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EDITORIAL

Thank God For Our Freedom

August 15th is India's independence day. On this day in 1947 our country became a free country. Each year on this day we are reminded of those who took part in the struggle for our freedom; those who even gave their lives for the independence of our country. India's freedom, which we all enjoy now, came at a great cost. As a nation we are free today because there were some people in our country in 1947 who were willing to give up whatever they had and even their lives for the independence. Many of us were not even born then or were too young to understand anything when the great struggle for freedom was launched and achieved. We only learn about those heroes of freedom struggle, and whatever happened then through books and other sources. Nevertheless, we are thankful for our country's freedom and for those who made various sacrifices for our independence. We are no longer living under the slavery of a foreign rule. We are a free people today. How wonderful it is, indeed.

Yet, the slavery of sin abounds everywhere. Wherever there is man sin coexists with him. "For all have sinned," the Bible declared, "and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Christ said, "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:24). "For the wages of sin is death," says God's book at Romans 6:23, "but the gift of God is eternal-life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin leads people away from God, who is the source of spiritual and eternal life in heaven, thus brings

separation from God, which is death. But the Good News is that God's gift of eternal life is available to man in Jesus Christ, because of what Christ did for man, when He, by the will of our God, died for humanity on the cross to be the propitiation for the sins of the world. (1 John 2:2 & 4:10). Our loving and merciful God, the Bible says, made Christ, His own Son, "who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:10). Or as Isaiah wrote in the Bible: "Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. . . . And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:4-6).

In his letter to the Romans, in chapter six, the Apostle reminds his readers that when they were baptized into Christ they were also baptized into His saving death; that they were buried with Him through baptism into death and were raised to walk in the newness of life, and then he said: "knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Romans 6:6). In verses 17 & 18 of the same chapter he wrote: "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of Doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." They were set free from sin when they had obeyed from heart or mind what they were told to do. They were baptized into Christ Jesus, into His death and were buried with Him through baptism. God's plan for man's salvation has not changed.

The story is told of an old slave who lived in the U.S.A. during the time when slavery was prevalent. His master, having no use of him, decided to sell him by auction. When the bidding for him stopped at seventyfive dollars and no one else was willing to give for him more than that, the auctioneer looked around and shouted: Seventyfive one, seventyfive two. But before he could complete the next sentence to give him away for seventyfive dollars to his new master, the old slave reached his hand into his pocket and took out hastily one hundred dollars, which he was able to save in all his life working as a slave, and waving it before the crowd at the top of his voice he shouted, "I bid one hundred dollars for me!" Everyone present there realized that the old slave wanted to be free. He loved his freedom. He was tired of being a slave. He was willing to pay everything he had to obtain his freedom!

Freedom was too precious for him!

There is no greater slavery than the slavery of sin; and there is no greater freedom than the freedom from sin. Thank God for Jesus Christ through whom we obtain freedom from our sins. He died in our stead; He was made sin for us, that is, our sins were laid on him; He carried away the load of our sins. Thank God for the freedom which is available to us all in Christ Jesus.

Not to be a Respector of Persons

J.C. Choate

It is common for man to be a Respector of persons. That is, he may put one before the other because of colour of skin, money, nationality, language, or for any number of other reasons. This hurts, deprives people of their rights, and keeps many from accomplishing in life what they might otherwise. This is an injustice that plagues all of mankind and probably always will.

The Bible teaches that God is no Respector of persons. Paul said, "For there is no respect of persons with God." (Romans 2:11). Dealing with the problem of slavery, he said to the Ephesians, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: Not with eye service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." (Ephesians 6:5-9). As you can see from the foregoing, Paul and Christians in general were faced with the problem of slavery in their day. They could have attempted to stamp it out over night, which they could not have done. Being radical and fanatical about it at that time would have done more harm than good. Paul chose rather to encourage servants and masters, and some of both had become Christians, to deal with each other in the spirit of Christianity. He also knew that in time that

Christianity would eradicate slavery, which it did.

To the Colossian Christians; Paul wrote, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Colossians 3:25). Peter said, "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourn with fear." (1 Peter 3:17).

James gives a good example of where respect of persons is shown. He said, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment: And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4). How many times have we seen that happen in our different public gatherings, even in the assemblies of the church? How easy it is to fall into this pattern when we are dealing with our fellow human beings.

