

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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The Sin Of Stealing

One of the Ten Commandments was, "Thou shalt not steal." (Exodus 20:15). This was a commandment that was originally given by God to his people, but since that time it has been included in every set of laws given by man and every religion has likewise seen fit to include it in their laws. This is because it is socially and morally wrong for one to take from the other person, that which does not belong to him. This law then condemns the thief but seeks to protect the innocent.

Stealing may include anything from money to another person's companion. It may be looked on as being small or large. It may be secular or religious. It may be personal or it may be done on a public level. But whatever it is, wherever it is done, or whoever does it, it is still stealing and it is wrong since it is against God's law.

Although originally this was one of the Ten Commandments, and the Ten Commandments have passed away with the Law of

Moses according to John 1:17; Matthew 5:17, 18; and Hebrews 10:8-10, still the commandment not to steal is binding on us since Christ included this commandment in his New Testament for man, and since the New Testament is binding on us today. That commandment is included in the law of Christ since stealing continues to be a sin that plagues man everywhere.

There are several terms used to cover this type of activity. First, we'll use the term we began with and that is stealing itself. Paul asked, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Romans 2:21). Again, he said, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28). Christ said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy..." (John 10:10). I believe therefore that from these few verses of scripture that we can see that stealing is being condemned by the Lord. But now consider the term of robbing which is also referring to stealing. Christ speaks of the robber when he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." (John 10:1). Then there is the term thief, the one who does the stealing. Christ said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21). Paul spoke of thieves, the covetous, drunkards, and such like, as not being able to enter the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:10). Peter said, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Peter 4:15, 16). Then hear the words of Christ, as he said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies..." (Matthew 15:19). He was saying then that it is in the heart or mind where

all of these bad things originate. Again, I think we can see from the foregoing scriptures that the sin of stealing, robbing, and theft, actually all referring to the same sin, is a sin against both God and man.

Some thieves stand out in the scriptures. These would include Achan of the Old Testament, who stole some of the possessions after the fall of Jericho, which he and Israel had been commanded not to do. As a result of his sin, Israel was defeated by their enemy at Ai. When Joshua approached God about it, he was told that there was sin in Israel's camp and that it would be necessary for it to be removed if he was to be with them in future battles. In going among the people, Joshua came to Achan and enquired if he was the one who was guilty. Then we read, "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus I have done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." (Joshua 7:20, 21). Then on checking, it was found that Achan had told the truth. The problem was that he had stolen these goods, had disobeyed God, had caused many of the Israelites to die when the enemy had defeated them at Ai, and now he had to pay the penalty for this sin. He and his family, and all he had, were taken to the valley of Achor and there they were stoned to death, burned, and buried. Now that was pretty harsh, someone might think, but just think about the crime that he committed. Furthermore, when one sins, whether it is by stealing, or by doing something else that is wrong, then he can expect to pay for his crime now or sometime in the future, but the punishment will surely come. There is no way to escape that. So before one does something that is wrong then he should ask himself if he is prepared to accept the consequences for his sin? If he is not, then he had better not do it. Read Romans 6:23.

Some other thieves that we read about in the scriptures include Judas Iscariot. Although Judas was one of the twelve apostles, he held the money bag, and later betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but we read in John 12:6 of him being

spoken of as a thief. Jesus spoke of the money changers in the temple as being thieves because they were cheating the people when they came there to exchange their money. (Matthew 21:13). Jesus was crucified between two thieves. (Matthew 27:38). Also, Ananias and Sapphira were thieves when they claimed to have sold their land for so much, but were actually holding back part of the money while pretending to give it all. Because of their sin they both fell down dead and were taken out and buried. (Acts 5:1-11).

Do we have any who steal today? any who rob? any who cheat, extort, make false claims, smuggle, swindle, and such like? In other words, do we have any thieves today? Of course to ask that question is to answer it. Yes, we have many of them all over the world.

