury can be used to help unbelievers become believers. We can also find in Scripture that we can use the treasury to help believers who are in need. Also, individual Christians can help believers and unbelievers.

The next two observations are going to give away how I feel about the treasury and using it for unbelievers. First, the treasury cannot be used in benevolent work for unbelievers. Second, the church treasury in benevolent work, as far as I can see, is for saints only.

I see two patterns in the Word of God. One of those patterns directs the church in how to use the treasury in benevolence. The other pattern directs individual Christians.

My remarks this afternoon are going to be drawn on a conclusion. The brethren before me have already established the fact that a treasury exists and that we can draw from it to do the work of the church. Of course, benevolent work is a part of the work of the church.

There is one thing about this subject that seems to enter into the picture whenever you study with people concerning benevolent work. I have dealt with this somewhat at home. It always seems to be an emotional thing. People will see these programs with these little children, and even older folks in distress, and their hearts will go out to them, and they will want to respond in some way to help them. So emotions often come into play when you study with people on this subject. However, as we study the Word of God, there are many things that come into play as far as our emotions are concerned. This is often a very difficult thing to overcome.

This evening, what I would like to do in my lesson is to establish the difference between the work of the church and the work of individuals as it relates to unbelievers and benevolent work. This must be done before we can come to any right conclusion.

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We can look at the denominational world or the liberal element of the church of Christ and become amazed at some of the things that they do. I was privy to some of these things in some work that I performed. A particular congregation was carrying on all kinds of benevolent work and other activities from the treasury that involved an abuse of the treasury. You could see people supporting orphans' homes, missionary societies, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, even martial arts classes. We must be very careful what we allow, as far as the treasury is concerned, for it is the Lord's money and we are responsible for how it is used. So it is important that we have the right attitude, and we must not create problems that can haunt us.

Many times when you study this lesson with someone, you find something very prominent among those that you study with, and that is their attitude toward authority. Authority plays a large role in anything that we do. Unfortunately, there are many people who will cast authority aside because of their emotional involvement in the issue.

First of all, we need to look in the Bible and see if we can find a pattern for what we should be doing. Now, we need to understand the significance of a pattern (example). Moses was told by God in Hebrews 8:5 that he must be careful to follow the pattern. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:21, that Jesus has left us an example that we should follow. There are examples and patterns in God's Word for us to follow. We will actually find the responsibility of the church is not as great as we sometimes place upon it. I think that the responsibility of the church for benevolent work is, over all, rather restricted by the Bible.

As you read the Bible there are some particular Scriptures that stand out. When I study this with someone, I refer to these, for they tell me and the person with whom I am studying what the Bible says about benevolent work and who it is to be used for. There are nine Scripture passages that are primarily used to prove what the treasury is to be used for in benevolent work.

Acts 2:44-45 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

Acts 4:32-34 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and

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great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.

Acts 6:1-6 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

McGarvey on this passage makes the point that those who were not needy were givers. So many times you have a dual role—those in need and those who relieve the need.

Acts 11:27-30 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

In this passage, before the need actually arrived brethren determined to relieve those who were in need.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much

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intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Corinthians 9:1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you.

You see how Paul refers to this benevolence as a "ministering to the saints."

Romans 15:25-26 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

1 Timothy 5:16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

So here are nine passages, there may be others but I am not aware of them, that have a central theme; namely, a responsibility of the church to help those in need. But it is restricted to saints only.

Well, what about unbelievers? When we open our Bibles and go to the Scriptures that teach we should be responding to the needs of unbelievers, we find none. We find no Scripture that places upon church or the church treasury the responsibility of helping needy unbelievers.

When I talk to people about this they become emotional and upset, because they think that you should just go to the treasury and draw it out for every situation. But we must understand what the mission of the church is in this world. It is a very important one. Lots of people do not really understand the mission of the church. The church's mission, according to Jesus, is to seek and save the lost (Mt. 28:19-20). That was His mission (Lk. 19:10). Also, you can understand from Ephesians 3:9-11, that the eternal purpose of God was that people would be saved through the church. So the church has a great responsibility to help unbelievers. It seems to me that if the mission of the Head is to save the lost (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16), then it must be our mission to save the lost.

I believe the apostles let us know that benevolent work was not the primary mission of the church, but that it was a secondary thing. It is taught in a way that we can understand. Remember how Peter said it in Acts 6:1—"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." Peter was just emphasizing that we must not leave the primary mission of the church and serve a secondary one. Of course, the

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primary mission of the church is the saving of souls and not reaching out to help people with temporal needs.

Another point that is very important relative to benevolent work being done for unbelievers--the world has a responsibility for itself. I believe that God has ordained governments. He set in order governments to take care of their people. According to Romans 13:1-13 and 1 Peter 2:13-15, God does rule in the kingdoms of men, and that through that "kingdom" the needs and the wants of the world should be supplied. There are all kind of governmental agencies that can respond to these needs and these wants. The church, even if it wanted to, could not embark upon such a mission. It would be impossible for the church to fulfill such an awesome responsibility of caring for all the world's people. We couldn't even begin. I think that the agencies of the world have God's approval for caring for their own.

Often, the work of individuals must come into consideration in this study. Individuals may want to leave out their responsibility, but there are many Scriptures that cover our responsibility to help others. Even the Sermon on the Mount—"Let your light so shine before men" so that God can be glorified--emphasizes this individual responsibility. Sometimes brethren ignore the individual responsibility and want to put the burden on the church.

I know there are brethren that do this. I have encountered it. One brother said, "You know, Jesus said that unless we become like little children, we have no part in Him." He made this point: since little children are like Jesus they are saved, therefore, he concluded, the church has a responsibility to help them, via orphan homes, etc. It seems like it is way out in left field, but there are many people who think that the church should take upon itself all these burdens, but it is not and cannot be our responsibility. So some things belong in the area of personal and individual responsibility.

1 Timothy 6:17-18 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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1 John 3:17-18 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

When you look on a brother and see he is needy and do not respond, you are not doing what you should be doing. So you have a responsibility as brethren to help others. I do not think that we are only limited to helping individuals who are Christians. I believe we can go beyond that as an individual. You can use your resources for whatever you want to as long as they are honorable. Jesus proved the principle in Matthew 25:31-46—"I was hungry and ye fed me" Do you remember that Scripture? They were amazed—"When have we done this?" "As oft as ye have done unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." We do have individual responsibilities.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

This passage is sometimes misused. People interpret "As we therefore have opportunity . . ." as admonition to the church to do for all men. However, in Galatians 6:3-10, we find the personal pronouns (him, himself, we, us, his) used twenty-three times. From that I draw the conclusion that Paul is talking about an individual responsibility. So we have many individual responsibilities. 10308 Republic Lane, Little Rock, Arkansas 72209.

Preaching in Russia: The Message of the Gospel in View of Russian History and Culture

by Raymond Fox

Introduction

- A. Our manner of presenting the gospel to a certain group of people should depend on their specific needs.
 - 1. Paul preached to the Athenians about the unsatisfactory nature of their idolatry. He reasoned with them about the self-contradictions of idolatry and explained why idolatry cannot fulfill man's need to worship God (Acts 17).
 - 2. Paul preached the gospel to the Jews in Antioch in terms they could understand. He appealed to them by way of the history and prophets of Israel. To be consistent with what they believed about God's role in their history, they must accept Jesus as the Christ (Acts 13).
 - 3. Paul preached the same gospel in both places, but the specific message and appeal depended on the people Paul was talking to. He did not use the same approach for every group.
 - 4. No question that man has universal needs. But the message must break through the culturally preconceived ideas of the world to fill those needs.
- B. Knowing the cultural and religious history of the people helps us understand their needs.
 - 1. The worldview that a particular people has depends on their culture and history. Through history they have developed certain ways of looking at the world and this worldview is reflected in the present culture.
 - 2. Preaching the gospel in Russia requires understanding the culture of Russians and the worldviews that are reflected in this culture.
 - 3. Teaching must overcome the preconceptions of worldview. For example, culture has its own vocabulary. The same words we

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use have different connotations among the Russians. The meaning of the name "Baptist" in Russia is closer to the meaning we give the word "Protestant."

4. We cannot simply preach the same gospel sermons that we preach in the United States during gospel meetings that are mainly attended by members of the church.
- C. Various worldviews within one society (The following are some of the various religious worldviews represented in Russian society.)
1. Members of the Russian Orthodox church steeped in tradition.
 2. Agnostics and atheists born of communist ideology.
 3. Town and city dwellers with no real ties to the country, townspeople who moved within their lifetime from the country to the town, peasants living in country villages surrounding the towns.
 4. Individuals who put their faith in the possibility of economic success, others who are fatalistic and resigned to the life they live, still others who are looking for a purpose other than materialism.
 5. These are some of the examples of the same varieties we find in our own society, but the causes and the manifestations of these worldviews are different in Russia.
 6. A single audience in a public meeting place in Russia may reflect this wide variety of worldviews, whereas audiences in the United States attending a gospel meeting are fairly uniform in their religious dispositions. So in presenting the gospel we must be aware of this diversity and be prepared to present the message of Christ on different levels to the intellectually sophisticated atheist as well as the deeply religious, Orthodox peasant.

I. The Confusion of Religion with Culture.

- A. In Russia religion has been a cultural pivotal point.
1. The Orthodox church originated as an effort to give the Russian people a national religion, to bring all the different pagan tribes together.

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2. It was rejected by the Bolsheviks as a myth and counter productive to the revolution.
3. Then, at various times since the revolution, it was restored when it suited those in power.
 - a. Stalin persecuted the clergy in the 1930's.
 - b. During World War II, Orthodoxy was encouraged in order to give the Russians an added sense of nationality to spur them on in the fight against Germany.
 - c. Khrushchev persecuted the church after Stalin.
 - d. As for the church itself, it has opposed communism and embraced communism when convenient. During the *glasnost* and *perestroika* periods, the church has sought the protection of communism against the influence of foreigners.
4. To be Russian has often meant to be Orthodox.
 - a. The word "peasant" in Russian is one letter different from the word "Christian" showing one word must be a derivative of the other.
 - b. So, in certain circles, to criticize the Orthodox church might be interpreted as criticism of Russia. If the church is labeled as ignorant then Russians are ignorant.
 - c. To convert from Orthodoxy to some other religion would be interpreted by many as an act denouncing Russian identity.
- B. Many believe that religion is just an expression of a particular culture. But religion must not be confused with culture.
 1. What does religion propose to do?
 - a. Religion proposes to tell the truth about our nature as human beings, the nature and will of God, our relationship to God and to other human beings.
 - b. This truth also includes moral principles that teach how we ought to live and how we ought to treat other human beings.

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- c. If religion is not the truth and is instead just an expression of culture, then it has no truth value, and thus has no value at all. Its teachings are just myths, like a blind man shooting in the dark.
 - d. Religion ought then to provide evidence for the truth.
2. What is culture?
- a. Culture consists of the art, music, language, customs, literature that identifies and distinguishes a certain people.
 - b. Culture serves the purpose of maintaining the identity of a certain group of people by means of promoting and continuing the distinctive characteristics of the group.
 - c. Most elements of culture have no truth value, that is, questions of truth are irrelevant. It makes no sense for instance to ask if a certain piece of art is true. Art is representation and not science (although the philosophy it represents may be false).
 - d. There are cultural traditions and religious traditions. Truth can only be asked about religious traditions because religion proposes to tell the truth. So religious traditions must reflect a correct worldview.
- C. When religion is influenced by culture.
- 1. If people view religion on the same level as culture, as an expression of culture, then culture can easily influence religion
 - 2. For example the so-called "prosperity gospel" of some denominations has been successful in the U.S. because of the materialistic values of our society, but such a message cannot be so successful in the poverty stricken cultures of third world countries.
 - 3. For example, we may teach on infant baptism and our listeners may understand that the Bible does not teach infant baptism, but nonetheless they baptize their child. Why? Because it is a matter of cultural identity and social acceptance within their particular social environment. They are confusing culture with religion.

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4. We must emphasize that we are going to Russia, not to teach an American religion, but to teach the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

D. Religion that is merely an expression of culture has no real value.

1. If you step out of one culture and into another, God does not suddenly change or cease to exist and moral principles do not suddenly become invalid. Moral truth and truth about God must remain the same in every culture, just like natural laws such as the law of gravity. The law of gravity is in effect regardless of the culture you are in.
2. Religion ought to provide knowledge and truth that meets the needs of all human beings despite their different cultures. These needs do not vary from culture to culture.
3. Therefore, whereas culture cannot unite people, but instead divides them; religion, if it is true, has the power to unite people. It alone can unite because its truths are not confined to just one culture.
4. For different cultures to coexist they need a set of common moral principles. Only religion, if it is true, can provide these moral principles.
5. If moral principles were just expressions of a particular culture then they could not be used to judge culture. Such reasoning would be circular.

E. Must be free to choose.

1. We must not allow ourselves to be chained to our culture so that we cannot accept the truth.
2. We need to convince people that changing religions does not mean forfeiting culture. Many aspects of culture have no direct bearing on religious issues or issues of the truth and so these aspects of culture do not have to change.

II. A totalitarian view of authority.

A. A history of totalitarianism.

1. Totalitarianism is a form of government in which the state has absolute control over nearly every aspect of the people's lives.

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Their duty is not to question or reason but to obey. No freedom of choice or expression. The authority of the state is enforced by terror.

2. Under the czars, the peasants lived as serfs, one step away from slavery.
 - a. Most of society had little direct contact with the czar. The totalitarian authority that the serf labored under was the feudal lord. Serfs were tied to the land and served the lord in return for protection and sustenance.
 - b. Under Peter the Great a complex system of rank developed with the czar as the ultimate authority without anyone to answer to.
3. The czars were replaced by the totalitarian authority of the communists, and in particular the secretary-general who was in essence a dictator.
 - a. A vast network of informers could send someone off to exile for the most insignificant complaint based on pure hearsay.
 - b. The populace had no say and no right to question the state.
4. The nature authority in the Russian Orthodox church as absolutism.
 - a. The individual had no right to question and must only obey.
 - b. Exclusion from the Orthodox church meant exclusion from society during certain periods in the history of Russia.
 - c. The church controlled many aspects of life from marriage to death. Peasant or town people could not visualize life without the ministrations and ceremonies of the church.
 - d. The priests ruled by intimidation and not by reason. They were not highly respected for their intellectual powers.
- B. The problem of communicating subjects such as the authority of the Scriptures or the Lordship of Christ.
 1. Teaching concerning issues of authority such as "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is si-

lent," or the Lordship of Christ, is difficult because of the mind-set of a culture brought up under totalitarianism.