Because the Lord had prepared a people through whom Christ would come, the Jews were shown respect over the Gentiles. But when Christ came, he died for the sins of both the Jews and Gentiles, and therefore things were going to change to reflect his love for all. With that in mind, we have Peter preaching the gospel to the Gentiles for the first time. The record says, "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35). Peter could say this because the Lord had said before, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16).

While God has always shown respect to those who have obeyed him, put him first, and have remained faithful to him, still he loves all, wants all to have the opportunity to hear his will, to be members of the church, to live the Christian life, and to go to heaven. Even at the judgment, he will show no partiality but will judge all according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10).

We as the Lord's people therefore should remember that we are to

follow Christ in all things and that includes that of not being respecter of persons. We should not shun some while catering to others. We ought not to bypass the poor and write off the rich on the basis that they would not be interested.

We ought not to refuse to give time to some religious people, both believers in Christ and those who are unbelievers, reasoning that they could never be converted. We should not deprive the elderly, political leaders, entertainers, sports people, and many other groups of hearing the gospel on the grounds that these people would not have time to hear the message of the Lord. In other words, we have simply written off most people, when it comes to Christianity, and that is showing respect of persons. What it amounts to, we have kept the gospel reserved for a select few. No wonder more are not obeying God and the church is not growing. When we begin to do what Jesus said we should do, and that is to preach the gospel to all, then we are going to find that a lot of people we thought could not be converted to the Lord can indeed be saved. These people are human beings with their weaknesses and needs just like everyone else. They have been ignored and rejected because of their wealth, profession, or some other reason, and this is wrong. They are starved for attention, love, and friendship. Give that to them in good abundance and you will be amazed with the response.

Don't shun, neglect, avoid, or reject anyone when it comes to the gospel and salvation. We wouldn't want to be treated that way. For sure, Jesus didn't treat people like that, and we can be thankful for that because had he done so we might have been rejected. May the Lord help us to always put him first in our lives and when we do that we will do unto others as we would have them do unto us. (Matthew 7:12).

Especially For Women

"Inferior?"

Betty Burton Choate

Are women inferior to men? Are we only second-rate creatures?

It would be surprising how many people would openly answer "yes" to those questions. Even women, sometimes, are so defensive

that they are subconsciously answering, "Yes."

Why is it that often when a woman reaches a post of authority, she is hard and demanding in her dealings? Is it because she has lived so long under the cloud of being counted inferior that she is going to the extreme to prove that she is not? When a woman runs a shop, usually she is even more "business-like" than her husband would be because, subconsciously, she is proving to him and to herself that she is not inferior.

But we don't have to compete with men and become hard, uncompromising and unsympathetic to prove our worth. Actually, God never intended women and men to be in competition with each other. He intended, rather, that they form teams, working together in harmony.

Yesterday I dropped a dish. It broke into two parts, with a long uneven edge on each piece. I picked them up and put them back together, the "ins" fitting "outs" of the other, so that the plate looked whole again.

A man alone, or a woman alone, would be something like one half of my broken plate. God formed them so that the two parts would fit perfectly together to form a whole.

The bodies of men and women are different. Neither is "inferior" to the other, but both are made according to the individual roles God intended for them to fill. Naturally, a man is physically stronger than a woman—his role is to be the protector and provider for the family. And why can women not compete well in foot races with men? Because a woman's pelvic bones are shaped for bearing children, not for allowing her to run freely.

Women and men are not alike emotionally. A man must carry the responsibility for the family. Day after day he must go to his job and face the challenges of the world. So, generally, men are steady, enduring, not easily discouraged. A woman, on the other hand needs gentleness and tenderness in the care of her children, in the encouragement to her husband. She should provide in the home the haven of peace he needs. Yet, even though a woman may be weaker, physically, than a man, and even though she may be gentle, this does not mean that she is weak in spirit or in character. Often when a man is discouraged, it is his wife's strength, her faith in him and the future, that enables him to go on. In this way they are helpers for each other, as God intended.

Spiritually, too a woman usually has great strength. She has more time to study and learn about God, more time to pray. She is with the children and can teach them. She can encourage her husband in his spiritual growth. So, in this area, the Christian woman can do much to shape her home life.

No, woman is not inferior to man in any way, Both are carefully fitted by God for each other and for the work. He has given them to do. For this we should be thankful.

Eternal Life Can Be Forfeited

G.F. Raines

The fact that eternal life can be forfeited is one of the plain statements of truth in the Holy Bible.