We have people who pick pockets, and pick up whatever they can wherever they go. Some try to justify it by saying that as long as you are taking it from the wealthy then it does not matter since they need it more than the ones they took it from. There are others who cheat on their examinations, cheat on their companions, or cheat the government on their taxes. There are those who break into houses, businesses, and banks to rob and steal and to take away whatever they can. Regardless of the robbing and stealing that I might refer to, I could probably never cover all of it. Man has seemingly thought of every way in the world to rob and steal. But I should go on and mention the type of taking advantage of people, such as overcharging, deceiving, and putting something defective off on them. This is stealing too. Finally, one of the worst forms of stealing is that of robbing God of that which rightfully belongs to him. Many Christians are guilty of this. God has commanded his people to return a portion of their earnings to him for his work. In Old Testament times he required a tenth, but in our day he has asked us to give as we have been prospered which might mean more than a tenth. (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 9:7). Now when we do not do that then we are robbing him. Malachi records how God spoke to the people of his day. He said, "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have

not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 3:7-12). Now it is true that this was spoken under the Law of Moses, but the principle is also true under the law of Christ. Under the law they were to tithe or give one tenth of what they earned or made. We live under the law of Christ, but we are to give as we have prospered. The Apostle Paul explained it like this, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6, 7). Yes, many of God's people are still robbing him. In holding back, failing to give, sowing sparingly, then they are failing to give to God that which rightfully belongs to him and as a result they will be the ones who will have to suffer the consequences. One cannot rob without having to pay for it.

My friend, there is just one way to deal with stealing and that is to repent of it. Paul said, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Ephesians 4:28). Regardless of the kind of stealing you have been doing, or that you are doing, you need to quit it and begin to be honest with yourself and with others. You need to learn how to distinguish between what belongs to you and what belongs to others. Even if it belongs to a school, business, or government,

it does not belong to you and you have no right to take it unless it is given to you or you pay for it. Remember that there is no substitute for honesty.

In spite of your dishonesty, God will forgive you if you will repent of it and obey him by confessing Christ as the Son of God and by being baptized for the remission of your sins. (Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38). Or even as a Christian who is secretly cheating or taking things that you shouldn't, or you are robbing God of your contributions, then you need to repent of that and ask the Lord to forgive you. If others know about it then you need to confess your faults to them and ask for forgiveness and ask God to forgive you. (James 5:16). When you cheat and steal, it makes you feel like what you are—a thief. But when you are honest with yourself, your fellowman, and with God, then you have nothing to hide and nothing to be afraid of, and you can enjoy life, and as a Christian you can be a Christian in both word and in deed. That brings joy and happiness that cannot be experienced in any other way. Try it and see if it doesn't work.



**associate
editorial**

Lust

Today we are living in a world which is full of problems. Wars and violence are prevailing everywhere. The fear of another world war is looming large worldwide. Both physically and materially people everywhere are feeling insecure. Anything can happen! Unemployment is increasing day by day. The needs of people are also increasing. But because of inflation and rising costs, man's needs are not being fulfilled. While it is true that man has increased his knowledge and is going up in science and technology, on the other hand it is also true that he is going

down morally with much faster speed. Crimes are on the increase. Kidnap pings, dacoities, robberies, lootings, killings, and other such things are taking place everywhere daily.

Did you ever try to think what is the main cause of man's problems? It is SIN! Yes, sin is at the root of all the problems of man. Man is in sin because he is not living his life according to the will of God. Sin exists on earth everywhere. It is as old as man himself, and wherever on earth man is found sin co-exists with him. We don't have to go some far place to see it, Sin can be seen right where we are. We can see it in our own country. It can be seen in our own city or villages. Yes, sin can be seen in our own locality, in our own houses, in our own families, and even in our own lives. Whatever is not according to the will of God is sin. But why does man sin?

The principal cause of sin is LUST. God's book, the Holy Bible, says, that "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin; when it is full grown brings forth death." (James 1:14-15).

When man looks at a certain thing and in his heart desires to possess it, he only thinks at that particular time of the enjoyment he will get from it. He closes his mind to the harmful consequences. One of the writers of the Bible gave this admonition "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly;" because, "at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." (Proverbs 23:31, 32). And this is true of every sin. Every sin begins in the heart or mind of man. Before any sin is committed, lust or desire is born in man's heart. And, then, encouraged by his own lust to fulfil his heart's desire, man commits sin, without realising the consequences of it. But the result of sin is terrible. The result of sin is death!

The word death means separation, or breaking of a relationship, just as when man's soul or spirit leaves the body and goes away, resulting in physical death. In the same way, when the relationship between man and God is broken man dies spiritually.