2. The speaker himself has a great obstacle to overcome because of the cultural reaction to someone in a position of authority.
 - a. Just standing in front of the audience and giving answers may be enough to win the acceptance of people who are accustomed to authoritarian declarations. The audience may readily accept our message just because we declare it to be so. But the same audience may turn around and give similar acceptance to the next group that arrives. We will wonder why the people vacillate, but they are trained to accept whatever authority is present.
 - b. Others in the audience may have become so suspicious of authority that they refuse to believe anyone.
 - c. To solve this problem we need to teach them how to reason for themselves, presenting Christianity as reasonable and let them reason for themselves. Asking them questions sometimes puts them in an unnatural position because they simply have never thought their opinion really mattered.
3. In a society which has been closed to reasonable discussion, people lack the capability or the tools to reason.
 - a. In public discussions they may have a tendency to accept the better appealing authority rather than the better sounding arguments.
 - b. They may accept what we say because of who we are and not because of the soundness of our reasons. In the long run this is to our detriment because they will not be grounded in the truth.
 - c. So we need to help them reason and communicate in such a way that helps them reason, such as by addressing questions to them and not simply making declarations.
4. Another issue raised because of a history of totalitarianism concerns the justice of God.
 - a. Russians have lived in a world filled with injustice. Injustice was a way of life under the czars, under communism, and

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even today under democracy, in which a few are getting rich and the many are still suffering.

- b. They naturally raise the issue of the justice of God.
- c. To convince them to freely trust in the authority of God, they must be convinced that God is somehow different from man.
- d. They have seen an incredible amount of suffering. So to them the issue of suffering and the character of God is not just a passing question.
- e. Even the Orthodox do not understand the mercy of God and simply accept life in a fatalistic way.
- f. So if a man goes to preach the gospel in Russia and cannot satisfactorily explain how God can be just and allow the innocent to suffer then he will not be able to meet the needs of his audience (Among the people we usually preach to in our society, the justice of God is not an issue because we are isolated from suffering.)

III. Religion as tradition.

- A. The Russian Orthodox is not a religion that has different traditions than others; rather, it is a religion that is tradition.
 - I. The uniqueness of the Orthodox church in the eyes of its adherents is its traditions. The Orthodox church is its traditions.
 - a. The issue of fasting is not so much how or why to fast but that fasting takes up more than half the calendar year. Take away fasting and you have robbed the religion of much of its practice.
 - b. The same is true with the worship of icons. Icons are distinctively Orthodox, first Greek and then Russian. They are Russian art, representing the flow of cultural history and man's understanding of himself. Many homes used to have a "red corner" with icons and votive candles. Take away icons and you have not just taken away a single aspect of their religion but you have taken away the vitality of Orthodoxy.

- c. The baptism of infants is not a isolated act but represents in the minds of the faithful one's connection to society and national identity. To fail to be baptized is not just a question of salvation (as we usually address it), but instead a matter of identity. If you are not baptized then who are you?
 2. Therefore, if you take away traditions then you take away what people view as the life and appeal of religion. The issue is what to replace tradition with.
- B. The life of Christianity is the Christian life.
1. To us in the United States, the focus of religion is Lord's Day services. We meet in a plain building for an hour or two and then may or may not come back in the afternoon. This may not give life to Christianity for us and it certainly will seem rather boring to Orthodox people.
 2. We must replace the gold appointments and the complex rituals of Orthodoxy with something vital. Their daily fasts that they stop because we do not teach the regular need to fast will leave them with an empty feeling about their new religion.
 3. We may wonder why they cling to their traditions after they become Christians. Perhaps the answer is that Christianity, the way we live and practice it, is perceived by Orthodox people as either lifeless or without daily and visible symbols.
 4. But we can appeal to their sense of daily involvement in their religion by teaching the beauty of the Christian life, Christian disciplines such as reading, meditation, prayer, fasting, and regular evangelism.
 - a. Show them that traditions form a dead religion because traditions do not give the power to change life. Traditions are formalities that do not change character.
 - b. The power of the Christian life is that we gain meaning and satisfaction from the daily imitation of Jesus.
 - c. We can present the Christian life as the exciting and motivating attraction of true Christianity.
 - d. The problem is that we are not accustomed to presenting Christianity in this way in the United States.

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- e. To replace the life that traditions give religion we will have to leave them with more than worship on Sunday and weekly Bible study for the sake of mere knowledge.

IV. Lack of a moral system and the power to overcome moral problems.

A. Our normal approach to moral problems.

1. The approach we take in our culture to morality is to address specific moral issues with argumentation and Scriptures.
2. This method may be somewhat effective in our society because, at least in the past, we all started from some of the same presuppositions and moral foundations (Lately, of course, this fact is becoming less and less descriptive of our moral dilemma.)

B. The cultural background of the Russian moral dilemma.

1. The church confined its practice to rituals and ceremonies with moral teaching limited to the ten commandments. Similar to the Catholic church, in the Orthodox church there was little understanding of how Christianity might provide a moral system that could encompass all of life.
2. The communist moral system seemed to revolve around one central principle: The right is whatever can further the power of the state (Supposed principles such as the equality of human beings, a classless society, were never seriously pursued because communism developed a huge bureaucracy of specially privileged demagogues.) Any other moral principle was subjugated to this primary one.
3. Of course, communism lacked sufficient grounds for developing an adequate moral system. Totalitarianism cannot produce moral principles because, as a system of government, it is immoral.
4. The scientific materialism of communism left no room for moral choice. Cause and effect determinism applied to all aspects of life and excluded the possibility of choice.
5. Therefore, in Russia we are dealing with a people who are not certain how to make moral decisions or do not know how to

reason about morality (This moral confusion is quickly becoming descriptive of the United States too.)

6. Without a moral system there is no energy to overcome moral problems that threaten to destroy society.

C. Teaching Christianity in a morally corrupt society.

1. More than just addressing certain moral issues, we need to show why Christianity is a superior system of morality.

- a. Christian morality is based on the absolute standard of the Creator of the universe.

- b. Christian morality respects the value of the individual human being and offers to God the honor He deserves as man's Creator.

2. Merely addressing certain moral issues such as drinking or adultery by simply stating such things are wrong is inadequate; we need to show people how to change and do what is morally right.

- a. Instead of just stating drinking is wrong, we must show how to overcome drinking. It is a habit that is not necessarily given up after simply listening to a declaration of its evil.

- b. Instead of just stating that adultery is wrong, we will have to show how Christianity can help us live a satisfying and peaceful married life.

- c. The need for showing people the process of change is due to the fact there is no social mechanism to help them change as there is in the United States (Unfortunately, we rely on this mechanism.)

3. In Christianity we have motivation for living a moral life, whereas in communism behavior seems to depend on survival of the fittest.

4. Presenting true Christianity as the best moral system could become the major thrust and appeal of our message. Instead of emphasizing the restoration of Christian doctrine as the primary message, we could also present the moral superiority of Christianity as equally primary.

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- a. After all the Russian Orthodox church is also morally bankrupt as well as doctrinally corrupt (Comparable to traditional Catholicism in the United States and Latin countries with its lack of moral power.)
- b. The Mormon church in the United States makes its appeal based on family values although its distinctive message is supposedly the impossibility of knowing the truth without a present day prophet.
- c. We are accustomed to presenting the true church in contrast to denominations, but now we can present the moral truth of true Christianity in contrast to the moral corruption of false religion.

V. A different restoration plea.

- A. The distinctive plea of the church of Christ in the United States has been the restoration of New Testament Christianity.
 1. Because of the multiplicity of religious organizations (perhaps 1,000 that claim allegiance to Christ), unity on the basis of restored New Testament Christianity has appeal.
 2. Even here we have problems convincing people that restoration is possible, but in an optimistic society with the religious freedom that we have, unity on the basis of New Testament Christianity is imaginable.
- B. The restoration plea in Russia must take a slightly different approach.
 1. The same religious division is not so apparent in Russia since there are not so many different religious denominations. Unity between all Christians is not imaginable because the Russia Orthodox church presents an invincible edifice of ancient tradition.
 2. Unity among people and cultures (instead of religions) through New Testament Christianity is a more imaginable plea.
 - a. Russians view societies as very different with little to communicate between them. However, if we can present Christianity as the very means to unite people based on

their common needs and the only true solution to these needs, then restoration will make sense.

- b. What divides religions is what culture has done to religions. Now we need to restore Christianity to rid it of cultural symbols in order to unite people together. Original New Testament Christianity did not have culturally defined laws and traditions.
 - c. The distinction between baptist and Christian is not so important to the Russian as the distinction between American and Russian.
3. Also, from another standpoint, New Testament Christianity is appealing because of the corruption and hypocrisy of the status quo. We can present the simplicity of New Testament Christianity as a welcome alternative to the corruption of priestly domination. Priests in the Orthodox church rule not out of respect, but rather out of intimidation.
4. Therefore, restoration is a relevant plea, but for different reasons.

VI. A responsible apologetic of Christianity.

A. The lack of a Christian apologetic in Russian religious culture.

- 1. The Russian Orthodox church, because of its totalitarian domination and traditional roots, has not needed to present a rational defense of Christianity.
- 2. Now Orthodox worshipers accept their religion out of faith in the tradition. Tradition is the standard of truth. By virtue of time it becomes the truth.
 - a. The problem is that they are evaluating truth in an entirely different manner than we do. Tradition is the final test. They are using "tradition" as synonym for "truth."
 - b. The clergy of the church were never known for their theological or rational sophistication. Monasteries were not intellectual enclaves but instead they were way stations for pilgrims.

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3. The communist persecution of the church used force rather than logic to defend its terrible purges.
4. Now, unbelievers, brainwashed by an atheistic worldview, have for so long assumed that religion is for the foolish peasant and is nothing more than a fairy tale. The Russian Orthodox church is unprepared to give an apologetic. We have the tremendous opportunity to present Christianity as a intellectually defensible belief.
5. The need for an apologetic depends on the cultural history of a people. In the Hispanic communities in California, for instance, there is little need for apologetics and the subject is boring because most people already believe (There are always exceptions within a culture, people who do not fit in with the majority.)

B. Presenting a responsible apologetic.

1. Preachers ought to prepare themselves to give a defense of the existence of God, of the character of God, the deity of Jesus, the reliability of the Bible, and the gospel.
2. An apologetic in Russia needs to include subjects related to comparative religion. Muslims and Jews make up a large percentage of the population. In addition eastern religions have made some inroads into the better educated levels of society. Eastern religion appeals to people because of its loose organization without hierarchy and its nebulous concept of god as a fatalistic force instead of a person. Eastern religion shares in common with Marxism the escape to ideals that have nothing to do with reality.
3. We must present the study of apologetics in such a manner as to invite the audience to reason. They perhaps have not reasoned before in an open and honest way about Christianity. They deserve, and Christianity deserves, a responsible apologetic.

VII. Restoring the dignity of man.

A. Materialism has produced fatalism.

1. Communism is based on a materialistic view of man, rejecting the existence of the soul.

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2. Communism mistakenly thought that rejecting the "myth" of man's soul would lead to great social progress.
 3. However, a worldview that excludes the existence of man's soul produces an expendable view of man. The individual becomes expendable for the good of society's "soul." Under communism individual life had no value. Individuals were slaves to the progress of society. Countless multitudes died laboring in unbearable conditions to build factories, mine resources, and produce goods.
 4. Fatalism, a mindset that surrenders to what seems to be the inevitable, was the natural result of materialism and its corollary of determinism.
 5. The corruption, arrogance, and self-centeredness that was part and parcel of communism produced a desperate, cynical view of man.
 6. On one level communism glorified the technical accomplishments and capabilities of man, but on the other hand it had no power to solve the moral corruption in human beings.
 7. In the United States society has an arrogant view of man's capabilities and is quickly denying the moral basis that has tempered this arrogance.
- B. The message of Christianity can restore the true dignity of man.
1. Man does have a soul and therefore has eternal significance.
 2. The dignity of man is dependent on the power and glory of the Creator. There is no room for arrogance. To possess dignity man must understand his relationship to the Creator.
- C. People need hope against fatalism.
1. Our message must include meaning and purpose in life that can give people personal significance as Christians, although their political or economic condition may not improve.
 2. We must give them something to live for now. Christians need to see that they can have moral influence on individuals even though they may not have social power.

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3. So members of the church can have evangelistic enthusiasm once they understand that society changes as individuals change. They can leave their mark on society as they leave their mark on individuals.

Conclusion

The responsibility of the preacher in delivering his message is to break through the cultural barriers so that the truth can save. For this reason the preacher must understand the culture of the society in which he is working to anticipate how a particular culture will receive the message. 753 Saucito Ave., Salinas, California 93906.

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Remarriage—Guilty and Innocent Party Considerations

by Jerry Cutler

The title of my topic gives the general direction my discourse is to take. However, more specifically, I have been asked to address three points:

1. Does the innocent party of a divorce have any alternatives for remarriage if their spouse divorces them for frivolous reasons?
2. Is it permissible for a Christian to go before the leadership of a congregation and scripturally "put away" their spouse, even after they are divorced according to the laws of the land, possibly for other reasons?
3. Can the guilty party in a divorce ever scripturally remarry?

By way of introduction, we must first say a word concerning the sacredness of marriage and the sinfulness of divorce.

Marriage is a sacred institution designed by God Himself. Believing this, we must also acknowledge that God has decreed what it takes to have a sacred marriage. Both male and female were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), indicating the spiritual nature of man. The first man and woman became husband and wife (Gen. 2:18-25), and Jesus, when discussing the divorce issue with the Pharisees, referred them all the way back to the beginning, quoting to them from Genesis. Three things are apparent from the beginning account.