Some who have been bought (redeemed) by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:18-19) have brought upon themselves "swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1). The word "destruction" in II Peter 2:1 is from the Greek word "apoleian," which means "to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery." (THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, page 64).

Only those who have been born again are in "the kingdom of Christ and of God" (John 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). But, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:41-42). Therefore, some who have been born again will be consigned to torment. Thayer (page 97) says that the kingdom referred to in Matthew 13:41 is "that perfect order of things which he was about to establish, in which all those of every nation who should believe in him were to be gathered into one society, dedicated and intimately united to God, and made partakers of eternal salvation." Therefore, some who have partaken of salvation will be consigned to hell.

To know God is to have eternal life (John 17:3). But, many people who have known God and therefore had hope of eternal life have forgotten God. God says: "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride

her attire ? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). Those who have known God and have forgotten Him will be consigned to hell. David says that those who forget God "shall be turned into hell (sheol)" (Psalm 9:17). Would it be possible for a person who has never known God to forget God?

Obviously, only the names of those who have life are in the book of life. But, God will blot some names out of the book of life (Exodus 32:33; Revelation 3:5). When a person so lives that God blots his name out of the book of life, he thus forfeits eternal life.

It is possible for a child of God to be "moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23). The hope of the gospel is "joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation."

(THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, page 205).

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

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

What Does The Bible Say?

Batsell Barrett Baxter

The world's most important book is the Bible. From one standpoint, it is only paper and ink and binding. But from a vastly more significant point of view, it is the inspired Word of God. In this it is unique. Through it, "God hath spoken."

Man's supreme need, today as throughout the past 1900 years, is to know Jesus Christ. Man needs to know His life, His teachings, and His significance for each individual. Especially, man needs to know Christ's will from Him—Christ's teachings. These teachings can be known through the reading of the Bible. It is, therefore extremely important to know WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS because only in this way can we know Christ and His will for us.

In our day, there is far less Bible knowledge than in some other

generations. A quiz program shows an otherwise competent contestant to be woefully ignorant of simple truths. A survey shows a wide-spread lack of information about such simple things as the four Gospels, the names of twelve apostles, the Ten Commandments, and other basic Bible facts. General experience further indicates that Bible knowledge is at a low ebb. One wonders why. Perhaps it is because man is so busy. Secular concerns have crowded out spiritual concerns.

Perhaps it is because of the great growth of total information available to man. The total amount of factual information available to man has doubled within the past decade. Confronted with this great tide of information modern man is often not very precise about anything.

He does not know EXACTLY the population of his own city, of his own state, or of his nation. He is not quite sure about the distance to another city. He is a bit fuzzy about the ages of his parents, or date of their marriage. He is not quite sure of the names of the heads of most significant dozen nations of the world. Approximations and estimates are about as close as he can come. The same generality, this same fuzziness of knowledge, is carried over into the realm of religion. In a day when less emphasis is placed upon the knowing of God's Word, the average man knows it only vaguely and inadequately.

THREE REASONS WHY

There are three basic reasons why the Christian needs to know the Scriptures. Before considering three reasons, however, we need to understand what we mean by KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES. We mean WHAT THE Scriptures say--CONTENT; we mean also--WHERE the Scriptures say it--LOCATION. An exact and comprehensive knowledge of the Bible demands that we not only know precisely what the Scriptures teach, but even where in the Scriptures the teaching can be found. Now, for the reasons.

FIRST, THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW THE BIBLE IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO GIVE A REASON FOR WHAT HE BELIEVES. Peter wrote, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Luke wrote, "Now these (Bereans) were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind,

examining the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). The apostle Paul commanded, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Too many people in our day, when discussing their faith, say lamely, "Somewhere the Bible teaches something like this. . ." Imagine a lawyer arguing a case before a judge and saying, "Your Honor, somewhere in one of the states there was once a case which established a precedent in a case somewhat like the one we are discussing today." Jesus commanded, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). Christians are evangelists; they must carry the story of Christ to lost mankind. In order to do this, they must know the Scriptures.

SECOND, THE CHRISTIAN MUST KNOW HIS BIBLE IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE RISE OF FALSE DOCTRINES. There have been many practices that have grown up through the sweep of church history which never would have had a chance if man had known the Bible adequately. The idea of salvation by faith only would never have been accepted if all of the scriptures of the New Testament had been in mind. Infant baptism would never have become widely accepted if the entire teaching of the New Testament on baptism had been known. The doctrine of purgatory would not have had a chance. The idea that Jesus will live on the earth and reign for a thousand years from Jerusalem is also foreign to the teaching of the Scriptures. These and many other heresies would never have grown into solidly believed doctrines if man had known the Bible better.