No man is a sinner or sinful from his birth, because God, man's creator, did not make man a sinner in the beginning, but he created man pure and holy as He is pure and holy. In the beginning, the Bible says, "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27). But every individual is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed, and thus sins. This is how man becomes a sinner, and that is why all men are separated, from Him and have no fellowship with Him, because all have sinned. (Romans 3:23).

But because God has created man, and He loves man, therefore He wants to save all men from the eternal consequences of sin. He does not will that any man should live away from Him in the state of spiritual death. God, therefore, has provided a way for man through which he can once again be reconciled to God and thus be restored to spiritual life. The Bible, God's book, tells us that to save man from sin, God Himself became a man and came on earth to live among men. This Man was Jesus Christ. He lived on earth for 33 years, before He died on the cross, but He never in any way sinned. The Bible says that He "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15). Then through His powerful and miraculous works and through His resurrection from the dead, Christ proved that He truly is the Son of God. But what did He do to save man from sin ?

He did not go to war against any. He never did fight, not even with His enemies. He never cursed or condemned sinners. In fact, He loved them and went to them to save them. On earth He gave His own life, to save man from sin. He took upon Himself all sins of all the people of the world, and to atone for their sins He gave Himself to die on the cross to become the propitiation for the sins of the world. It is written in the Bible that, "God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). The Bible also says that Christ is the mediator between God and man. By believing in Him, and by doing the things He has commanded us to do, we can come back to God through Him. He has said,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6).

As we have already noticed that Jesus Christ was in all points tempted as we are, but yet He was without sin. This cannot be said about any other man, yet it is true of Jesus Christ, because He is God. By obeying the commands of Jesus, not only are our sins forgiven, but by imitating His life we can keep ourselves away from sin. Because by being in Christ we no longer walk according to the lust of the flesh, but we live and walk by the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God whom we receive from Him. (Romans 8:1; Acts 2:38).

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

50-50

A young friend was eagerly looking forward to her marriage. She explained, "I know we will be happy together because both of us will go 50-50." She meant, of course, that she would do her part in the marriage and her husband would do his, so they could not fail.

I smiled inwardly, thinking how much she had to learn. "That may be all right most of the time," I answered, "but what about the days when you don't feel well or you are disheartened and disappointed about something? On those days you may, using all the energy inside you, be able to offer only ten per cent to the husband-wife relationship. Then, if your husband gives only 50%, how will the 40% that is lacking be supplied?"

"Oh . . ." she answered, doing some new thinking.

"You see," I went on, "marriage isn't 'I'll go half-way if you'll go half-way.' Marriage is working together and supplying whatever the partner lacks, knowing that tomorrow you may be depending on him to make up the great part that you lack."

A good marriage is not something that just happens because there is a ceremony and two people begin to live together. A

good marriage is the result of planned determination and of daily work.

It is no easy matter for two people to become one. Perhaps it may seem less difficult if they knew each other before the marriage and made the choice themselves, out of love. But even with that knowledge, one learns a seemingly completely different person when life together becomes a 24-hour-a-day thing. Personalities, habits, values, ways of thinking may be very different, and even small things can become important when they are influencing and re-shaping two lives. Somewhere along the way there must be a lot of "give and take", many days of "60-40", "30-70", "90-10"—and the successful molding into one can be done only if both the husband and wife are determined not to fail. They must *plan* to succeed, and every day they must work at their plan.

There are two important keys to success. First, lines of communication must always be kept open. When a problem arises, it should not be stored away in the heart to cause smouldering hurt. It should be talked out, preferably calmly and with mature consideration for everyone concerned; but even if emotions hinder the best selection of words and perfect control, the problem must be discussed and settled.

One reason husbands and wives often cannot discuss their problems is that soon after marriage they stopped communicating. They may say few words to each other all day, and those may concern only daily activities and duties. But it takes deliberate intention to open up one's thoughts and feelings, to care enough about another person to want that person to have full understanding of one's inner self. Communicating, whether it be concerning one's thoughts or dealing with problems, is absolutely essential in building a good marriage.

The second vital element is mutual forgiveness. If I could be perfect, may be I could expect perfection from my mate. But humans make mistakes or fall short or inflict hurt on loved ones every day. We must learn to say, "I'm sorry. Please forgive me," when we are wrong. And when our mates are wrong, we

must truly forgive, putting the past behind us and being determined to begin anew in our efforts to build a life of love together.

How To Treat Visitors

Steve Williams

When visitors come to worship services, it is important that we treat them properly. Every visitor is a contact and a potential convert. Our treatment of them may vary from place to place depending upon local customs, but some general guidelines might be useful.