1. Marriage is to be **PERMANENT**. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother . . ."
2. Marriage involves **COMMITMENT**. The man was to "cleave to his wife . . ."
3. Marriage involves a **FLESHLY TIE**. "The two shall be one flesh."

Jesus' personal comment concerning the Genesis account was: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). Marriage in-

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volves a formal, legal tie that binds together a consenting man and a consenting woman, with God joining them together.

Conversely, divorce involves the destruction of the sacred institution of marriage. Divorce is ugly and always involves sin in some way. Various explanations have been given concerning Malachi 2:14-16, but it still says that God "hateth putting away." They had broken a covenant which God had witnessed when they put away "the wife of their youth." From antiquity, there have been divorces, and Jesus himself spoke of "a writing of divorcement" (Mt. 5:31). A divorce involves the severing of the formal, or legal tie, and may not necessarily be a God-approved action.

Thus, a Christian marriage is more than a civil contract. In a Christian marriage two are joined to one another and at the same time to the law of God.

We hope that our brief definitions and explanations will help us understand the subject at hand.

1. Does the innocent party of a divorce have any alternatives for remarriage if their spouse divorces them for frivolous reasons?

Case number one. This question pre-supposes a guilty party. This is indicated in the "innocent party" being put away. First, the guilty party cannot initiate a God-approved divorce. One cannot scripturally divorce one's spouse for "frivolous reasons," and neither can one divorce one's spouse if one commits adultery (Mt. 19:9). There are both God-approved marriage and God-approved divorces. Of course, in the case of where one divorces one's spouse for frivolous reasons, one must remain unmarried (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Lk. 16:18; Mk. 10:11-12; Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11). Under the conditions outlined, neither can the one put away for "frivolous reasons" remarry. Sometimes celibacy is bound upon the innocent party also. For one who puts away his spouse for "frivolous reasons," Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

The question though is, what is the scriptural position of the innocent spouse when the guilty, or adulterous, party in a marriage gets the divorce, rather than the innocent? The conclusion is: God did not give the guilty spouse that *right* to begin with. All options lie at the feet of the innocent spouse, and the guilty party can never do anything that will

take away these rights. What are the innocent party's alternatives? They can exercise their scriptural rights at their discretion.

Case number two. Another occasion that I can think of that involves an innocent party being put away for "frivolous reasons," is the case of where a Christian is put away by an unbelieving spouse. The Apostle Paul deals with such a case in 1 Corinthians 7:15. The verse says: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." In this verse, the word "depart" refers to divorce. This is true also of verses 10-11 (Thayer, p. 674). As for the word "bondage," it literally means "to enslave, subject" (Bauer, p. 206). "Bondage" means "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage" (Thayer, p. 158). The lexicons say that "bondage" is used as a figure of speech in 1 Corinthians 7:15. Thayer, p. 158, comments: "b. metaphor to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity, in some matter, 1 Corinthians 7:15." This is also true of 1 Corinthians 9:19. Bauer also lists bondage in 1 Corinthians 7:15 as a figure of speech.

In short, "bondage" in 1 Corinthians 7:15 refers to the marriage itself. The binding force is the "constraint of law." Thus, if the unbeliever divorces the Christian, the Christian becomes free from the marriage, as free as if they had never been married. They are as free as a slave released by his master.

However, this can only be applied "to such cases." It cannot be applied to Christians married to Christians (1 Cor. 7:10-11). A Christian should not initiate a divorce, except in a case of where adultery is involved (Mt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10-13).

In the Greek, the rendering of "in such cases" is simply "in the such." But, such what? In order to finish the sentence, the word "cases" is supplied by the translators. Thayer defines "such" to mean "such as this, of this kind or sort, with the article one who is such a character, such a one - 1 Cor. 7:15." Bauer defines the word: "In such cases, under such circumstances." Most translations agree with Bauer's definition.

The word "such" in the Greek may be either neuter or masculine. Where this is true, the text must, where possible, determine the gender. Only neuter will work here, for a masculine usage would contradict the text. The text involves both a brother and a sister.

Paul is giving information on how to handle a *special case*; namely, one involving a Christian being divorced by an unbeliever. In *such cases* a

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brother or a sister is not under the bondage of the law, or they are free from the marriage.

2. Is it permissible for a Christian to go before the leadership of a congregation and scripturally "put away" their spouse, even after they are divorced according to the laws of the land, possibly for other reasons.

This question is similar to the first one. Simply, it involves a Christian divorced by civil law for something less than adultery. It infers that at sometime the Christian's spouse commits adultery, either before or after the divorce. Can the Christian now go before the church and put away their spouse? Moreover, the question pre-supposes that no adultery is ever involved as far as the Christian is concerned. There would be no need for the Christian to go before the leadership of the congregation and "put away" their spouse at a later date, if there had been.

What is the innocent Christian to do in such a case? First, I am not aware of any state in America at this time that allows divorce for adultery. The laws exist. They are seldom used. So, even in cases of where a spouse admits adultery, or it can be proved, the divorce is granted for a more general reason. Usually, in the church, it is tacitly understood that the spouse is being put away for adultery.

However, no civil law can ever suspend a law of God. When the two laws come into conflict, we all know which law comes first (Acts 5:29). It is impossible to create a situation in which a Christian cannot exercise their scriptural rights.

In the above question, the inferred guilty party had no scriptural right to get a divorce to begin with. In fact, the guilty party has no scriptural rights at all.

Inasmuch as civil law does not generally allow divorce for adultery, what can the innocent Christian do? They can take it to the church. It is preferable to state the situation in writing. This eliminates the possibility of a misunderstanding in the future. The innocent Christian should explain that their spouse has committed adultery and that they are putting them away for that adultery. The church might even consider making up a letter of divorcement to be used by Christians whose spouses have committed adultery. Jesus Himself spoke of a writing of divorcement. Remember that civil law only determines what a marriage is to a certain point. The guilty party may divorce and remarry according to civil law, but not according to God's law. The same is true with divorce. Civil law

allows divorce for many reasons. God's law allows a Christian to divorce for one reason only. The final word for Christians is found in God's Word, and when a Christian guilty of adultery divorces their spouse, they violate God's law.

There is nothing that the guilty spouse can do that will take away the God-given rights of the innocent. There are no scriptural limbos in marriage, created by the guilty party. God protects His children.

In the case of where a Christian divorces his spouse and no adultery has been committed, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 must be observed. If such a situation develops, and no adultery is committed, then the Christian who got the divorce caused their spouse to commit adultery. Jesus said: "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, *causeth her to commit adultery*: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Mt. 5:32).

If both Christians desired a divorce to begin with, and later one commits adultery, then both erred in getting a divorce, but both did not err in committing adultery. Remember, also, no Christian has the right to commit adultery, no matter how wronged they may have been in other ways.

The question at hand is answered by saying that a Christian who has not committed adultery, may go before the church and put away their spouse.

3. Can a guilty party in a divorce ever scripturally remarry?

To state it another way, may a Christian guilty of adultery, and put away for that adultery, ever remarry? First, does not that which frees the one free the other? It does, but this does not really address the issue. Both are *free from the marriage*. If this were not true, then not even the innocent spouse could remarry without adulterating the previous marriage. There are no half-marriages. In our definition, we found marriage had a civil or legal tie, and a fleshly tie. God joins two Christians in marriage when both ties exist. The severing of the legal tie by divorce does not destroy the marriage in the sight of God (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Whoever marries such a divorced person commits adultery (Mt. 5:32). Man cannot put asunder what God has joined together. If, conversely, one spouse commits adultery and no divorce has taken place, the marriage still exists. What binds two in marriage has not been completely severed. If the innocent spouse puts away their spouse after adultery

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takes place, then the marriage ceases to exist. Both spouses are free from the marriage, but *only the innocent is free to remarry*.

Marriage is more than a civil contract. Two Christians are bound to each other and to the law of God. It has been rightly said: "God planned marriage, established its bounds, and bestowed the state of marriage as a right given by Him to certain individuals upon meeting certain conditions." For instance, divorce may free one from the civil contract, but not from the law of God.

It has also been said: "The right to marry, which God bestows on the human race (Gen. 2:18-24; 1 Corinthians 7:28), is a contingent right, that is, it is dependent on certain conditions." That is the reason why some men and women must remain unmarried, although divorced (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

This brings us to the question of rights. Who has a scriptural right to divorce and to remarry? The one guilty of adultery does not have the right to remarry because he does not have the God-given cause that bestows that right.

For the sinner, repentance does not mean restoration. Esau sold his birthright, a right given him by reason of him being the firstborn. He acted in a way that caused him to lose his birthright, and nothing could be done to regain it (Heb. 12:14-17). Many in Israel lost their right to enter Canaan because of their rebellion against God. In society, felons lose certain rights that can never be regained, even though they pay every debt they owe to society. We see how a felon can be both free and not free.

One cannot remarry if put away for trivial reasons. Why then should one contend one guilty of the greater sin, adultery, can remarry?

Simply stated: First, the right to put away (divorce) is not given to one guilty of adultery. Second, the cause (fornication) for remarriage is not given to one guilty of adultery. Third, anyone who marries one put away commits adultery. Jesus said, "Whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mt. 19:9). You might notice that in the Greek, in Matthew 19:9, the definite article is omitted in the second clause. This means that when one marries *any* put away person, one commits adultery. *Only the innocent* can put away their spouse. Remember, also, one joined to a harlot becomes one body with the harlot, "For two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (1 Cor. 6:16). Therefore, "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18).

One becomes guilty of harlotry when one joins oneself to a harlot. Likewise, whoever marries one divorced for adultery commits adultery.

We must never contend that one guilty of fornication, and put away for that fornication, is as free to remarry as the innocent spouse. It is rightly contended that "The 'except for fornication' phrase has little or no significance if the guilty party can emerge from the divorce with the same freedom to remarry that the innocent one is granted." *It makes no sense to contend one cannot remarry if put away for less than adultery, but can remarry, if put away for adultery, after due repentance.*

Thus, in considering the issue at hand, we must never contend that because two Christians are free from each other that they are free also to remarry. The reason: We are never free from the law of God, and whether either Christian can remarry again depends upon that law.

In conclusion: One put away for fornication is as free from *the marriage* as the one who put them away. But *only* the innocent spouse has a right to divorce and to remarry. Rt. 1 Box 139, Crescent, Oklahoma 73028.

The Prophecy of Daniel

by Doug Edwards

The book of Daniel opens with the children of Israel suffering through Babylonian captivity. No doubt they must have wondered why all of these problems had come upon them. The Jews were well aware of the promises made to them by God. They knew, for instance, that God had promised them a Messiah who would rule over them. So they carefully studied the Messianic promises and looked forward to this wonderful time of His rule. But God also warned them they would be punished for their sins (Dt. 28:15-68; Ps. 89:28-37). They seemed to overlook this part of God's promise. As a result they could not understand their captivity in Babylon.

There would be a tendency to think while in bondage that God had forgotten His people. After all, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the people scattered throughout the known world, the monarchy, and the kingship under David and his descendants had apparently ended. To make matters worse, they were now under Gentile control. It would be natural for them to think that God had deserted them. Daniel, however, tells the Jews that everything that is happening to them is all according to God's dealings. He encourages the Jews with these thoughts:

- God has not forgotten us, but first He is punishing us for sin, as He repeatedly told us He would.
- When we acknowledge our sins, we will be returned back to our homeland.
- There, the kingdom will be given back to us and David will again rule over us.
- We will no longer be under Gentile control, but under the control of Messiah.

The Time Span

In order to understand Daniel, we must determine the time span that it covers. Does Daniel deal with prophecies describing events that have already happened or are the prophecies still to be fulfilled in our future? It is my understanding that Daniel deals with the last days of Old Testament history and the beginning of the New Testament. Daniel par-

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ticularly deals with the last days of the Jewish nation and, as a result, will overlap with the first years of Christianity. It does not deal with a future Millennial reign of Christ on earth. It does not even deal with our future. The context proves this point to be true in several places.

There are certain key expressions that occur regularly throughout Daniel that help us to understand the time span of the book. One such expression is "latter days," or its equivalent, "time of the end." Do not automatically assume these expressions always refer to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. Quite often, this expression refers to the last days of a particular nation and some impending judgment to come upon it. When the phrase "latter days" is used in reference to the Jews as a nation it refers to a period of time involving the closing days of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. For instance, Jacob called his sons to himself and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. 49:1 KJV). A careful study of the rest of the chapter reveals that Jacob has in mind events that deal with the twelve tribes of Israel and not something in our future. Likewise, Moses says, "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands" (Dt. 31:29). Again, the context shows us that Moses refers to the last days of the Jewish nation and not to some future event.

A second expression that occurs throughout Daniel that helps us to understand the time span is the phrase "your people" or some other equivalent. The messengers sent to Daniel to interpret his visions quite often use this phrase. This phrase obviously refers to the Jews, as Daniel was a Jew. It does not refer to the Gentiles, or some other group in our future.

Please note the following references to a time span in Daniel and how they correspond to the meanings we have placed upon them:

2:28 "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy head are these" (KJV).

8:17 "As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

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8:19 "He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end."

9:24 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

10:14 "Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.

12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

12:7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

12:9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

In all of these passages there is a consistency that must be noted. Daniel talks of the Jews and their last days. He is not talking about events in our future. Thus it becomes a mistake to take Daniel out of its historic context and speculate on all of the unfulfilled prophecies of the book.

There are five prophetic visions recorded in Daniel, one was given to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar and the other four to Daniel. At this point I would like to summarize each one in order to illustrate how each falls into the time span I have just suggested.

Daniel 2

Of all of the prophecies of Daniel, we are most familiar with the one found in chapter two. King Nebuchadnezzar had a frightening dream that he wanted his magicians and wise men to tell him about. He not only wanted them to interpret the dream but also tell him what the

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dream actually was. When they could not tell him what the dream was, he threatened to put all of the wise men and magicians in his kingdom to death (2:1-13). Daniel heard of the king's harsh plans, and with God's help, interpreted the dream for him.

Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar the actual details of his dream in 2:31-35. The king saw a large statue that was enormous and dazzling in appearance. The head was made of pure gold, the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron (with its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay). Then a rock, that was cut without human hands out of a mountain, smashed the statue, and the statue became like chaff on the threshing floor and was blown away. The rock became a huge mountain that filled the whole earth.

We are fortunate that Daniel interprets the dream for us. He says:

This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. . . . In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever (Dan. 2:36-40, 44)

Daniel tells of four world empires that will arise, with Babylon being the first. The other three empires are Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. It is during the time of this fourth empire that God's kingdom will be established. Daniel describes this kingdom as being a rock that grows into the huge mountain. Three points are made about this rock. First, it is not cut out by human hands. This point emphasizes the divine origin of the kingdom. It does not come from man, but from God. Second, the rock smashes the statue. This point simply illustrates the fact that the kingdom of God is more powerful than human kingdoms. Surely, no one would say that kingdoms such as the United States, the former Soviet Union, or even ancient Rome are more powerful than God's kingdom. Third, the rock becomes a huge mountain and fills the earth. In this tig-

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ure, Daniel merely tells us the reign of the Messiah is universal (Mt. 28:18; Psa. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Cor. 15:24-26).

When did the kingdom of God finds its fulfillment? We understand this kingdom to be the one that Jesus, during His ministry, promised to establish, and said was very near (Mk. 1:14-15, 9:1). It was to be spiritual in nature (Jn. 18:36). This kingdom was established on the day of Pentecost, after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2), and from that time on it was spoken of as being an already existing entity (Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9).

Why would this dream be given to a Gentile if it deals with the last days of the Jewish nation? It served as a reminder to the Jews that no matter how dark they might think the future to be, God's plans would emerge victorious over the plans of men. God would use the powers of the world to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah's kingdom.

A proper understanding of this first vision is crucial to understanding the other visions in this book. The other visions will basically cover the same time span as this one, and yet they will also serve to give additional information to this first vision. When we understand from Daniel 2 that this vision refers to the last days of the Jewish nation and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom during the first century, then we will be able to rightly divide the remaining visions of the book.

Daniel 7

Daniel's vision in chapter 7 pictures four different beasts rising up out of the sea (7:3-8). He says:

Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. "The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it." And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh!" After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever

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was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully (Dan. 7:3-8).

There is a judgment scene then described, which deals with the fourth beast (7:9-12), and then the establishment of the Messianic kingdom is again mentioned (7:13-14). Concerning this kingdom Daniel writes:

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

There are several parallel points between the visions in chapter 2 and chapter 7. The four beasts parallel with the four parts of the statue. The lion corresponds to the golden head, which is Babylon. The bear corresponds to the silver chest and arms, which is Medo-Persia. The leopard corresponds to the brass belly and thighs, which is Greece. The terrifying beast corresponds to the iron legs, which is Rome. Even God's kingdom in chapter two corresponds with the kingdom in chapter 7.

There are some additional pieces of information given in chapter seven that are not found in chapter 2. The fourth beast is said to have ten horns and these horns represent ten kings. The messenger sent to tell Daniel the meaning of the dream tells him, "The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom" (7:24). These kings are ones who will arise within the Roman Empire. The messenger continues, "After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings" (7:24). The identity of this king, also described as a little horn (7:8), is probably the most difficult symbol in Daniel to determine. Possible explanations as to his identity include the Syrian ruler Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes, some Roman emperor of the first century such as Nero or Domitian, the Pope, or the Antichrist of premillennialism. Of the four major interpretations, the belief that the little horn is one of the Roman emperors fits the historical context better. The vision tells us that persecution would

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come upon God's people (7:21), and persecutions during the reigns of both Nero and Domitian in first century show this to be true.

Daniel 8

The vision of chapter 8 deals with important events that would take place during the Medo-Persian and Grecian kingdoms, which parallel with the second and third beasts of chapter 7 and the silver and brass parts of the image in chapter 2. We must continue to remember that Daniel is dealing with the last days of the Jewish nation.

Daniel first sees a ram with two horns standing by a canal. One of the horns grew longer, and he watched as the ram charged toward the west, the north, and the south. No other animals could withstand the attack of this ram (vv. 3-4). While he was thinking about this ram, a goat, with a large horn between his eyes, suddenly appeared coming from the west. This goat attacked the ram and trampled him to death. The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off and four smaller horns grew in its place (vv. 5-8).

Out of one of these four horns came another horn that began to grow until it reached the Beautiful land. Daniel describes this horn doing great damage in the Beautiful land (Israel), such as persecuting God's people, setting itself to be as great as the Prince of host, taking away the daily sacrifice, and desecrating the temple (vv. 9-12). Someone then asks in the vision, "How long will it take for this vision of destruction to be fulfilled?" The answer comes back, "It will take 2,300 days and then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated" (vv. 13-14).

The angel Gabriel was sent to tell Daniel the meaning of this vision. He said:

The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will

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destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power (vv. 20-25).

This vision supplies additional revelation concerning important events to affect the Jews during the Grecian kingdom. The large horn on goat represented its first king, which would be Alexander the Great. He conquered the known world of his day and died at the young age of 33. After his death, his kingdom was divided into four parts that would be ruled over by four of his generals. Out of one of these four parts of his divided kingdom would come a king that would bring great persecution upon the Jewish people. That king would prove to be Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes. He ruled over the Seleucid kingdom (Syria) during the second century B.C.

Daniel foresees the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes because he was such a prominent enemy of the Jews during their last days. While some of the Gentile rulers before him may have been cruel, they all allowed the Jews to continue in their religion. This practice of freedom of religion stopped when he came into power. When he came to Jerusalem he slaughtered thousands of its inhabitants and robbed the temple of its treasures. He tried to stop the Jewish worship and introduce in its place the worship of the Greek gods and the Greek manner of living called Hellenism. All kinds of abominations were sacrificed upon the altar, and images were brought into the temple. Gross immorality was practiced in the holy places. His evil behavior brought about the Maccabean revolt that began in 167 B.C. This revolt succeeded in causing him to lose his power over the Jews, and they reconsecrated their temple to God on December 25, 164 B. C.

Daniel 9

Daniel lived a very long time in Babylon. In fact, he lived throughout the reign of the Babylonians into the reign of the Medes. In the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel noticed that a promise was made in the book of Jeremiah that the captivity of the Jews would last 70 years (29:10-12). Daniel knew that this 70 year period was about up so he began to pray to God in behalf of Israel. He was well aware that in order for the people to return back to Palestine there had to be repentance on their part (Dt. 30:1-4). So Daniel intercedes to God in behalf of the Jews. This chapter illustrates the great power that is found in the prayer of a righteous man (Jas. 5:16).

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Even as Daniel prayed, God sent Gabriel with an answer. The angel tells Daniel:

Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: war will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (9:24-27).

During a period of 70 weeks or "sevens" three important events will take place. First, a command to rebuild and restore Jerusalem will be given. It is, of course, implied in these words that the return of the Jews from Babylon captivity will take place during this time. Second, the Messiah will appear and perform His wonderful work (v. 24). Daniel also foretells the death of the Messiah. Third, many of the Jews will be disobedient to God and will reject the Messiah. These disobedient Jews are to be punished by God in the destruction of Jerusalem (vv. 26-27). This destruction of the temple and Jerusalem will bring about the end of the Jewish commonwealth.

It should be noted that all of these events take place during the general time span of the other prophecies in Daniel. There is an evident harmony between all of these visions. The rebuilding of Jerusalem took place during Medo-Persian kingdom and the appearance of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem took place during the Roman kingdom. It should also be noted that all three of these events are important contributing parts in the great scheme of redemption.

Daniel 11 and 12

In chapters 11 and 12 a vision occurs that is so correct in minor details that liberal scholars have decided that some unknown Jew (not Daniel)

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wrote these things after they had happened. Their motive in attributing this work to an unknown Jew is because of their rejection of predictive prophecy.

An angel comes to Daniel with a new vision. He tells Daniel, "Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come" (10:14). We will again see that this vision deals with the same time span as the others, although it will give us new information about that time. Because of the length of the vision I will try to briefly summarize it.

- Verse 2—Four Persian kings that are to arise are noticed.
- Verses 3-4—Daniel briefly repeats the rise of the Grecian kingdom under Alexander the Great, his death, the distribution of his kingdom to his four generals.
- Verses 5-20—These verses describe in amazing detail the battles between the kings of Egypt and Syria. They are here described as the kings of the South and the kings of the North. After Alexander's death, one of his generals (Ptolemy) took over Egypt. He and his descendants are referred to as the king of the South. Another one of Alexander's generals (Seleucus) founded the Seleucid kingdom (Syria). He and his descendants are then referred to as the king of the North. Daniel describes many of the conflicts between these kings that will cover almost two hundred years. The reason for their place in these visions lies within the fact that Palestine is located in the middle of these two countries, so their history will also involve the Jews.
- Verses 21-35—The vision now turns its focus on the Seleucid king Antiochus Ephiphanes (we were introduced to him back in chapter 8). We are again told that he will invade the Jews and cause terrible suffering and desecration of the temple.
- Verses 36-45—In this section the vision turns its attention to the Romans. Some scholars believe verse 40 to refer to the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. where the Romans under Octavian defeated the Egyptians under Marc Antony and Cleopatra. It is also fact that the Romans invaded Palestine during this period (v. 41).

There is no break between chapters 11 and 12, so the vision continues into chapter 12. The angel says, "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of dis-

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trass such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered” (v. 1). Our understanding of chapter 12 centers around what we will do with the phrase “at that time.” By keeping the phrase within its context we can see that it refers back to the time of the Romans in the last part of chapter 11. It is not referring to some point in our future. We again see the words “your people” indicating that the vision continues to deal with the Jews. This verse also tells us of a terrible distress to come upon the Jews during this time. No doubt this reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem with identical words to Daniel by saying, “For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again” (Mt. 24:21).

In verse 2 the angel says, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” Our first inclination is to think that Daniel has jumped thousands of years into the future to discuss the final resurrection. However, we must continue to remember the historical context and the fact that the immediate context is governed by the phrase “at that time.” This resurrection must be one that is figurative rather than literal. This same figure is used in Ezekiel 37:12-13 to refer to the Jews’ redemption from Babylonian captivity. When the Messiah (Jesus) appeared, established His kingdom, and gained universal dominion (Dan. 2:37, 7:13-14), the Jewish nation was redeemed from foreign dominion. In a figurative way they were raised from the grave of Gentile dominion. For some this figurative resurrection would mean eternal life because they would place their trust in the Messiah, but for others it would mean everlasting punishment because they rejected Christ.

A question is then asked in verse 6 as to how long it will be before these astonishing things are fulfilled. The answer is given in verse 7, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.” The vision continues to describe the “holy people” (Jews) and when their power will finally be broken. The reference again is to destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While the Law of Moses ended with the death of Jesus on the cross (Col. 2:14), the Jewish commonwealth with its temple worship continued until A.D. 70 when the Romans under Titus destroyed the city and the temple, murdered thousands, and carried off many into captivity. Thus we see that this vision fits into the same time span as do all of the other visions. The book of Daniel thus deals with the

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last days of the Jewish nation, and so it overlaps with the early years of the Christian age.

When God Is In Charge

By way of conclusion, allow me to say that Daniel vividly shows how great our God is. He is able to control all nations to bring about His will. He can direct even the smallest details within our world to accomplish His purposes. He carefully orchestrated the destinies of nations for hundreds of years to bring in the Messiah and His kingdom at just the right time. What a consolation that should be to us! If God can do so many great things throughout history, surely He can take interest in each of us and assist us in living the Christian life.

Suggested Readings

There are literally hundreds of books that deal with the prophecy of Daniel. I will now list just a few that I have used as suggested readings. Keep in mind that some of the authors are Premillennial and their books push that theory. We must accept the words of commentators only when their thoughts are in harmony with the Scriptures.

The Prophecy of Daniel by Edward J. Young, Erdmans Publishing Company.

The Message of Daniel by Ronald S. Wallace, The Bible Speaks Today series, Inter-Varsity Press.

A Textual Study of the Book of Daniel by Don Simpson, Western Christian Foundation, Inc.

Daniel by Paul T. Butler, College Press.

A Commentary on Daniel by Leon Wood, Zondervan Publishing House.

The Book of Daniel by Jim McGuigan, Montex Publishing Company.

Rt. 1 Box 201C, Depauw, Indiana 47115.

Counseling Families In Crisis

by Billy Orten

I am honored to be asked to present this subject, but I feel very inadequate to the task. This is a topic that some people spend at least four years preparing themselves to master this work. It is not reasonable to assume that in forty-five minutes we can do very much.

In the opening paragraph of his book **Toward More Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy**, Dr. George W. Truax makes a statement that has stuck with me through the years. Dr. Truax was Professor of Psychology at the University of Arkansas at the time I was working toward a degree in School Guidance and Counseling. His book was the text for a class on counseling techniques. Dr. Truax states in the opening paragraph of this book: "The sum total of the results of all counseling is zero." This was quite a startling statement to me, especially as I was preparing for a career in that field. Dr. Truax goes to explain his statement by saying, "While there are some counselors or therapists who are having a positive effect on their clients for good, there are also as many who are having a negative effect of harm on their clients." Some therapists are doing good and some are actually doing harm to the people they purport to be helping. Thus, when it is all added up, he says, the sum total of all counseling is zero.

That statement was not very encouraging to me, and it has made me very cautious about practicing the art of counseling. We all know people who have been helped by counseling, especially if the counselor was a Christian. On the other hand, we have sometimes strongly suspected that some Christians who were having problems have been harmed by a non-believing therapist, who tried to place the cause of their conflict on their faith and some of the fundamental doctrines that they believe in Christ Jesus.

I think Dr. Truax was probably right when he said that the sum total of all counseling is zero. But all preachers are called upon at times to counsel with people in distress. There is no way to avoid it. Christians have problems like everyone else. Who other than the preacher should these people be able to go to for help? We as gospel preachers should be able to give comfort, strength and guidance to these people, because we have the Word of God as our textbook.