In religious discussions, too many people say, "I think . . ." "I feel . . ." "My idea is. . ." when they should be saying, "The Bible says . . ." It does not matter what anyone of us thinks, or feels, or has as his own personal idea.

What does matter is what the Lord teaches in His Book. Let us, therefore, have a "Thus saith the Lord. . ." for everything that we do in faith and practice. Let us insist on "Speaking where the Scriptures speak and being silent where the Scriptures are silent."

THIRD, THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW HIS BIBLE IN

ORDER TO ENRICH HIS OWN LIFE. Everyone recognizes the twenty-third Psalm, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. However, not everyone recognizes the seventeenth chapter of John, in which Jesus prayed for the unity of all who believe on Him. The thirteenth chapter of Romans, setting forth man's relationship to government, is often unknown. Not widely known is Philippians 4, with its matchless passages on trust in God, rather than worry, and its great inspiring, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Matthew 13, with its cluster of parables concerning the kingdom, or church, and Matthew 25, with its stark warnings against the dangers of being unprepared at the judgment, are also widely unrecognized. When man becomes familiar with all of the great passages of the Bible, his spiritual life takes on greater depth and he has greater richness of being.

From Darkness to Light

Buford C. Holt

"Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through Whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). Since we have "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," we raise the question: Where does one get this faith which gives us access to God's grace? The Holy Spirit said, through Paul, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). One must read God's Word or hear it preached to believe it, for it comes by "hearing." For the Bible to benefit one, the Word must be received into the heart (obeyed) to be of benefit (to save). Nothing short of the Word of God will save man. More than the Word of God will cause the hearer to obey the commandments of men. If a man teaches, "You can be saved just so you are honest and sincere, "he should be able to produce the Scripture(s) which so teach. If he cannot produce the Scripture(s), he should renounce his teaching and accept the Scripture which says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

KINDS OF FAITH

The Bible speaks of a "common faith" (Titus 1:4); a "faith made perfect" (James 2:22); "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26); and "great faith" (Luke 7:9). The faith which is for all people is a "common faith." Faith which is inactive is a "dead faith" and faith that causes people to do all God commanded is live and active, made perfect in obedience.

WHAT MUST I BELIEVE?

People are often confused as to what they should do because they hear so many conflicting ideas presented. They ask, "How am I to know what to do or believe?" The prophet told Israel, "Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls; but they said, we will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). From all the teachings of today, we must take the same instructions--search out the good way (the gospel way) and walk therein. Paul told a young preacher, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). We must be willing to do as the people of Berea did when they heard Paul preach Christ, "in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

When we study the Bible and rightly divide it and learn the things the apostles practiced and taught others to practice, if we do just as they commanded people to do, we will be right, because we will be following the teaching which Paul commanded all men to obey without changes lest they be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). By searching the Scriptures and following every commandment as found in the Bible, we shall be assured for our future safety and eternal salvation.

Many honest and sincere people fail to receive salvation because they do not follow the faith set forth in the Word of God. We must all remember the Bible is the source of authority and all must follow the instructions given if we expect to receive salvation.

The Eternal Christ

Garvin Toms

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Word became the Lord Jesus Christ in the human body. This second Person in the Deity lives forever with God, the Father, without beginning or end, because He is God. The Hebrew term JEHOVAH applies to both of them, for the two are One (John 10:30; cf, Isaiah 40:3). "Jehovah is an everlasting King" (Jeremiah 10:10). "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). He already was in the beginning, for that was when He created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). The Son of God always existed with the Father since eternity is an attribute of God (Deuteronomy 33:27). The eternity of the Word is the cause of all being and gives immortality to the righteous creation.

Moses said to Israel: "The eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). Moses also wrote in Psalm 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD

The Word of God existed from eternity, "without beginning of days or end of life," with the Father, as the "radiance of His glory and the very image of His substance" (Hebrews 1:3; 7:3). Of Him it was declared, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8; Psalm 45:6). With reference to His creation the Psalmist penned the immortal words, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are works of Thy hands" (Hebrews 1:10; Psalm 102:25).