First, we should not show an unchristian respect of persons. James tells of such a situation if a rich man in fine clothing is treated with great respect while a poor man in ragged clothing is pushed to the side as an unimportant person. (James 2:1-4).

Second, do what you can to make a visitor comfortable. They may not be familiar with how you conduct your services. They may be uneasy. See that they have a song book and a Bible. See if they have any questions that need to be answered. If they are alone, try to sit and talk with them. Ask them to talk about themselves with questions like, "What kind of work do you do?"

Third, be soul-conscious. Try to find out if they are Christians or not. Do not just talk about the weather or food. See if they have any Bible questions or if they would like to study the Bible with you. They have shown enough interest to come visit with you, so respond with a genuine interest in their soul.

Fourth, keep the door open for future contact. Make sure that you get their name or address. If they leave without you getting that information, you may lose a contact forever. Mail them a thank you note and a gospel tract the next day. Visit their home as soon as possible. Many growing churches visit a visitor the very same day. If you wait longer than one week to visit their home, you have waited too long.

“And The Canaanite Was Then In The Land”

Ben F. Vick

The undaunted faith and unmatched courage of Abraham is ex-emplified in the obedience to the call of God given to him in Ur of the Chaldees. (Acts 7:2). “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee : . . .” (Gen. 12:1). The divine commentary says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” (Heb. 11:8). It was true he was leaving an idolatrous land; but he knew not the place, nor if there would be inhabitants when he arrived, nor their religious convictions if they had any at all. What an inspiration of faith to us all! (Josh. 24:2).

Abraham traveled up the Mesopotamian valley, spent a few short years in Haran where his father, Terah, died, and then removed to the land of Canaan as directed by God. (Acts 7:4). Moses, being moved by the Holy Spirit, wrote concerning the first stopping place of Abraham in Canaan, “And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Cannanite was then in the land.” (Gen. 12:6). Imagine, if you will, the thoughts which may have run through Abraham’s mind as he pitched his tent in the centre of Canaan’s land. Perhaps he thought, “I see the Canaanites, a wicked and idolatrous people, are residing in this land. Well, I had to contend with the idolatrous people in Ur; even my own father served idols; so, I guess one should expect no less here. I will continue to serve the true and living God.” Though Abraham did not say these words, his actions speak them. “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. . . . And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. (Heb.

11:9-15). Abraham, along with the other patriarchs mentioned here, could have returned to Ur; but they chose to stay and serve God.

Since "the Canaanite was then in the land," what did Abraham do? We've already noticed that he did not return to his homeland. Even though the Canaanite was in the land, Abraham worshipped God. "And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent. . . and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. 12:7-8). See also Genesis 22:1-9.

"The Canaanite was then in the land" and throughout the 175 years of Abraham, and for generations to come, he remained in the land. What should Abraham do in the midst of such a crooked and perverse land? He taught his children and household to follow the Lord. The Lord said of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Gen. 18:19). Abraham even made provisions in his old age for his son to take a wife from his kindred rather than marry a daughter of Canaanites. (Gen. 24).

Even though "the Canaanite was then in the land," Abraham showed hospitality toward others. "And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. . . ." (Gen. 18:1-5). He entertained angels unawares. (Heb. 13:2).

What did Abraham do about the Canaanites being in the land? He obeyed God. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22: 18). He did not allow the Canaanites to alter his steps in obedience to God. He put God first and recognized that the Judge of all the earth would do right. (Gen. 18:25). Read again Hebrews 11:8 which states his obedience to the Lord.

The lesson from this short statement in Genesis ought to be beneficial to each and all. Just as Abraham dwelt among the Canaanites, we as Christ and Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, must sojourn among the wicked and depraved. John says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." (I Jno. 5:19). Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4). Peter said, "Save yourselves from this untoward (ASV says 'crooked') generation." (Acts 2:40).

The Christian cannot go out of the world in a sense and form separate communities as the Essenes did or as Robert Owen in New Harmony, Indiana. Though we are not of the world, we must live in the world. Else, how shall we be an influence upon the world? (Matt. 5:13-16). We cannot be separatists nor live in monasteries and expect to have an impact on the world for the cause of Christ.