Counseling

I offer you as qualifications for this topic, not formal education; but forty-six years of preaching the gospel; thirty-three years of living and working in the same area, where we have had to face crises of many kinds; the suggestions of my brother, Dr. James Orten.

The first question tonight, and I think the one we shall spend most of our time dealing with, is "What are the qualifications for counseling with people in crises?" Most of us feel inadequate when we are called upon to help someone with a problem. Yet, we must try, for love demands it. In deciding the question of competence in counseling it is important to look at the biblical qualifications for counselors. I ask you now to turn to Romans 15:14.

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

The word "admonish" comes from the Greek *nouthetia*, which means "to put in mind, to instruct, to comfort, to counsel." The William's Translation uses the word "counsel" instead of "admonish." It reads: "As far as I am concerned, my brethren, I am convinced that you especially are abounding in the highest goodness, richly supplied with all knowledge, and competent to counsel one another." Notice that Paul said "competent to counsel one another." Paul sets forth "goodness" and "knowledge" as two qualifications for competence in counseling. Paul recognizes that any Christian can engage in counseling as long as he possesses the qualifications of goodness and knowledge. But notice also that Paul says these two qualifications must be present in large measures. Note the expression "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge." As William's Translation says, "abounding in the highest goodness, and richly supplied with all knowledge." So knowledge and goodness—information and the desire to help—equip a person to counsel.

Counseling involves imparting information or giving advice, but this must be combined with a genuine concern for the welfare of that individual. Goodness embraces both involvement and empathy for the other person. The two qualifications that Paul lists are: (1) goodness, which we are defining as "a genuine care and concern for the individual," and (2) abounding in knowledge. Goodness involves empathy, which is the ability to actually feel what the other person is feeling. A good counselor empathizes with the counselee. He listens not only to what the person is saying, but he tries to zero in on the feelings and the emotions behind what the person is saying.

Another qualification for competence in counseling is to learn the art of listening. One of the problems that many of us have in counseling with others is that we have not learned to listen. We are so accustomed to being the speaker, that even in a one-to-one relationship we fall back on preaching, instead of listening. Listening is not something that we preachers have learned to do well. A good way to let the other person know that you are intently concerned with what he is saying, is to rephrase what he has just said, and repeat it back to him. Your response might begin with, "I get the feeling that you are telling me . . .", and then repeat what that person has said. You will be surprised to see the expression on that person's face when he realizes that you really are listening intently to what he is saying. Something good comes from that kind of listening. First, the person that you are talking to is encouraged to open up and talk freely about the problem that is hurting him. Second, it causes that person to continue to talk until the problem begins to surface. If you just respond with some advice that you feel is appropriate, the person often closes up and that is the end of the conversation. The art of listening is very important to effective counseling.

I recall one occasion when my brother James related a problem he had encountered with one of his clients. To me it sounded very complicated. My analytical, mathematical mind began immediately to say, "Well, what is the answer? What are we going to tell that person?" I expressed this by asking, "Well, what to you tell a person with a problem like that?" James smiled and answered, "Oh, I don't tell him anything, I just listen."

Do not too quick to dispense advice. First provide an atmosphere where the person feels free to talk. James added this suggestion-- please hear this—"Never offer any advice or suggestion until you have talked *at least one hour*. That is the very minimum." He continued: "Flush out the problem. Keep the person talking about the problem. Get them to describe the behavior that is causing the problem or the conflict. If it is a husband and wife conflict that you are dealing with, and she says, 'He doesn't love me anymore.' You will say, 'Well, tell me what he does that causes you to say he doesn't love you anymore. Describe his behavior that causes you to think that.' If it is parent that is in conflict with a rebellious child, and the parent says, 'That boy is insolent and disrespectful!' You will say, 'But tell me what he does that causes you to say he is insolent and disrespectful.' Do not start offering advice until there is a clear perception of the behavior that is causing the problem. Remember, behavior is what you are seeking to change. In the case of the husband and

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wife or the rebellious child, if the behavior changes the feeling 'He does not love me,' or that the child is disrespectful, will change also.

Does the Bible have anything to say about this qualification? I believe it does.

James 1:19-20 (NIV) *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.*

"Quick to hear but slow to speak" does not describe most of us preachers. I realize this verse has a much broader application than in counseling, but there is no place where it applies more. Now look at this passage:

Proverbs 18:13 (NIV) *He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame.*

Nowhere does this apply more than in counseling with another individual. He who dispenses information before he has listened fully about the problem, will act foolishly and completely miss the mark.

Another qualification of a counselor is acceptance of the individual. This acceptance recognizes the worth of the person without approval of the person's behavior. Acceptance was a keynote of the ministry of Jesus. Though He could thunder at the Pharisees and denounce the religious leaders of the day, His ministry took on a very warm and gentle note when it came to talking to sinners. In His encounter with the woman at the well (Jn. 4), Jesus saw a lonely, sinful woman, and He began a warm and accepting conversation with her. He broke down her defenses and got her to open up her heart and speak freely. He knew about her past life and He made reference to it, but in no way did He condone her sinful behavior. She felt His acceptance of her as a person of worth, though she knew He did not approve of her behavior. The woman taken in the act of adultery (Jn. 8) was brought before Jesus by the legalistic religious leaders, who were ready to condemn her. She found acceptance from Jesus, although He told her to stop her hurtful actions. The Pharisees were ready to take up stones against her. They said to Jesus, "This woman was caught in adultery, in the very act" (Jn. 8:4). However, they were convicted by their own consciences at the searing statement of Jesus—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (Jn. 8:7). Jesus saw beyond the outward facade, a lonely, sinful woman that needed above everything else to be accepted and treated as a person

of worth. Jesus gave her that, though He did not approve of her wrongdoing—"Go, and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). Publicans and sinners found acceptance from Jesus. No wonder that they followed Him. After Jesus chose Matthew, a publican, to be an apostle, we are told that many publicans came and followed Him.

Matthew 9:10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

Jesus was not a psychologist as we think of psychologists today, however, in His willingness to accept people regardless of their condition, His ability to empathize with them, His readiness to listen to them, His great care and concern for them, He used methods similar to those of a modern therapist.

The most outstanding figure in the book of Acts and the Epistles is Paul, whom we think of as a preacher and an apostle. But there were other important aspects to his ministry. We get some insight into the more personal areas of Paul's work when we look at his address to the Ephesians elders at Miletus (Acts 20). His empathy or capacity to feel for these people is indicated in his farewell address to them. He spoke of admonishing them day and night with tears (Acts 20:19, 31). He alludes to the public and private nature of his ministry when he says "I taught you publicly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). This would doubtless include personal and individual counseling. He told the elders to keep watch over the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. Also, he told them to be shepherds over the church of God which he had bought with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Seeing to all the needs of the flock would certainly include some personal and private counseling. In the last chapter of Acts we get a picture of Paul being confined to his house with a constant flow of people coming to visit him. Many of these were brethren who came to consult about matters pertaining to the church. There must have been elements of counseling involved in these encounters. We get a picture of the more personal side of Paul's ministry, when we see him talking one-to-one to the Roman soldiers to whom he was chained, patiently counseling with Onesimus the runaway slave, or commending the daring Epaphroditus who had risked his life to bring a gift from the Philippians. Counseling with those who came to see him suggests a man who takes the care of others into his heart and has time to deal with their problems.

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Another very important qualification of a counselor is confidentiality. God forbid, brethren, that we should divulge to others things that people say to us in confidence. Brethren, to our disgrace, I have heard people say, "I would never discuss any of my problems with one of the preachers lest I become the laughingstock of people from coast to coast." I say this in humiliation. Some of us preachers have earned the title of "tattler." The message of Solomon is appropriate here: "The words of a talebearer are as wounds that go down into a man's innermost parts" (Prov. 18:8). The message of Solomon is about the hurt that can be caused by talebearing. Gossip can cause wounds that can go deep and are very hard to heal. Nowhere is this more true than with a preacher. A person feels betrayed when something is said in confidence, and they learn later that this information was repeated to others. This causes wounds that may never heal. Brethren, never allow anyone to bare their soul to you, unless you intend to exercise the utmost care and regard to their privacy. The apostle tells us that love demands confidentiality of all of us—love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). The expression "beareth all things" primarily means "to protect or preserve by covering." It comes from the word *stigo*, which Vine says denotes "to protect by covering, to conceal, to keep off something which threatens" (p. 102). The Diaglott translates this "Love . . . covers all things." The NIV translates: "Love . . . protects all." The King James II translation very aptly translates it: "Love . . . keeps all things confidential." Love demands confidentiality of all Christians. We must never repeat anything that could be damaging to an individual, but it has a very special application to a counselor. I feel safe in saying that some of us preachers have not been called on to help people with their problems, because they do not trust us with their problems. We must change our image in this area.

The final qualification to be named here, for competence in counseling, is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the counselor. Counseling is a work of the Holy Spirit. He is called the Paraclete, the Counselor. Look at John 14:15-17:

If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

The KJV uses the word "Comforter," which comes from the Greek *parakleetos*, which is from a verb (*parakaleo*) that means "to call to one's

side or to one's aid." "It suggests the capability of giving aid. The word was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, a counsel for the defense, an advocate. In the widest sense it signifies a succorer, a comforter, as Christ was to His apostles" (Vine, p.208). Christ used the expression "another Comforter (Counselor)," implying that the Holy Spirit was to be a counselor of the same sort as Jesus had been to them. He was called "Counselor" by the prophet in Isaiah 9:6.

Counseling, to be Christian, must be carried on in harmony with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. All holiness stems from His activity in us. All the personality traits that a counselor will hold forth to a counselee as fundamental to the growth and development of a stable personality, are declared to be the fruit (that is, the result of the work) of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Are not love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control the qualities a counselor attempts to generate in the counselee? Do not these qualities make a peaceful, joyous, and stable personality? To attempt to generate these characteristics apart from the Holy Spirit is to undercut His work and leave the counselee with the husks of a humanistic approach to character and personality development. Bypassing the Spirit amounts to saying "You have the power in your own strength to do these things." Can we have the fruit of the Spirit apart from the Spirit? Can Christians without peace in their lives turn to men and women who themselves know nothing about the peace that passes all understanding? Paul asked the question of the Galatians, "Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). Paul's question to these Galatians is simply: "Since you began the Christian life by the regenerating work of the Spirit, are you now trying to reach maturity on the strength of your own flesh?" The NIV says, "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" I believe that the Holy Spirit is the source of all genuine personality changes.

Is there Scripture to back up this statement? Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Note that Paul said that we behold in a glass the glory of the Lord. Someone says, "Does that not refer to the Word of God?" Yes, looking into the Word of God is the part we do. I behold in the glass the life of Christ in His glory, the Spirit changes me into Christ's image. Paul says the Holy Spirit uses the life and words of Jesus, our prayers and worship, the fellowship of other Christians, as vehicles

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through which He brings about the changes in the individual who is a Christian. However, how can counseling by a person who does not have the Spirit, that is, a non-Christian, be expected to effect the permanent changes that come only by a growth in the Spirit?

A word of warning: this discussion of the Spirit is in no way intended to discourage the counselor from learning all he can about the techniques of counseling. The counselor's training and abilities, like that of the preacher, should be a matter of concern to him. He cannot afford to be sloppy about the way he counsels, anymore than a preacher can be sloppy about the way he preaches. The counselor is the human instrument in helping other people with their problems, just as the preacher is the human instrument in the salvation of souls.

One final word: Paul said in Galatians 5:18, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." I do not want what I have said to be interpreted by some to mean that the counselor who has the Spirit will get inner feelings, hunches, voices, visions, or extra-biblical revelations that will tell him what to do in a counseling relationship. That is not to be expected. Since the Holy Spirit employs the Word as the principle means of enlightening, counseling cannot be effective apart from the Scriptures. The fact of the Holy Spirit in counseling implies the presence of the Holy Scriptures as well. Conversely, counseling without the Scriptures is counseling without the Holy Spirit as well.

Let us summarize what we have learned in dealing with the qualifications:

- A counselor, to be effective, must have a genuine care and concern for the person to be helped. This is expressed by him being able to empathize, not just sympathize, or feel what the counselee is feeling.
- Knowledge and wisdom in the Scriptures is required. This is skill in using the Word of God to comfort, encourage, strengthen, and help the person grow spiritually and emotionally.
- Ability to listen, for listening is the heart of the counseling process.
- Acceptance of the individual as a person of worth. Jesus is our perfect example of accepting and loving everyone without condoning their sin.

- Confidentiality between the counselor and the counselee. The counselor must be able to keep sensitive information in strictest confidence. To divulge privileged information is an invasion of privacy and a betrayal of the counselee.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the counselor. The fruits of the Spirit should be visible in the personality and character of the counselor. The preacher must portray the wisdom and behavior of Christ in every aspect of his life.

The Counseling Process

The older and more traditional methods of counseling involve trying to find the cause of conflict by probing into a person's past. This was time-consuming and takes a very skilled therapist to accomplish it. Attitudes and feelings are built up in a multiplicity of ways over a long period of time. And because of past experiences, the emotions involved are very difficult to trace to their origin. It is unprofitable for the unskilled counselor to get involved in this process.

The more modern approach to counseling focuses on the behavior rather than the causes. Behavior can be changed. Once the behavior changes the feelings will change also. Man is a rational being, but his behavior is often irrational. He is not so much logical as he is psychological. He may know how he is supposed to behave but emotional blockages prevent him from utilizing this knowledge. The counselor helps to get the problem out in the open and formulate a plan to effect change.