God's eternal purpose was to send the Christ to provide salvation for the human race which was formed in His mind "before eternal times" (Ephesians 3:10; II Timothy 1:9). "Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before time eternal." Thus, God's "plan of the ages" was in place long before time began. He chose us in the Christ in that, before the foundation of the universe, he foreknew that those who would obey the gospel would share in this eternal salvations when they were immersed into Christ in

order for the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:4). God had this overall purpose running through the ages of the past.

Wise Little Things

T. Pierce Brown

Many times when we consider the vastness of the universe, or some great task, the accomplishment of which boggles the mind, we may feel a sense of our own littleness, and cry out as David did in Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

It is good for us to realize how small and helpless we are, that we may depend on God and give glory to him. But sometimes we may concentrate on our limitations instead of the infinite power of God and bury our talent in the sand. Remember the excuse and the result. "I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth" (Matthew 25:25). The response of his master was "Thou wicked and slothful servant--Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth(Matthew 25:26,30).

Proverbs 30:24-28 says, "There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the lizard taketh hold with her hands, yet she is in kings' palaces."

Let us examine some lessons from that passage, that we may be at least a little wiser than we sometimes are. First, the ants prepare their food in the summer. This suggests that there is an appropriate time for every task, and if it is not done at that time, it may never be done at all. Solomon put it this way in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." This is especially fitting as we think of the present gigantic and thrilling task of getting the gospel message into every home in the nation. We have thought about it many times. Now we are making specific plans not merely to think and talk, but do.

We may be small and insignificant compared to many religious and irreligious groups, but the lessons from the ant are for us right now.

We could dwell at length on the industriousness and ingenuity with which they find and prepare their food. The courage, confidence and perseverance with which they operate is amazing. I have seen them face a body of water across which they apparently could not swim. So they would push a straw out in the water and climb on. I have seen them pull or push an object many times their size. If they are not able to push it forward, they pull it backward. If they are unable to get it over an obstacle, they go around.

They may follow a leader if they have one. If not, they cooperate as if they did have one, for they are moved with a common purpose. Some of them may have been lazy, cantankerous, proud, self-willed, selfish, uncooperative, but in all my hours of observing them I never found one.

Indeed they are exceeding wise. The wonderful thing about it is, they apparently exercised this wisdom, not by trying to acquire more brain power, but simply by using what they had in the way God intended for it to be used. The man with the one talent did not have to get five before he could function adequately and gloriously. He just needed to use what he had for his master. Surely the lesson is plain. Every individual and congregation should recognize that now is the time to use every resource we have with ingenuity and confidence to accomplish the task of helping to get the gospel into every home. Each can send financial aid, pray, and make plans for follow up on responses.

The conie, or rock badger, somewhat like a rabbit was weak and small. Yet he built his house in the rock. We must start like the wise man, building our house on the rock. Keep in mind that Jesus says that that happens by "Hearing these sayings of mine *and doing them.*" We have heard these saying all our lives, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature", and "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men," but may have not really made a sacrificial, faithful, cooperative effort to do this.

Also, it is my judgment that many are trying to find shelter in the blueprint instead of in the house on the Rock. It is possible to get very involved in studying and analyzing the blueprint of the house that we never actually get into the house. The key to it is simple. Instead of sounding as if we must choose the plan OR the Planner, the church OR

Christ, we need to be keenly aware that if we choose Christ, it automatically follows that we are added to his church. If we really have any respect for the Planner, we **MUST** follow his plan! How are you individually or congregationally going to cooperate in this present glorious opportunity to get the gospel to every home in the nation? It may be the only actual opportunity you will have this century.

The point I am making here is that Christianity is not **MERELY** a doctrine to be believed and taught, but a life to be lived. Jesus said about some on one occasion, "They say and do not." Beware lest he say it about some others on another and more final occasion!

The locusts without any king, going together in bands can wipe out the opposition in any nation under heaven, no matter how scientific, technically advanced or actively engaged that opposition may be. One can crush a dozen of them under one foot at one step, yet they cannot be stopped once they go on a mission. The reason is simple. They all use their God-given ability in a cooperative fashion at the same time. They do it without a king. Think of what we can do **WITH** a **KING**, if we but follow him together! One can burn a hole in a piece of steel if he can properly get the sun's rays concentrated on that one place.

What a lesson for us! Without any national or international headquarters, central organization or denominational machinery, we can simply work together on a common cause with our own individual talents and opportunities, but concentrating our efforts on the same thing at the same time and overcome all opposition from the world. Thousands of us are already trying it in scattered local efforts. Let us now concentrate those efforts in this big task!