Regardless of those about him, Abraham worshiped God. We today must realize that while we are worshiping God there will be many who could not care less. Abraham taught his children in the way they should go, and so must we. He was hospitable, and so should we be. He obeyed God, and so must we. (Heb. 5:8-9). He did all of these things in spite of the world about him. What about us?

Though wickedness of all kind dwells in the land, our response as Christians should be: "And 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). Thus by our lives (i.e., "have no fellowship") and our lips (i.e. "reprove them") we are to oppose wickedness.

Therefore, when we become discouraged because of the wickedness about us, let us take courage from the example of Abraham when "the canaanite was then in the land.

The Good Confession Of Faith Of A Leading Evolutionist !

Basil Overton

Robert Jastrow is acclaimed as "the greatest writer on science alive today" on the front cover of his 1984 edition of his book **Until The Sun Dies**, and also on the front cover of the 1984 edition of his book **God And The Astronomers**. I have these two books. This appraisal of Dr. Jastrow may be on the covers of others of his books too.

As a scientist, Dr. Jastrow is not a "minnow," but he is a "whale." He is also a leading evolutionist. But in his book **Untill The Sun Dies** he makes a good confession of faith. He confesses that the doctrine of evolution is a faith, or a belief. He confesses there is no concrete evidence to support the story of evolution.

HE ADMITS THERE WAS A BEGINNING

In the Preface of **Untill The Sun Dies**, Dr. Jastrow says, "Astronomers have amassed evidence that the world did not exist forever; there was a beginning." On page 16 of the same book, he says, "Most remarkable of all is the fact that in science, as in the Bible, the World begins with an act of creation. That view has not always been held by scientists. Only as the result of the most recent discoveries can we say with a fair degree of confidence that our Universe has not existed forever; that it began abruptly, without apparent cause, in a blinding event that defies scientific explanation.

On page 19 of the same book, Dr. Jastrow says of the beginning, "Science, unlike the Bible, has no explanation for the occurrence of that extraordinary event."

Of the beginning of the world Dr. Jastrow says on pages 27 and 28 of the same book, "An important event occurred—the origin of the world—for which there is no known cause or explanation. Moreover, a scientific explanation for this event may never be discovered."

HIS GOOD CONFESSION OF FAITH

In chapter seven of *Until The Sun Dies*, Dr. Jastrow tells the story of the beginning and the evolution of living things from molecules to man. He says, "Eventually, after countless millions of chance encounters, a molecule is formed that has the magical ability to produce copies of itself." He tells the story of evolution all the way from this magic working molecule to man! He says that during the billions of years that followed, these simple, self-producing molecules evolved into the variety of plants and animals that now populate the earth. He affirms that "According to this story every tree, every blade of grass, and every creature in the sea and on the land evolved out of one parent strand of molecular matter . . ." Then he asks, "What concrete evidence supports that remarkable theory of the origin of life? There is none."

There is right! Dr. Jastrow, one of the leading evolutionists in the world says there is no concrete evidence that supports the evolutionary theory of the origin of life! "The greatest writer on science alive today" says there is no concrete evidence to support the evolutionary theory of the origin of life!

Dr. Jastrow says, "At present, science has no satisfactory answer to the question of the origin of life on the earth."

But science does have a satisfactory answer to that question; it is in the Bible. Science has not proven that the Bible's answer is untrue! Perhaps, Dr. Jastrow senses this, for he says that perhaps the appearance of life on the earth is a miracle! He says scientists are reluctant to accept that view, but he also says the

choices of scientists are limited! He says either life was created on the earth by the will of a being outside the grasp of scientific understanding, or it evolved on our planet spontaneously. He says the first of these two views places the origin of life beyond the reach of scientific inquiry! He says of this view, "It is a statement of faith in the power of a Supreme Being not subject to the laws of science."

Then, Dr. Jastrow says of the second view, the evolutionary view, "The second theory is also an act of faith. The act of faith consists in assuming that the scientific view of the origin of life is correct, without having concrete evidence to support that belief."

This is a good confession of faith by Dr. Jastrow. Many "lesser lights" in science who say evolution is science, would do well to study and ponder what this giant among scientists has confessed!

IF ONE FAITH CAN BE TAUGHT, WHY NOT THE OTHER?

Dr. Jastrow confessed that evolution is a faith. If the faith of evolution can be taught in the public schools, why cannot the faith of creationists be taught there? That is an urgent, pertinent and potent question?