Part of the counseling process is to get a true perception of the problem. The counseling will be greatly hindered if the counselor begins dispensing advice before the true problem surfaces. A difficulty that is associated with flushing out the problem is that *the first problem mentioned by the counselee is often not the real one*. It is entirely possible that the counselee does not even know what the real problem is. In **Counseling for Church Leaders**, Drakeford gives this example: "A woman may say 'I hate my husband!', but the intensity of her statement indicates that the very opposite is true. She loves him very much, but she has been hurt. Taking the woman's statement and acting upon it could lead to some unfortunate circumstances. She is very angry at her husband but she does not hate him." I asked James how one could know whether the real problem has surfaced or not. He replied, "You don't, but you never act upon the first statement." Those were his words. You keep focusing on the behavior, you keep questioning the person further—"What has he

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done to cause you to hate him? Describe his behavior that you hate so much." Remember, offer no advice until you have talked at least one hour. Listening offers the opportunity for self-communication. Although the counselee sometimes makes the request, "Please tell me what to do," they seldom really want you to answer that question. They generally want the counselor to confirm their own line of action. One author compares it to a boy who explained to a friend that he was in a dilemma about which girl to date. The friend suggested flipping a coin, to which the boy replied, "I have done that already, but it keeps coming up the wrong one." He had already made up his mind which girl to date, he merely wanted his friend to confirm that he had made the right choice.

The counselor must avoid making decisions for the counselee. He listens with understanding and acceptance, and gives the counselee confidence to develop his own inner resources, and become capable of dealing with his own problem. It is somewhat disappointing to discover that the heart of the counseling process is a relatively simple technique. At least it appears to be simple. The most important technique in counseling is to provide a non-threatening atmosphere which will encourage the counselee to express himself. Consequently, listening is the heart of the counseling process. "A good listener serves as a mirror upon which to cast the image of our real selves," as one has said. The counselor gives the counselee an opportunity to hear himself and achieve a form of self-communication. Drakeford says, "When the counselee speaks he may be addressing you, but he is actually talking to himself." Carl Rogers discusses what he calls the primary technique in counseling: "The answer is bound to be disappointing to the over-eager. The primary technique is to encourage the expression of attitudes and feelings—encourage them to talk—until insightful understanding appears spontaneously." Similarly, Harris Stack-Sullivan: "The real magic is done by the patient, not the therapist. The therapist's skill and art lie in keeping things simple enough so that things can happen. In other words, the counselor clears the field for favorable change, and then tries to avoid getting in the way of its development." Considering the question of how this is done, Stack says, "Listening, really listening, is the key." Counselor responses should always aim at keeping the counselee talking. One of the well-known techniques is to reword the counselee's last remark and repeat it back to him or her. This serves two functions. It shows the person that you really are listening and it keeps them talking. One counselee described his reaction to reflective responses by the counselor in this way: "It is like looking into a mirror and seeing myself for the first time. I never really saw, heard, or felt myself before. It hurt, but it was also a great relief."

"Drakeford says, "If the counseling process can be summed up, I would say, the counselor must be able to listen."

Areas of Counseling

The qualifications and techniques which we have discussed in the previous sections are applicable in all areas. The counselor who has developed these qualifications and sought to master the general technique, has tools that he can use in any counseling situation. However, it may be profitable to look at some areas where we will be called upon to help people in the churches where we minister.

Counseling the sick. Probably one of the most important areas of our counseling activity is going to be with those who are ill, especially the terminally ill. This is an area where we need to prepare ourselves. Many well-meaning but misdirected visitors of the sick do harm and cause undue suffering.

First, we must remember that illness, especially terminal illness, is not just physical. There are psychological reactions which need to be understood by the Christian worker or counselor. Think of the shock of being told, "You're going to die." Many go into depression, and the depression causes the physical aspect of the case to worsen. Then there is the social crisis. The sick person is separated from his normal work and the place where he has been spending a good deal of his time. He may have financial worries brought on the loss of income or heavy medical expense. There is also the personal crisis, brought on by the fact his body is the focus of doctors, nurses, and technicians who invade his privacy and disturb his rest. And then there is also the presence of pain which carries with it a shocking effect.

When a person seeks to help in a crisis like this, he should realize that this sick person may exhibit behavior that is quite different from that which characterized him or her before the illness. Once again the art of listening is important. The patient has been quite for so long that he is often longing to talk to someone. When the Christian worker says, "Tell me how you feel," and then listens carefully, he helps the person express his hostilities, his fears, his doubts, thus clearing the emotional blockages that stand in the way of dealing with this crisis. Let the person get his feelings out. There may be a lot of anger that needs to come out—"Why me? Why is this happening to me?"—are expressions we hear so often. The counselor or Christian worker needs to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures; it is our resource book. It records the struggles of men and

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women of faith in their encounters with suffering, affliction, and adversity. There is much to encourage the modern sufferer in these examples. Passages such as Psalms 23, John 14, Romans 8, Psalms 96-99, have been of comfort through the years, and bring reassurance when nothing else can. It is important that Christian workers commit some of the great passages to memory so that they can be quoted spontaneously. Many times it is appropriate to leave a verse of Scripture on a card as you leave.

The Apostle James makes ministering to the sick the responsibility of all Christians (Jas. 1:27). When we become involved in the visitation and the counseling of the sick, we are becoming involved in one of the most meaningful activities of the church. We are also joining hands with the He who has been called the Great Physician.

Counseling the bereaved. The preacher plays a very important role in the healing of the bereaved person or family. One of the tragedies of bereavement is that after the funeral, most people feel that their job is done, and the family is left to cope all alone. However, grief lasts long after the separation from the loved one. The Christian worker should realize that he is needed more after the funeral than before or during the funeral. No less than five or six visits should follow up in counseling with the bereaved.

There are several things for those who counsel with the grief-stricken to keep in mind. Do not try to divert the sorrow. It hurts to see a person grieve and it makes us uncomfortable. In order to spare their feelings and ours, we try to divert the sorrow by immediately introducing something else to think or talk about. This typical reaction is what one writer calls "camouflaging death." The reality of death must be faced and there is nothing gained by trying to avoid it. The grief needs to be expressed. Many people steer the conversation away from the deceased, however, the bereaved may wish to talk about relations with this loved one. Talking about these relationships with someone who listens carefully can be very helpful. There is pain associated with grief and the pain needs to be expressed. As the bereaved person talks about his loss to someone, he becomes increasingly aware of the reality of his loss, and comes to a healthier acceptance of it.

Also, remember that silence is golden. Do not be too hasty with words. I was surprised when I asked James about this and he said, "A comforter should never be the first to speak—never." I am uncomfortable with silence and perhaps you are, but James referred me to Job when he was in deepest sorrow. His friends came and sat seven days

without speaking a word (Job 2:13). Job was comforted by their presence. It was when they began to talk that he became agitated. Let the bereaved lead the conversation.

Guilt feelings should be expressed. Often, there is a sense of guilt and the feeling that responsibilities to the loved one have been neglected. This is especially true of parent/children relationships. I hear this so much: "I am so sorry that I did not take more time to be with him (her)." Sometimes there is a basis for this feeling of guilt, but more often there is not. However, the feelings of guilt need to be accepted and dealt with.

Help the bereaved to establish new relationships. Sooner or later they must establish new relationships. The counselor or Christian worker can be helpful by arranging opportunities for new, meaningful relationships to occur.

Marriage and family counseling. Very few of us have had specialized training for this task, yet by necessity we are often involved in the process. When people are in trouble, very few are able to secure a professional marriage counselor. I offer these few suggestions which were given to me by James in a phone conversation on Sunday, December 9, 1994.

First, the counselor must maintain strict neutrality. When a husband or wife feel antagonistic toward a spouse, he or she will seek to enlist sympathy from another person, and they come to the counselor expecting him to take sides. The perceptive counselor will avoid being manipulated into a position where one party can call upon him as an ally against the other.

Second, see them both together, at least for the first time. To avoid being manipulated by either party see them together. Let each party hear what the other sees is the problem. The counselor will act as moderator. You may want to see them separately later, but on the first interview see them together.

Third, if you are called upon to do this, ask your spouse to sit in on an interview. Of course, this has to be cleared with the counselees. The spouse just listens. However, she is able to help you see the problem more clearly. The counselor and his spouse can discuss the interview later for a clearer understanding of the problem. Of course, the spouse must also accept the obligation of confidentiality.

Fourth, focus on the behavior that is causing the conflict. You can change behavior but you can't change feelings. Get both parties to

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commit to a change in behavior. Make this commitment for a change for one week and then see what happens. Help them establish a behavior pattern that will bring them closer together.

Fifth, the counselor helps to define the situation. Marriage counseling situations are often confusion confounded. In the midst of accusations, counter-accusations, recriminations, angry outbursts, and so forth; it takes a steady mind to help emotionalized persons have a clear perception. The counselor should try to pinpoint difficulties, explore alternatives, and oversee setting up goals to change behavior.

Finally, as in all forms of counseling, leave the decision in the hands of the counselee. Only a solution that comes from them, out of their own thinking and feeling, will be acceptable to them.

The church in the last few years has found itself facing new responsibilities. With marriage and divorce as they are today, and with the emphasis upon the sacredness of marriage and the value of the family unit, preachers can become an important force in trying to do what Jesus said, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." *Rt. 3 Box 127, Marion, Louisiana 71260.*

Christian Liberties—Romans 14

by Edwin Morris

When we think of liberty, we know that it is something much abused. There are different kinds of liberty: political, mental, moral, scriptural. However, when we speak of Christian liberties, we are talking about those things that pertain to a Christian. There is no liberty without law.

I use the term "liberty" as Thayer gives the definition, "In the N.T. liberty to do or omit things having no relation to salvation" (p. 204). Let us keep this in mind. Under "law," Thayer says, "In the N.T. a command, law, a law or rule producing a state approved of God, that is, by the observance of which we are approved of God" (p. 427).

Paul writes, "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness" (Rom. 9:31). Israel professed adherence to the Law of Moses, but they did not keep that law. Therefore, instead of being righteous, they were sinners, transgressors of the Law they professed to follow. I believe that we can see from this that we have to do the will of God.

The Bible Restricts Certain Activities

Christ came from the Father; He was the Son of God. He took upon Himself the form of flesh. We might think that Christ had the will or liberty to do anything He might want to do. But, Jesus says, "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jn. 5:30). Now there are other Scriptures where Jesus points this out, but I want to emphasize that Christ did not have the liberty to do anything He wanted to do. He had to do the Father's will (Jn. 12:49; 5:19).

We find also that angels did not have the liberty to do just anything they want to do. Paul says, "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" (Gal. 1:8). Even if an angel were to come right now before us, he would not have the liberty to preach or tell us anything contrary to the will of God.

Then again, we find the Holy Spirit did not have the liberty to do whatever He might want. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of

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himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (Jn. 16:13). Thus, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the angels could not teach whatever they wanted, but only what was given by God.

Now we find that all Christians are also restricted to God's will. Paul says, "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" (Gal. 1:9). Also, Peter says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). So from the beginning, I want to point out that when we talk about liberties, we must do the will of God. We cannot violate the law of God in order to carry out some liberty that we think we have. God's Word, with its commands, examples, precepts, and divine teachings cannot be violated or changed. We have no choice in the matter.

Exposition of Romans 14

Verse 1. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."

Paul refers to "him that is weak in the faith." What does he mean by "weak"? Thayer says, "to be doubtful about things lawful and unlawful to a Christian" (p. 80). We often have doubts in our mind about something. A man who has doubts is "weak," as pointed out in this passage.

The term "faith," as it is used here, does not necessarily refer to saving faith. This is the person's own faith, that is, *his* faith. He is weak in this faith. Now, he has faith that he can do a certain thing, but he may be weak in that. To prove this let us turn to verse 22: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." Now, the reason I do not believe that the word "faith" in verse 1 is referring to faith in Christ, is because it says to have this faith between you and God. We are not commanded to keep our faith in Christ to ourselves, but to spread it throughout the world. We have to spread the gospel. We have to spread it everywhere. So here in this verse, "faith" is one's own personal faith. If you have this faith, have it between you and God.

Now he says, "but not to doubtful disputations." The word "doubtful," "the thinking of a man deliberating within himself; having a thought, an invalid reasoning; literally, the judging of

thoughts." Vincent says, "Receive these weak brethren, but not for the purpose of passing judgment upon their scruples" (vol. 3, p. 167).

The idea is that disputes over matters of opinion must not be an obstacle to Christian fellowship. Now notice, those things that are of opinion, we are not to let them disturb our Christian relationship or fellowship. The continued discussion of questions of this character will destroy the harmony of any congregation. When you take opinions and start quarreling over them, it will destroy the love and peace of the church. Paul says do not do this over matters of opinion.

The Revised Standard Version renders this verse, "As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions." In other words, the man comes in and he has some opinions that could be either way, so to speak. Do not accept this man in order to start an argument over his opinion. Do not dispute over opinions. Many times this has happened and the church has split wide open as a result of opinions. Stop and think about this for just a minute. Often in the brotherhood we worship just alike, we believe the Christian life the same, but we have a division over some matter of opinion that was carried too far. Many times we agree on all matters of doctrine, but because of some opinion the church has split. This is wrong.

Let us notice here, that the weakness is the effect of scruples that lie outside the scope of things which our Christian faith demands. Concerning this weak brother that Paul speaks of, "him that is weak in the faith," we find two things that he must be very careful about: (1) judging the brother who is strong, and (2) the liability to take offence at what another brother does. He is weak, and this is a danger. I want to point out that the weak have something that they must follow: they must not judge their strong brother, nor take offence when he does things that are matters of opinion.

The strong person is the one who conscientiously lives his life toward God, and he is not hindered by scruples founded upon opinion. Now, what is the danger for this person found in this chapter? (1) He might despise the weak brother, and (2) he might further set a stumbling block in his brother's way. Many times we talk about the weak brother and his characteristics and we do not think about the strong brother.

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I want you to know that both the weak and strong could be wrong. If I am the weak brother and you are the strong brother, I have to be careful not to judge you, and I have to be careful that I do not take offence as to what you do, and thus fall. The strong brother has to be sure that he does not despise me or cast a stumbling block in my way. Brethren, I am afraid that many times, we who claim to be strong in the church have set stumbling blocks in our brethren's way and caused them to fall.

This does not refer to saving faith in Christ, for he might have the faith in God which Christ has specified. This man could believe in the plan of salvation, Christian worship, the Christian life; but he has this one thing in which he is weak. He is not weak in everything. Paul is not saying that this man is weak as far as the Lord's Supper is concerned, in the teaching of God's Word, in the singing, or in the plan of salvation. He is not weak in matters of doctrine, but he has some scruples—he has an opinion and in that he is weak.