"Not Under Bondage"

Cecil May, Jr.

In I Corinthians 7:15 Paul says, "But if the unbelieving (mate in a mixed marriage) depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases."

Another point under current discussion, suggesting a limitation or amending of Matthew 19:9 by I Corinthians 7, is whether this verse adds

'desertion by an unbelieving mate' to 'fornication on the part of a mate' as a reason for allowing remarriage following a divorce. The discussion of this point, which follows, will also answer a question that was no doubt raised by a previous discussion of I Corinthians 7: If "say I, not the Lord" means Paul is giving inspired advice or judgment, as contrasted with command, how does that apply to the verses that follow verse 12; what implications does this have for their application.

Here is a paraphrase of an argument sometimes made in favor of the amendment of Matthew 19:9 by I Corinthians 7:15:

One does not learn all the truth about a Bible subject by camping on one passage that relates to the subject. It takes all that the Bible says about a matter to establish the truth on that matter. Some passages that seem to be universal are later found to be limited by other passages. For example, "whosoever believeth" in John 3:16 does not teach salvation by faith only, even though repentance and baptism are not mentioned in that passage.

"It is possible, therefore, that I Corinthians 7:15, a later revelation of God, can give an additional reason for divorce and remarriage to Matthew 19:9, even though the Matthew passage sounds universal and limits the exception to one."

Let's note two things in response to this: (1) The language of Matthew 19:9 strongly mitigates against it. (2) To say it is possible that some passage may do so is not the same as to say that I Corinthians 7:15 does do so. I believe we shall find, as a matter of fact, that it does not.

(1) What Matthew 19:9 says is, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." While it is possible to learn something from other passages that would be an addition to what is said here, it is not possible to learn from any other passage, given the nature of the Bible, anything contradictory to what is said here.

Note the force of "except." In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." That establishes the necessity of repentance. We can learn from other passages the necessity of other things, for example, faith and baptism. But we cannot expect to find any passage which would allow anyone in the scope of Luke 13:3 to escape perishing if they did not repent. If we thought we found such a passage,

we would have to reevaluate our interpretation of it.

Similarly, if Matthew 19:9 is universal for whoever marries and puts away, as we have reasoned previously, then we shall not expect to find any passage anywhere to say someone can marry, put away, and remarry, and not commit adultery in doing so, unless they have put away because of fornication. To find such would contradict the plain sense of the passage.

(2) I Corinthians 7:15 is not, in fact, saying that one may divorce and remarry and not be committing adultery when desertion of an unbelieving mate is the cause of the separation, in the absence of fornication.

We have seen that I Corinthians 7:10 and following verses are not discussing divorce and remarriage. The question in these verses is, "Is it good for a man to touch a woman?" or "Isn't it good to be unmarried?" In response, Paul is commanding the married, "Do not separate." That is what he has bound upon them as "command" of "the Lord."

Now, in verse 12, he says, "To the rest speak I, not the Lord." Given our previous observations regarding this expression, we would expect to find following it, a "permission," a relaxing, in some circumstance, of what was bound or asserted in another circumstance. That is the consistent use of "I say," "I speak," type passage throughout the chapter.

And indeed, that is what we find. Having bound upon "the married" (Christians) that they stay together, he says to "the rest," those in mixed marriages: "You stay with your mate, too, but (Here is the permission.) If your unbelieving mate refuses to stay, you are not bound to stay together, as I, or the Lord, have bound on the married," "Let him depart."

That this is the correct interpretation of "not under bondage" is further suggested by the word used by Paul which is translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15. There is a word translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15. There is a word translated "bound" which is often used to describe the marriage bond. "The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth" (Romans 7:2); "Art thou bound to a wife?" (I Corinthians 7:27); "The wife is bound by law as long as her husband liveth" (I Corinthians 7:39). The word translated "bound" in I Corinthians 7:15 is not the word for "bound" in those passages; nor is

the word for "bound" in 7:15 ever used anywhere else in the Bible for the marriage bond. He is not saying, "Not under bondage" in the marriage bond; but "not under bondage" to stay together, the bondage he was just placed on "the married."