Creation-science is that array of scientific evidences which supports belief in a sudden creation of all things. These scientific evidences should be taught in the public schools if evolution is taught, so the students will have the opportunity to decide which is more reasonable and acceptable.

Those who are not acquainted with the scientific evidences which support creation should learn what they are being objecting to their being taught!

NOT IN THE REALM OF NATURAL SCIENCE

The origin of things is not in the realm of natural science. Dr. Jastrow confirm this. Whether a person believes what the

Bible says about origins, or believes what the evolutionists say about origins, in either case he has a faith!

Scientists tell us many many facts about what is here, but they cannot tell us anything about how everything came into being except what they believe about how everything came to be!

A Lost Man On Straight Street

Jim Clark

Ananias was told in a vision, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for for one called Saul, of Tarsus : for, behold, he prayeth. . . ." (Acts 9:11). Ananias was sent to see Saul in order that he might tell him what to do. (Acts 9:6). Saul had done a number of things before Ananiah came to him yet he was still in his sins.

HE WAS PENITENT

Luke records, "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." (Acts 9:9). One might look at his mere change of life and say that he had been "born again." The fact that he had seen the Lord and reacted in such a way is to many enough to say that he was "born again." Saul's complete turn around in life from persecuting disciples to being persecuted for being a disciple is a great and essential step in conversion, yet he was still in his sins because no one had yet told him what he must do. A good moral life with outstretched arms to one's neighbour is an essential admirable quality, yet obedience to the same words that Saul was told is also essential. Conversion involves doing all the requirements and following the proper pattern. Penitence is just part of the process.

HE WAS PRAYING

The Lord told Ananias in the vision that Saul was in the house of Judas and that he was praying. (Acts 9:11). Even

though Saul was praying he was still in his sins because Ananias had not told him what to do.

Often people are told to "pray through" and that would take care of everything. Why did not Saul "pray through?" The reason is that conversion does not come this way, Prayer is a vital part of one's spiritual life, yet it is no substitute for obedience. It is true that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16), but Saul was not righteous, even though he was penitent and praying, for Ananias had not told him what to do.

CONCLUSION

Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, rehearsed to his prosecutors the event of his conversion in Acts 22:4-16. Ananias came to him and proclaimed unto him the words of the Lord. Paul specifically states that Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Luke records in Acts 9:18 that he arose and was baptized. His penitence and prayer would have been to no avail without his submission to the word of the Lord at the mouth of Ananias. The once lost man on Straight Street is an example of what the word can do in the receptive heart.

Three Things Christianity Did For Me!

Charles L. Brown

Randolph C. Miller, in his book *Living with anxiety*, makes the following statement: "A wise Christian once declared what Christianity meant to him. 'First,' he said, 'it took away my fear, then it gave me uncontrollable joy, and finally it got me into a peck of trouble.'"

CHRISTIANITY WILL DESTROY FEAR

Psychologists say that man is born with two fears, the fear of loud noises and the fear of falling. But these two fears soon

grow into multitudes! A survey of 500 adults asked the question, "What are you afraid of?" A total of 7,000 fears were tabulated in their answers! Many of these fears grow out of control, become phobias, and destroy all peace and happiness.

The fear that is capable of gripping the heart of a sinner is vividly described by the prophet Isaiah: "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings." (Isaiah 33:14). "The wicked flee," Solomon wrote, "when no man pursueth." (Proverbs 28:1). And the thought of being found in the very presence of God caused Isaiah to cry out in terror, "Woe is me! for I am undone. . . ." (Isaiah 6:5).

The truth of God's word dispells fear from the heart of his children. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). To his panicstricken disciples on the Sea of Galilee Jesus is heard to say, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid! (Matthew 14:27). And the apostle John admonishes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love; casteth out fear. (1 John 4:18).

CHRISTIANITY WILL BRING JOY

From that first day when one puts on Christ in baptism unspeakable joy floods the heart of the Christian as it did with the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34) and with the Ethiopian "who went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:39). In the words of a familiar hymn: "O happy day! when Jesus washed my sins away."

This new-found joy is intended to continue and grow in the heart of the child of God. Paul did not want to see it die among his Philippian brethren so he urged, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4). In a similar way we teach our children to sing. "I have a joy, joy, joy down in my heart. . ."