Verses 2-3. "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."

One believes that he can eat anything while another believes that he cannot eat certain types of meats. One man is so strong in Jesus Christ he realizes that it is really a matter of indifference as to what a man eats. Sometimes a person has so strong a faith that he realizes that these things are not a matter of law. On the other hand a man who is a weak brother may think that it is a matter of law. The strong man might believe that whatsoever is wholesome and nourishing, whether herbs or meats, whether enjoined or forbidden by the Law of Moses, may be safely and conscientiously eaten by every Christian.

There were people who could not eat certain meats. Some meat had been sacrificed to idols and afterward it was sold in the markets for food. The weak Christian could not eat those meats. If the strong brother eats these meats, the weak Christian would be offended. Here are two brethren: one eats vegetables and another eats meat along with the vegetables. Paul says they are not to despise one another. If these brethren are doing this, that is, not despising one another, there is nothing wrong here.

What we find here is that certain Jews, lately converted to the faith, believed the Mosaic law relative to the eating of clean and unclean meat

to still be in force. They believed that one could not eat of certain meats. Therefore, when they were in Gentile country, they avoided eating meats entirely and lived on vegetables for fear of being defiled.

On the other hand, this man, because he could not tell whether the meat sold in the market was clean or unclean, or whether it was offered to an idol or not, or whether the blood had been taken from it properly; could not eat. He looked upon the meat and had some convictions about it. This man did not realize that the Law had been taken out of the way. When the Law was taken out of the way, the stipulations regarding clean and unclean meat were also taken out of the way. They were no longer in force.

Paul says plainly, "Let him not despise him." That is, "to despise utterly, to make of no account; to throw out as nothing; thus to treat as nothing, so with contempt." He that eats meat must not set at naught or refuse fellowship with the brother who will not eat. If a man refuses to eat the meat, he should not be disfellowshipped.

Sometimes we become a judge; notice here that it says we are not to judge him. Do not judge him. That is, "to judge severely or unfairly; finding fault with this or that in others, to judge in the sense of criticism or to condemn as guilty of sinful practices." This is what we are doing in such cases.

They ate that meat and the brethren were condemning them as if they were sinning. He who, for religious reasons lived on a vegetarian diet, was not to adopt a censorious attitude toward the one who ate meat, regarding him as unscrupulous.

Now, God has received that man. We need to be very careful that we do not reject people whom God receives. We need to be careful that we do not judge that man and reject him. Many times people have been baptized, or have made confession of faults, and we do not want to accept it. We want to reject it. We had better be very careful for we are judging another man's servant. It is up to God whether He receives that man or not. There have been times when each of us may have had in our minds that maybe someone was not doing exactly what he was supposed to; but in his heart, he may have been. I have had people tell me after someone made a confession of faults, "I do not believe they meant that; I do not believe they were sincere in that. I think they did it for this reason or another." In such cases, we have become judges.

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Now, if after that he does something wrong, then, I will correct him. But I am not going to go back and claim that he was not sincere before. We are to forget the past. Do you see how we can become judges? Paul says that God is the one who judges and God has received him. If God has received him then I certainly do not want to reject him. So, as long as one's faith in Christ is unwavering, we should not condemn him if he does or does not eat meat. No one has the right to force his opinions on another in Christ. When God has given no law that condemns a man for eating or not eating, we have no right to condemn either.

Verse 4. "Who art thou that judges another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

The apostle proposes the question, "Who is the man that judges another man's servant?" Who am I if I judge another man's servant? When the Master has given no rule to govern His servants, no one else can. Now, God has given His rules to His servants, but when some man comes along and sets down certain rules for others to live by, that man is wrong. A servant is a household slave. God has received him and he is not accountable to God for my opinions.

He says that the man "shall be holden up of God." "Holden" means "to make firm, establish, fix, to cause a person or thing to keep his or its place." The Revised Standard Version reads, "for the Master is able to make him stand." God is able to make that man stand.

I have asked God for several weeks now to help me this morning. I have asked for His wisdom and guidance. I need it. I have asked Him since Monday to help my voice get better. It is not perfect today, but it sure is better. He is powerful, almighty, strong.

Follow me closely. For one to condemn the Lord's servant does not change God's attitude toward that man: I can condemn this brother out here, but that does not change God's attitude toward him. Many times we think that if we condemn him then God condemns him, and if we do not accept him, then God does not accept him. We need to be very careful.

This is on my mind and I want to include it. A lady once told me, "Brother Morris, you have a lot of righteous people in the church down there . . . that is, self-righteous." Folks I have thought about this a lot; let us stop and think about this for just a moment. We sometimes look down our nose when people come to our services. Maybe a woman has her hair cut, maybe she has on men's apparel, but of course this person has

never been taught. We sometimes get to where we shun these people. This individual needs to be taught. Jesus did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Let us remember that.

Verse 5. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

"One man esteemeth" is properly translated here. But in Acts 13:46, the same Greek word is translated, "*judge* yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." In Acts 16:15, it is translated "If ye *have judged* me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." The word "judge" originally had the idea of separating, and then, discrimination in the act of judging.

The expression means that one would set a higher value on one day than another. One might regard one day more sacred than other days. This was the case with the Jews, who regarded their festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, new moons, fast days, Jubilee, etc., as sacred even after they were converted to Christianity. They failed to understand that when the Messiah came, these all ceased; they wanted to hold on to them. Those who desire to observe these days could do so, but they have no right to require others that they observe them.

Let me point this out. If people desire to come together on Saturday or any other time to worship God, they can do it, but that does not take the place of the Lord's Day. But they cannot take up a contribution or observe the Lord's supper on that day. This coming Sunday is Christmas day and I can still gather on this day to worship the Lord scripturally. However, I cannot worship Him unscripturally, and this is true of any other day. Paul said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Verse 6. "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

Paul says that the man who eats meats and herbs gives thanks to God for it. The man who eats only herbs gives God thanks for it. In the same way, the man who regards a day, regardless of what day it is, must observe it to the Lord. And if a man does not desire to observe any day besides the Lord's Day, he does not have to. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that a man does not have to live the Christian life. I am saying that a person who has a special day on which he wants

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to do something of his own accord, cannot force it on others. I know people who get up early in the morning and read a chapter or two from the Bible and have prayer every morning, but I could not make you do that. You might want to do it at noon or in the evening. I do not have any authority to demand that you do this at a certain time or even at all. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind as to whether he will or will not devote any other day to study, meditation, and prayer.

While we are on this subject, let us look to 1 Corinthians 8:7-11:

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 has 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?

They had meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. But these people could not conscientiously eat that meat. Paul says that the strong Christian could go down to buy the meat sold in the marketplace, and after giving God thanks, he could eat it. The weak brother who had a conscience against eating this meat could not judge another brother for eating it, neither could the strong brother compel the weak brother to eat that meat. When I give God thanks for it (the meat), that sets it aside.

Here is what he further says: if this weak Christian (the one who thinks it is wrong to eat this meat offered to idols) sees another Christian go into that place where there is idol worship, and sees him eating that meat, the strong Christian might cause that man to perish because of his weak conscience.

I have heard brethren say, "That it is none of their business; I have the right to do it." We have no right to do it if it causes our brother to sin.

It seems to me in this context that we can only apply this teaching to the eating of that meat in the idol's temple, and only if that is what makes that man sin. The weak brother would have to eat the meat against his conscience which was caused by another's eating of the meat even though he gave thanks. For example, if the weak brother quit going

to church, the cause would not be the strong brother's eating of the meat. Did that cause them to quit worshipping? Was that the cause of it? No, that was secondary. Folks, if they were strong in other things (as strong as they should be) they would not leave the Lord. They would not leave the truth or the church.

Therefore, Paul says, "I will eat meat no more." He did not mean that he would never eat any kind of meat. The same applies to the issue of special days: I may regard a day, if I regard it scripturally unto the Lord, or I do not have to regard the day. But if I do, I cannot compel another man to do it. This knowledge is not in every man. This, of course, does not apply to the Lord's Day service.

Concerning the observation of special days, I want to call your attention to Galatians 4:10-11, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Paul said, "I am afraid of you. You are still observing those days and festivals, new moons, and so forth."

Now, one eats herbs and gives God thanks. Another eats meat and gives God thanks. Some regard special holy days unto the Lord (the one who regards any day above another can do this scripturally, if he regards it unto the Lord). No doubt that both Jew and Gentile observed the Lord's Day as per Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Revelation 1:10.

Verse 7. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

The Christian cannot cut himself off from the Lord, either in this life or the life to come.

Verse 8. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Christ died and lives again that this very relationship might be established: that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living. While living, we must do the Lord's will and even when we die we will be fully resigned to His will. We are not at our own disposal. So, whether we live or die we are the Lord's.

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Verse 9. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."

New life springs out of Christ's death. According to Romans 6:4, we die with Him and we rise with Him. Since our life comes from His death and resurrection, this makes Him our Lord whether we be living or dead.

Verse 10. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why doest thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

As the years roll by, I become a lot more concerned about myself than I am with anybody else. The more I learn, the more I mature, the more I realize that keeping myself in check is so very important. I will have to give an account for myself. When the Lord says, "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity," it will not do any good for me to say that someone caused me to do this or that. We are going to give an account for our own sins. Is it not amazing how easy it is for us to look at the other fellow and be so critical and never see ourselves for what we really are? Maybe we need to be looking in a mirror and criticizing that fellow we see.

Verses 11-13. "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

What does Paul say? He tells us not to put an occasion to fall in our brother's way. If eating some meat led a weak Christian to think he was eating in honor to an idol and was therefore led to eat meat in honor to an idol, the eating of meat would become a stumblingblock over which a brother could fall or sin. No Christian should ever insist on exercising his liberty if harm is going to come from doing such. What is it that I could not give up if it would help save someone, regardless of how bad I might want to do it? I am talking about matters of opinion or liberty.

A lot of times we give up things for our children. A certain lady had four children (her husband had died) and she said many times that when she sat down to eat and there was not much to eat, she pushed herself away from the table so her children could eat.

Verse 14. "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

By this emphatic statement Paul declared that the distinction the Law made between clean and unclean animals was no longer in force. The Gentiles were right and the Jews were wrong. In the matter of eating meats as long as it was eaten with thanksgiving and not to an idol, all meat was clean.

Conscience alone is not an infallible guide as to the right or wrong of a thing. But to act against one's conscience, even when it is misguided, is always wrong.

Verse 15. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."

"Grieved" means, "to hurt the conscience," which, while not necessarily fatal, may lead to a violation of conscience, and finally to fall. The one who thus causes grief to the weak brother, departs from the path of love in which he has been walking as a believer.

Paul warns, "Destroy him not with thy meat." Contextually, this means to cause another to lose eternal salvation by improper conduct. He would do this if eating meat led a brother to eat in honor of an idol, under the impression that you were eating in honor of an idol.

"For whom Christ died." The mention of the death of Christ forms the climax of the appeal. The divine love displayed at the cross is put in striking contrast to the selfishness which sets more value upon one's own desires and enjoyment than upon the spiritual welfare of a brother, and even runs the risk of bringing disaster upon him.

Verse 16. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

You have greater knowledge than these weak brethren, and know that "nothing is unclean." That is "good." But if you sternly insist on your right to do what the weak regard as sinful, your "good" will be evil spoken of.

Verse 17. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The evidence that we have entered into the Kingdom of God, and that its powers work in us, is seen, not in adherence to principles which

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have to do with outward things, such as eating and drinking, or refraining therefrom, but with the inward, spiritual, and essential matters; namely, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18. "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

The one who promotes such conditions in a church is well-pleasing to God, and is approved by all right-thinking people.

Verse 19. "Let us therefore follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Let us not look to selfish gratification, but to the well-being of all. Peace is delightful and helpful. No thoughtful Christian will needlessly cause confusion and strife, but will give diligence to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Peace with one another is necessary to edifying one another. To edify is to build up in knowledge, faith, and right living. Confusion does not edify anyone: it builds up nothing except strife and division in the church.

Verse 20. "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."

The man who eats either contrary to his own conscience, or so as to cause another to stumble does an evil act. However lawful the thing may be in itself, his conduct does not please God.

Verse 21. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Deny yourself rather than offend a brother. Even if a man thinks within himself that he could drink intoxicants in moderation without injury to himself, he is under obligation to refrain from it, lest by his example a weak brother be led to drink.

The brother is "weak in faith" because his own faith will not allow him to eat meat that has been previously sacrificed to an idol. If a Christian eats this meat and a weak brother sees him, he may think that his brother is eating as a sacrifice to an idol. This could cause him to sin by influencing him to eat the meat in sacrifice to an idol. This would not be the cause for him committing other sins, such as forsaking the assembly or disobeying any other command.

When I abstain, the weak brother must know that I do so only because I am prompted by love, only for his sake, only because his weakness is weakness and not strength, only because I would give him time and help to grow strong.

God is the "lawgiver." His sovereign will is the infallible rule of our conduct. He has given laws to us in His Word. He alone is Lord of our conscience: the simple expression of his will binds it to obedience and His laws are subject to no examination, being absolutely supreme and infallible. James says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas. 4:12).

Verse 22. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Bloomfield has this comment: "Keep this persuasion to yourself, and your God; use it when you have no other witness." A man condemns himself in what he approves, if in holding to it and practicing it he causes others to stumble.

Again, the "faith" has to be his *own* faith, because he is not commanded to keep his faith in Christ to himself, but to spread it throughout the world. This chapter shows that such faith must not be used under circumstances that might lead others to sin against their convictions. He could eat the meat in his own home in the presence of God. He is not asked to renounce a principle or to think that anything is wrong which is not actually wrong, but rather to exercise his liberty with a view to the welfare of the weak brother. Faith is necessary, but it is not to be displayed, as if to show one's superiority to those who have scruples about things. The strong brother must be satisfied with cherishing an opinion, and acting on it in private, without bringing it forward to cause a disturbance in the church.