CONCLUSION

I Corinthian 7 is not, therefore, limiting Matthew 19:9 to Christians, nor is it adding "another exception" to it. Consequently, Matthew 19:9, as a prior word of the Lord, would still be binding upon all: Upon the unmarried and the widows, regarding whom they shall marry; upon the married, if they did divorce and remarry; and upon the rest, if they are deserted. I Corinthians 7 is responding to the Corinthians' question regarding the assertion, "it is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Corinthians 7:1). He responds as to the way in which the assertion relates to various groups. But he does not mention Matthew 19:9; he does not refer to the conditions under which divorce and remarriage may occur. Matthew 19:9 still stands independently as applicable to all.

Striving For The Faith

J. Roy Vaughan

The church in the days of the apostles preached and held to one faith. Jude exhorted Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye also were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). Paul, like Jude, taught there is one faith. Just as there is one God, one Lord Jesus, one baptism, there is also one faith. This was the unity enjoyed by the early church. This unity professed Christians should enjoy all over the world today. But, such does not prevail. Talk with a man on the street about the Bible, and he is likely to ask you: "What church do you belong to." He means by that: "Of what faith are you?" Such a question would have been entirely out of place in the days of the apostles. Today there are as many faiths in the land as there are creeds and churches.

But, the church of the first century had only the gospel of Christ, and there was but one faith; and Christians were exhorted to contend for this faith.

This faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ. "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." (Romans 10:17). Peter said, "Brethren ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7). And Jesus said, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one" (John 17:20-21). The Scriptures emphatically declare that faith is produced in our hearts by hearing the gospel. It does not come in answer to prayer, or a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. All the faith we have is based upon God's Word. And, when the gospel of Christ is preached without addition or subtraction, it produces the same faith in the hearts of those who hear it. It produces the same faith in our hearts that it produced in the hearts of the people who heard the apostles preach. Faith rests upon testimony, or evidence; and when the same evidence, or the same testimony is presented, the same faith is produced. The apostles are said to have preached "the faith" when they preached the gospel of Christ. They said of Paul: "He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc" (Galatians 1:23). Would anyone be so ridiculous as to ask, "Which one of the faiths did Paul preach?" Everyone knows that Paul was preaching the one faith that is produced by the one gospel of Christ.

All the apostles preached the same faith. Peter said: "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:1). What kind of faith did these Christians have? Peter said: "A like precious faith." Their faith was alike, and to them it was precious. This is the faith Jude said was delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). It was delivered when the apostles went forth and preached the gospel to every nation. And when men faithfully preach the gospel of Christ today, "a like precious faith" will be produced in the hearts of all who believe it.

Since the early church enjoyed a common faith, it was possible for them to be of one mind and one accord. They enjoyed peace and unity. Where there is unity, there is peace, where there is peace, there is unity. One cannot be had without the other. In the days of the apostles, there was only one church, preaching one faith; now we have many

churches and many creeds--many faiths. This produces division in faiths. This produces division in the ranks of professed Christians. Even families are sometimes divided. Come Sunday morning, and in some homes father goes to one church, mother goes to another, while son and daughter go to another. Does any honest heart believe that Christianity will divide homes like this? Furthermore, this divided condition among professed Christians produces hundreds of churches. They cannot all be scriptural. They teach different doctrines. They contradict one another. They vie with each other in the same communities. They divide the affections of numbers of the same families and separate neighbours. And they are costly. Should all who professed to follow the Lord Jesus be of one faith, preach only the gospel of Christ, be members of the church of the Lord Jesus, homes would be united; father and mother, son and daughter could sit down together and worship God; and all the lost energy wasted in building up the walls of denominationalism could be spent in building up the kingdom of God, and the gospel could be fully supported in communities where now three or four preachers are meagerly supported. The gospel could be preached with less than half the amount of the money now being spent in the homeland, and more could rightly be spent in sending the gospel to the lands that know not God. And all the jealousy and envy that curse the church today would be gone, should professed Christians contend only for "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." And, best of all, souls would be saved by the truth instead of being lost through false doctrine. With this "unity of the Spirit" the church would, like a mighty army marching beneath the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel, go forth UNITED to battle the enemy of mankind.