CHRISTIANITY WILL RESULT IN PROBLEMS

For Paul, being a disciple of Jesus resulted in many new troubles. He was immediately alienated from his life-long Jewish

companions; persecuted by those he once fellowshipped; feared by the apostles and other Christians he sought to embrace; considered a trouble maker by the Roman authorities; opposed by heathen worshippers; rendered unable to engage in otherwise right actions because of his influence on others; given a spiritual turmoil in his own life between what he wanted to do and what he should do; and subjected to the trials described in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.

Paul, along with all the apostles except John, died a martyr's death. But Jesus had said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34). "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26).

Power Of The Written Word

W. C. Anderson

There is a power in a written message. I once received a telegram informing me that my paternal grandfather had died. The power of that written message caused me to be sad. It had come from my earthly father.

Our heavenly father has sent us a written message about his love for us. He caused a man to write, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

JESUS USED THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he did not call for miraculous help from heaven. He simply quoted the written word of God!

Jesus had not eaten for forty days and forty nights and was therefore very hungry. The devil said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Jesus did not yield to the temptation to provide bread for himself. He met the

temptation by using the power, the influence, of the written word. He answered, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus was tempted two more times and he resisted by quoting the written word. There surely was power in the written word because Satan left Jesus, and then he received strength from heaven as "angels came and ministered unto him." (Matthew 4:11).

James admonished Christians, to "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7). When we are tempted we could do like Jesus did by saying, ". . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21).

JESUS USED THE WORD AT NAZARETH

After Jesus had been immersed he went home and announced that he was the Messiah. But he did not do in a boastful way. He used the written word by reading in the synagogue, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruished, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18,19).

The written word provides us with a beautiful picture of that synagogue scene. Luke wrote, "And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" We would not know of this beautiful scene concerning our Lord if it had not been written.

What was said to people then was find for them; but if those things had not been written, we could not benefit by them. Peter wrote of "a more sure word of prophecy." (2 Peter 1:19). The "more sure word of prophecy" is what has been written.

JESUS SAID, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES"

Jews wanted to kill Jesus not because he had broken the sabbath, but because he said that God was his Father. (John 5:18). He referred them to what had been written about himself, trying thereby to convince them that he was the Son of God. Yes, he wanted the people to be convinced by the power that is in the written word. He said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39).

Later Jesus said, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father : there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:45-47). Thus Jesus told unbelievers that if they had believed what Moses wrote about him, they would have believed him when he told them that he was the Son of God. There is power in what is written, but it must be believed or it does no good.

WHAT IS WRITTEN GIVES LIFE

John wrote : "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book : but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30,31).

There are two ways we may get the faith that will save us. We may read what has been written "for our learning" or we can hear the written word preached to us. The preacher must not go beyond what has been written because the power to produce faith is in the written word. "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Corinthians 4:6). It is easy to see that things written are important.

“WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW?”

A certain lawyer asked Jesus, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” The lawyer quoted words from Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus then told the lawyer, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”

Do what? He was told by our Lord to do what had been written. That is what must be done now except we must obey the New Testament “law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2). It is written “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” (Revelation 22:14).

The lawyer who talked to Jesus was instructed to keep the commandments that were written in the law of Moses. All who want eternal life now must obey the commandments that are written in the New Testament.

Confessing Christ

Luke 12:1-12

Paul C. Swindle

It is vital that we study the context of things written in the Bible. Far too often we will overlook the circumstances of a verse or a statement in scripture. This being the case, it is easy to form an opinion that is foreign from the thought intended.

Consider, for example, Luke 12:8: “And I say unto you, every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.”

SETTING

To fully appreciate and understand this statement one needs to consider the circumstances leading up to the Lord's saying

these words. In Luke 11:14ff we find that some were attributing the power of Jesus to Satan. Then in Luke 11:29ff, Jesus is associating that generation with Ninevah of old, and he points out that they had repented when faced with their sins. The Lord then makes his point that because of the repentance of the Ninevites, they shall stand in judgment in contrast to the Jews who would not repent.

In Luke 11:37ff our Lord rebukes the Pharisees for their outward piety. Following this, in Luke 11:45ff he reproaches the lawyers for "taking away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (vs. 52). It is at this point that the Scribes and Pharisees "began to press him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak many things: laying in wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth." (vs. 53-54).

Now we are ready to look at Luke 12:1-12 and allow the context to help us to understand more completely what the Lord meant when he said, "... every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God."