Verse 23. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

The convictions of our hearts must be respected, must be honored. God accepts nothing as worship that is not done heartily with full faith. Right motives never justify wrong actions. What is evil cannot be excused on the ground of good intentions. No man can perform any service or introduce any order into the service of God, by faith, unless it is ordained of God.

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The apostle *does not say* that whatsoever conscience approves is right (for conscience may be perverted or misinformed), but that what conscience *does not approve cannot be right* to the doer. False notions of "Christian Liberty" have induced a wide-spread, growing, and most pernicious fallacy on this subject. The claims of truth are subordinated to the claims of the individual conscience, with all of its whims, defects, and narrowness. People refer constantly to their "opinions" as if they did not rest under the ultimate obligation of checking their opinions with the teachings of God's Word, which is the only possible evidence of their truth. Christians plead for their liberty to do things they enjoy, but we never hear them insisting upon Jesus' example of perfect self-denial.

1 Corinthians 10:25-31

Verses 29-30. "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?"

Revised Standard Version: "For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples?"

20th Century Version: "For why should the freedom that I claim be condemned by the scruples of another?"

The Cambridge New Testament comments:

I don't say your conscience, but the other man's. For what right has he to judge you, or to interfere with your Christian liberty? No, he has nothing to do with your conscience. But you may have a good deal to do with his. If you should inflict an injury on that, you would be greatly to blame. In other words, no man has any right to pronounce judgment on another man's conduct in such matters. Each is free to act, as far as he himself is concerned, according to his own sense of what is fitting and proper. But a man's right to think for himself is limited by the effect of his action on others.

If his conduct be the means of inducing others less enlightened than himself to act contrary to their conscience, and to do what they believe to be wrong, he is doing harm by the exercise of a liberty, which in any other case, he undoubtedly enjoys.

The eating of meats was not wrong in itself. But to eat meat that is being eaten as a sacrifice to an idol was wrong! It was condemned.

I am to abstain only in the case of the liability to offend another's conscience. In cases where my own conscience has no scruples, I am not bound by any other conscience than my own.

The one whose conscience is affected would have to know or suspicion that we were eating the meat as a sacrifice to an idol. If we give thanks to God and eat it with thanksgiving to God, he could not say that we were eating it in honor of an idol.

Paul says, "I do not make any person's conscience a judge of my liberty, as to what I may or may not do, must or must not do." Why would he make such use of his liberty as to give offense when no good end would be served by his eating?

Examples of Liberties in the Bible

1. To marry or not to marry

There is no law here: some marry and some do not. Paul says, "Have we not the power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Cor. 9:5).

2. To work or not to work a secular job as a preacher

We can preach and be supported or we can preach and work to support ourselves. Paul says, "Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?" (1 Cor. 9:6; cf., 9:4-6, 12, 18).

Thayer defines the word "power," "power of choice; liberty of doing as one pleases—leave or permission. Liberty, right strength, privilege" (p. 225).

3. For a widow to remarry

A widow can marry again or remain single. But notice that her liberty is restricted—"only in the Lord." Paul says, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39).

4. To be circumcised or not circumcised

Him [Timothy] would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:3).

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But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that 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. 2:3-4).

Today, if parents want to have their boys circumcised at birth, it is a liberty, not a command. *10520 N. McKinley, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73114.*

The Observance of Holidays

by Ronny Wade

May Christians observe any and every holiday regardless of its nature or purpose? Is the observance of holidays wrong? If not, how do we distinguish between those that are acceptable and those that are not? All of these questions deserve Bible answers and are worthy of our consideration. The child of God should approach the study of any subject mindful of the fact that to become a part of any activity that causes him to compromise his Christian influence, is forbidden by the Bible (2 Cor. 6:14-18). The present study is no exception.

False Approaches to the Study

1. *The observance of holidays is a Christian liberty.* This may or may not be the case. Since anything unscriptural can never be a liberty, we must first prove that the observance of the holiday in question violates no Scriptures before we conclude that it falls within the realm of Christian liberty. Nothing is expedient unless it is first proven to be scriptural.

2. *All or most holidays share a common heritage.* This being the case, if we reject one we must reject all. Or if we accept one we must accept all. The fallacy of this argument lies in the assumption that similarity proves identity. The fact that two things are similar does not prove that they are identical. Some reason (1) the observance of birthdays originated with pagans, and (2) the observance of Christmas originated with pagans, thus, if we observe birthdays (knowing they are of pagan origin), why can we not observe Christmas, knowing it is also of pagan origin? First of all, how a thing originated does not, in and of itself, make it right or wrong. A thing is right or wrong based on its relationship to the teaching of the Bible. For example, the use of a baptistery and the use of individual cups are both of human origin. The former is scriptural because it is generically authorized by the command to baptize, and violates no precept of God. The latter is unscriptural because it violates plain Bible commands. So sharing a common heritage neither proves nor disproves the scripturalness of a practice.

3. *We can do nothing on a day without observing a day.* The fact that one does certain things at a particular time of the year does not, in and of itself, prove that he/she is observing a particular holiday. For example, I

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eat every day of the year. The fact that I eat on December 25th does not mean that I am necessarily observing Christmas.

Most Holidays Fall into Two Categories

1. *Religious*, i.e., those that relate "to religious beliefs or observances" (Webster). Examples would include Christmas, Easter, Lent, Epiphany, etc.

2. *Secular*, i.e., "not overtly or specifically religious" (Webster). Examples would include historical type holidays such as Independence Day, Flag Day, Presidents' Day, etc. Some secular holidays are personal in nature and include such days as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, etc.

How Do We Distinguish Between a Religious Holiday and a Secular Holiday?

Some practices are inherently religious in purpose and nature. "Inherent," according to Webster, means, "involved in the constitution or essential character of something." For example, worship to God is inherently religious. Observing the Lord's supper is an inherently religious practice or observance. There are a number of practices, in and of themselves, that are not religious in nature, however under certain circumstances they became religious because of the association involved. Under the Law, one could kill an animal for food. However, when that same animal was killed by being sacrificed on an altar, the act took on religious significance. Washing hands before eating for hygienic purposes has no religious significance. However, when one washes before eating for ceremonial cleanness, he has involved himself in a religious rite (Mt. 15:2), even though it was a tradition of man. Thus, when the design of an action is inherently religious (and has been so designated by those involved), when one participates in that action, he/she becomes involved in a religious practice. In the same way, it is impossible to observe a holiday that is inherently religious in a non-religious way. A secular holiday, on the other hand, is one that has no religious significance at all.

Religious Holidays

Space does not permit us to discuss all the religious holidays that are popularly observed by people today. There are several of special interest.

1. *Christmas*. Since the world includes the name of Christ, one would expect to find something in the Bible about its observance. However,

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such is not the case. No reference to it or mention of it can be found in God's Word. That being the case, we ask, "When did men first start observing this day?" "Christmas was for the first time celebrated in Rome in 354, in Constantinople in 379, and in Antioch in 388" (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Noval Geldhnuys, p. 102).

Chrysostom, in a Christmas sermon, A. D. 386, says, "It is not ten years since this day was clearly known to us" (Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 196). "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church, and before the fifth century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether January 6th, March 25th, or December 25th" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 5, p. 641).

Christmas is a Christian holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. No one knows the exact date of Christ's birth, but most Christians observe Christmas on December 25 . . . The word Christmas comes from *Cristes mæsse*, an early English phrase that means Mass of Christ . . . The first mention of the celebration of Christmas occurred in A.D. 336 in an early Roman calendar, which indicates December 25 as the date of observance. This celebration was probably influenced by pagan (unchristian) festivals held at that time. The ancient Romans held year-end celebrations to honor Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light (World Book Encyclopedia [vol. C]).

Despite the beliefs about Christ that the birth stories expressed, the church did not observe a festival for the celebration of the event until the fourth century. The date was chosen to counter the pagan festivities connected with the winter solstice; since 274, under the Emperor Aurelian, Rome had celebrated the Feast of the Invincible Sun on December 25 (Academic American Encyclopedia).

The exact date of Christ's birth is not known. For the first two centuries, while Christians were being persecuted for the new faith, the Christian church did not celebrate Christmas. Soon after A.D. 200, however, Christmas was being observed, but on various dates, especially January 6, March 25, and December 25. By the middle of the fourth century the church in the West (Roman Catholic Church) was celebrating Christmas on December 25 (Compton's Encyclopedia).

From these quotations we learn several things:

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- There is no certainty, even from history, as to the exact date of the Lord's birth.
- The early church did not celebrate the birth of Christ
- The Roman Catholic Church settled on the date of December 25 in the fourth century.
- The events surrounding the Christmas celebration are a mixture of religious practices from the Catholic church and previous pagan (unchristian) observances.

Since we do not know when the Lord was born, and have no command from God to observe His birth, we would do well to dispense with speculation as to the time, and with participation in any such observance.

One thing is certain—December 25 could not be the day of our Lord's birth for a number of reasons. The fact that at the birth of Christ shepherds were in the fields with their flocks rules out the December date since "the driving forth of the flocks took place in March, the bringing in of them in November" (H. A. W. Moyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospels of Mark and Luke*, p. 273).

There are a number of reasons why I believe it is wrong for Christians to celebrate Christmas. I will list only two of them at this time.

The Christmas story is a fable. Paul warns us in 1 Timothy 1:4 and 2 Timothy 4:4 not to give heed to fables. W. E. Vine defines a fable as "a story, narrative, fiction," i.e. "an account of a story in which actually there is falsification of facts" (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 397). The Christmas story is full of falsification of facts:

- Christ was born on December 25.
- Three wise men brought Him gifts.
- Santa Claus brings gifts to children today.
- The implication that we should remember the birth of Christ.

All this is false; all fable. Paul said, "turn away from such." A Christian who observes Christmas with all its trappings has not turned away from fables.

The silence of the Scripture rules against it. As the Lord's people we can practice in religion only that which the Scriptures authorize. We must

honor the silence of the Scriptures. Evidence of this is seen in the case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-13), as well as Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3-7), and many other events in the Bible. Today, we are commanded to remember the death of Christ and celebrate it weekly (Mt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-29; Acts 20:7). Nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to remember or celebrate the birth of Christ. The silence of the Scripture rules against such a practice.

2. Epiphany. Epiphany is defined as a Christian feast traditionally celebrated on January 6, but often observed on the first Sunday after New Year's day. The purpose is to commemorate the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus (Mt. 2:1-16). In Eastern churches, Christ's baptism is commemorated. The feast originated in the third century for the Eastern church, and came to be celebrated in the West in the fourth century (from *Encyclopedia Britannica*). Customs associated with the observance of Epiphany are:

- Baptismal water, homes, and chalk are blessed on this day.
- The names of the Magi (wise men) are written with the blessed chalk on doors and lintels.

Suppose someone today chose to write the names of the wise men on their doors on January 6th with blessed chalk. Would anyone claim that such a practice is a Christian liberty? Would one not be involved in the observance of a religious holiday?

3. Easter. From the *World Book Encyclopedia*, we read:

Easter, the principal Christian feast day, celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Most Christian churches in the West observe Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon that comes on or after the vernal equinox (March 21). Thus, Easter falls within a 35 day period between March 22 and April 25 inclusive. The date of Easter in some Eastern churches may vary from the Western date . . .

History and Date. The history of Easter, as well as its theological and liturgical significance, is rooted in the Old Testament. In the book of Exodus, "Passover" refers not only to the Angel of Death "passing over" the houses of the Jews in Egypt but also to Israel's deliverance from servitude—the exodus from Egypt and the entrance into the Promised Land. The Jewish Passover feast joined the theme of gratitude for divine deliverance with a spring harvest feast in which the first produce of

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the year was offered to God. Since Christ was crucified during Passover, the Christian commemoration of His death not only coincided with Passover, but also incorporated elements of the Jewish feast. *Thus Easter is the Christian Passover.*

Theological-Liturgical Significance. The central theme of Easter is the celebration of the death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to the church. The richness of this theme was gradually expanded into a protracted period of liturgical celebration. Thus the weeks immediately preceding and immediately following Easter were times of special devotion. Eventually, Easter was preceded by an extended period of preparation (Lent) and followed by a 50-day period of celebration (Eastertide or Paschaltide) that lasted until Pentecost.

Popular Customs. Many customs have become associated with Easter at different times and places. Some customs are popular dramatizations of the Gospel accounts of Christ's Passion and Resurrection. A Palm Sunday procession re-enacting Christ's entry into Jerusalem is common and is part of some official liturgies. In some places it is customary to re-enact other events, such as the Crucifixion, the burial, and the visitation of the tomb. During the Middle Ages such dramatizations evolved into complete plays, some of which are still performed today.

The information cited above clearly shows that Easter is a religious holiday. Would it be appropriate for Christians to have a Palm Sunday re-enactment of Christ's entry into Jerusalem? Is this a Christian liberty? Would it be any different than a reenactment of the manger scene? If so, how?

Conclusion

The question for all Christians is simply this: Can one observe and participate in a holiday that is inherently religious in a non-religious way? Could one kiss the ring of the Pope of Rome in a non-religious way? Could one call him "holy father" in a non-religious way? Of course not. To claim such flies in the face of reason and logic. It seems to this writer that such a claim regarding the observance of Christmas, Easter, Epiphany, or Lent, is equally indefensible. Let us remember that in religious matters God's people may do only that which is authorized.

Suppose for just a moment that we are successful in converting a Catholic to the truth. During our studies we explain that he must give up the rosary, holy water, the weekly mass, idols, Catholic symbols, and the

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indulgence. He agrees to all of this, but with one exception: he would like to continue the observance of Christ's mass. Would we agree to let him keep just this one mass, and still be a Christian? If we said no, and he replied, "I'll give up the practice of going to this one mass, but please let me keep the tree, the lights, the candles, etc.", would we agree to that? My point is simply this, dear brethren, where do we stop? How much are we willing to allow in the observance of something that is a mixture of paganism and Catholicism—something indisputably religious? Think about it.

Secular Holidays

In the observance of secular holidays we may do nothing that sacrifices or compromises our Christian character, reputation, and example. In all matters we must be guided by the principles set forth in Matthew 5:13 and Romans 12:1-2. *P. O. Box 10811, Springfield, Missouri 65808.*