Men generally admit frankly that the idea is a grand and glorious idea, and that the church of the first century did enjoy this unity. But, they tell us it cannot be done today. Why can it not be done today? The very fact that it was accomplished in the early days of the church is positive proof that it can be done. It is not, therefore, an impossibility. Furthermore, God has condemned division, and the Lord Jesus prayed that His people might be one, "that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (John 17:21). The Lord knows, as every intelligent man knows, that there are thousands upon thousands of good men in the world who are not Christians, because they cannot reconcile the discord, the faction, and the strife they see among professed Christians with Christianity. They know it is not Christianity. They will never be

persuaded that this divided condition among the followers of Christ is the fruit of Christianity. But men tell us: "That is just the way you see it, and this is the way I see." This is not true. Every one knows that about ninety-nine people out of every hundred do not know enough about the faith of the church they joined to talk about it intelligently thirty minutes. They did not join these churches because "they saw it that way," but in most instances they simply followed father and mother, wife or husband, or some childhood associate. Ask the average man of the street what his church believes and teaches, and he knows practically nothing about it. The excuse for continuing the division among professed Christians, saying, "This is the way I see it, and that is the way you see it," is not based upon conviction. It is simply an afterthought, or something a preacher told to ease disturbed consciences. It will not be approved in the judgment.

May God help us to be honest and to respect His word; to strive for the unity of the Spirit, preach the gospel of Christ only and abide in His teaching, that we may reap the real fruits of Christianity and be Christians in deed and in truth.

Concern For A Solemn Charge

Fred Dillon

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and in His kingdom; preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:1-4).

Woe is me! Woe is me! I have fallen from the mainstream! Now and then I preach against false doctrine! Sometimes I preach against sin! Oft-times I find myself preaching against denominationalism and even occasionally against unfaithfulness in the Lord's Kingdom! Yes, from time to time, I am inclined to take a negative view of things.

Where would I get such inclinations? Come they from the heart of a hard-hearted radical or from a study of the holy scriptures? As a child of the Father, I know that I cannot allow myself to become hard and bitter (Hebrews 3:13). We all need encouragement or we will be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Did the Lord ever preach negatively? "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites (Matthew 23:13-16). "Ye fools and blind (Matthew 23:17); "Ye fools and blind (Matthew 23:19); "Ye blind guides (Matthew 23:24); "Thou blind Pharisee (Matthew 23:26); "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33). What a negative preacher! Excuse me, friends and brethren, but that was my Lord speaking!

Isn't it wonderful and grand to talk about love, joy and peace? Surely, it is! We should rejoice in the Lord "always." Love is greater than faith, greater than hope (I Corinthians 13:13). The Lord came to bring peace, to break down the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Do we convert people by namby-pamby preaching which wouldn't prick the heart of a child? Repentance must follow "Godly sorrow" (II Corinthian 7:10). Repentance comes about when men realize that each of us was in part responsible for the death of our Lord because, "All have sinned. . ." (Romans 3:23).

Can men truly be converted when they are not told that they are sinners? John the baptizer preached repentance in no uncertain terms. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to turn from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-8).

Peter informed the anxious Jews on Pentecost that they had taken the Son of God with wicked hands and crucified Him. They were condemned as the murderers of Jesus!

What happened as a result of this "negative" sermon by Peter? According to my copy of Acts, about three thousand souls were saved.

Why didn't Peter just say, "We don't want to offend you folks. . . we know you didn't mean it. . . we love you . . . so let's just forget about what you did and accept you into the Kingdom?"

"Peter, don't you know that you offended those people? Why, Peter, you pricked their poor hearts. You convicted them of the crime of killing the Saviour! Peter, who gave you the authority to talk to those

people in such a manner?"

The Saviour had taught Peter and the other apostles that He would send the Comforter and that Guide, the Holy Spirit of God, would teach them all things and inform them as to what they were to speak (John 14:26; 16:7, 13). Was Peter just taking matters into his own hands or was he speaking as the Spirit directed?

Surely, the servant of the Lord "must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God will peradventure give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Where, then, is all this hullabaloo about "negative preaching" coming from?

Are we no longer to warn people that they cannot continue in sin? (Romans 6:1-2).

Should we refuse to say anything that would prick the hearts of the alien sinner or the unfaithful child of God? "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Timothy 5:20). "Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Revelation 3:19).

It is hoped that our younger preachers, the new generation of evangelists, will not be so timid in their delivery that they will not be able to convert the sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death (James 5:19-20).

Yes, the truth must be spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15); but the truth must be spoken in a way that it can be understood, applied, and corrections made in the lives of precious souls.

It is nice to hear things that are agreeable, positive and edifying, but there is need to tell it like it is, even if the results are not what we would like for them to be.

Not all those Jews on Pentecost repented and were baptized. Later, we find some of them became very angry and wanted either to imprison or kill the preachers, but thank God this did not deter the apostles. They had to obey God rather than man. What about you?