TEXT—Luke 12:1-12

After reading the entire text, we observe the setting as that of great turmoil. Many thousands of the multitude were gathered together. The Scribes and Pharisees were violently opposed to Jesus. They were trying to stir up the multitude against him. Things were close to getting out of hand. Without doubt the disciples of Jesus were in the minority. It may be that they were showing fear, even for their lives.

In the midst of this boiling mob, Jesus begins to teach his disciples. This was a most unlikely time for one to teach a lesson, but the things that they would learn at that moment would be invaluable to them in the months and years to come.

THE SITUATION

The situation is that, for all practical purposes, things had gotten out of hand. Jesus, however, did not show any fear and

this must have re-assured the disciples. His words may not have made much sense to them right then, but in the future we can see that they then understood his message. At a most unlikely time and place, Jesus begins to teach a lesson on fear and trust.

He warned them against hypocrisy, like that of the Pharisees. (vs. If) They put up a good front, but what they actually were was obvious. God looks on the inside of a person and you cannot hide your inner self from Jehovah. Make sure your heart is pure, that your motives are right. Do not be serving God just on the surface, but serve him with all of your might. The secrets of our lives shall be revealed; so make those secrets even to be praise for your God.

At a time when his life was in danger, Jesus tells his disciples that they should not be afraid of those that can only kill the body. It's so easy to be fearful. Like scared rabbits, we jump at shadows that are not even there. We fear mobs that do not exist. We shrink back like sniveling cowards when no danger lies. Jesus said, do not be afraid even when there actually is danger, even for your life.

Don't be afraid even if they do take your life. This did not make sense at the moment, later it did for their lives were on the line. The worst thing that can happen is the loss of your life, after that they cannot do anything more to you. They cannot touch your soul and that is what really matter.

Jesus takes away the fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15). Paul tells Roman Christians that in their death they would "... crush Satan under your feet shortly." (Romans 16:20). The Lord himself said that a child of being "... faithful unto death. ..." would receive "... the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). You need to fear God, for he has the power to cast both your soul and your body into hell. As long as you are right with God, what difference does it make what happens to you?

Jesus then gives them assurance. God is concerned even for the sparrows. Even the hairs of your head are accounted for by God. Do you not think that a child of God is more valuable

than hairs and sparrows? Why worry then? "God loves us when we were enemies, but now that we are his children he loves us even more." (Romans 5:8-10).

In this context Jesus says, "Everyone who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of angels of God." (Luke 12:8). In light of the context of his words, how many of us are really willing to confess him before men?

Are we willing to confess Jesus as our Lord when :

—Some says, "You don't mean you've got religion and you go to church!?"

—The people at work start taking the Lord's name in vain?

—You have just had a big fight with your wife (husband) and that attractive person at work gives you the "come on"?

—The fashionable thing this year is to expose your body in the latest fashions?

—The gang at school is together and someone pulls out a marijuana joint or a can of beer?

—You go to a required office party and everyone is expected to drink alcoholic beverages?

—Your neighbour starts telling you the latest gossip?

—The boss tells you that you have to work on the Lord's day causing you to miss assembling with the Saints?

—The only time you have to go camping is Sunday and you can't get to worship?

The words of Jeremiah 12:5 express the point of the lesson for us. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and though in a land of peace thou art secure, yet how wilt thou do in the

pride of the Jordan ?” The point is this : If you cannot stand up and confess Jesus as your Lord under the conditions you now face how could you ever expect to confess him at the threat of your life? If we cannot live for the Lord in our present circumstances, how could we ever expect to stand strong for him when things really do get rough? Unless you are ready to confess him now, you won't confess him later.

May God forgive us, being such weak, puny creatures who fashion ourselves more like to children of Satan than like the children of God we claim to be. Are you willing to confess Jesus as the Christ and the Lord of your life?

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Discuss the importance of studying the context of every passage of scripture you use.
2. Discuss the setting of what Jesus said that in Luke 12:8.
3. Name some things for which Jesus rebuked people.
4. Do we ever fear things that really do not exist?
5. What should be attitude of faithful children of God toward death?
6. Why did Jesus speak of sparrows and hairs of human heads?
7. Discuss the items in the lesson which challenge us as to determine whether or not we really are willing to confess Christ.
8. Discuss, that while one must confess Christ before his being baptized, he must be willing to confess him in other, perhaps, more difficult circumstances.