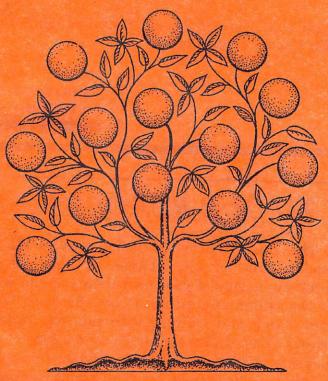
BIBLE TEACHER



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Proverbs 11:30

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THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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No. 1

EDITORIAL

"Behold, I thought!"

In the book of 2 Kings chapter 5 of the Bible there is an interesting story of a man named Naaman. He was the commander of the army of the king of Syria, a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master. and also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper, as the Bible describes him. Seems he had white patches all over his body. There was a servant girl in his house who was from Samaria in Israel, she told Naaman's wife about a man of God in Israel who would heal Naaman of his leprosy. Without losing any time, Naaman decided to go to Israel to meet the man of God, whose name was Elisha. And, now let us pick up the story directly from 2 Kings 5:9-14: "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean. Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child,

May 1996

1

and he was clean."

I want us to notice especially in this story the words of Naaman: 'Behold, I thought!" As if Naaman had already decided for God what He should do! He was looking for an answer that would be suitable to his own thinking. He was shocked when he heard an entirely different answer and became furious and went away in a rage. Not only did he think that the man of God would come out and would make a great display of healing him; but he also thought that other rivers, Abana and Pharpar were better or as good as Jordan. Also, he thought, too, that the command of God through the man of God was too simple, and rather absurd.

It is so wonderful to know that God has created man after His own image and in his own likeness. Like God, we can think; and God want us to think, but He does not expect of us to think that we know more than Him!. "For my thoughts," said our Creator God, "are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thought than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9). God means what He says, and He says what he means. God does not mince words, does He? Yet, man has always thought that he can improve on God's word, or he can think or decide for God. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden? They knew what God had said. But they thought what they were doing was right, or was also right! At Leviticus chapter 10, Nadab and Abihu had thought they were offering the right kind of fire, which, the Bible says, God had not commanded them. (Leviticus 10:1). So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord, says the next verse. Saul, the first king of Israel, about whom we read in the book of I Samuel chapter 15, thought it was better to capture alive Agag, king of the Amalekites, and the best of the sheep and oxen and lambs; whereas God had commanded him to "utterly destroy all they have, and do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." Samuel, the prophet, before telling Samuel that God had rejected him from being king over Israel because he had rejected the Word of the Lord, told him: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." (1 Samuel 15:22).

Describing the day of the judgment, Christ said, "Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?" (Matthew 7:22). They thought that they did! But the Lord said, "then I will declare to them, I never knew you, depart from me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:23).

Let us not think for God. Let us not assume that God will accept anything we want to do, though sincerely. When God's word read, believe and be baptized to be saved; and repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Then we should know that there is no other way to be saved or to receive the remission of sins. When the Bible says that Christ has established His church, and that He adds all the saved ones to His church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4). Then we should not think that all churches are alike, or that it does not matter to which church we belong; or that one church is as good as another. God has decided and shown to us in His book in what way we ought to worship Him; How we should live for Him; and what He expects from us. We need to read and study the Bible and do what it says to be sure that we are doing God's will.

The Blessings of God

J.C. CHOATE

The Apostle Paul wrote these words to the Ephesian Christians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3). He tells us that all blessings come from God, that they are in Christ, and that we receive them if we are in Christ. This refers to the Christian, the child of God, as being the recipient of these blessings. But what about all of those who are not in Christ? They represent those who are in the world, without God and salvation, and are therefore lost. They do not qualify for the spiritual blessings of Christ and are without the hope of eternal life.

All, however, enjoy the physical and material blessings of this world. There is life itself, health, family, job, and numerous other good things that come our way. Even these come from God. The Hebrew writer says, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." (Hebrews 6:7).

As important as the physical and material blessings are to us, they fade into the background in comparison to the spiritual blessings of God. Here again, if we are wise, we will acknowledge them as being from God. (James 1:17). The sad part with all of this, both with the physical and spiritual blessings, we often forget them and take them for granted.

Let us think again of some of the blessings of God. These become

even more important when we realize that God created us (Genesis 1:26, 27), gave us a soul (Matthew 16:26), and in spite of the fact that we were lost and without hope, he sent his Son into this world to die for us while we were yet sinners. (Romans 5:8). He then revealed his will to us that we might know and understand, believe in him, and obey his will that we might be saved and added to the church. (Hebrews 1:1, 2; John 8:32; Romans 10:17; Acts 8:30-32; Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 47).

Enlarging on that, we are told that Christ died on the cross, was buried, and then resurrected from the grave. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). these facts are called the gospel, the good news that Jesus did that to make it possible for us to be saved. (Romans 10: 15). Christ said, "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). Paul later said that this gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believeth. (Romans 1:17).

We are further blessed not only to be saved, but to be added to Christ's church by the Lord himself. (Acts 2:47). This is the one and only church that we may read about in the Bible. It was built by Christ (Matthew 16:18), with him as being the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), head (Colossians 1:18), and saviour. (Ephesians 5:23). There is but one, it is his spiritual body, and he is returning one day to receive it unto himself. (Ephesians 5:27). While there are many man-made churches, we are most blessed to be able to be a member of the one that wears the name of Christ. (Romans 16:16). When we know that, how could we possibly settle for anything less than that?

We are blessed to be able to worship the Lord each first day of the week (Acts 20:7), to assemble with the Lord's people to read and study God's word (John 5:39; 2 Timothy 2:15), to pray to the Father (Philippians 4:6), to sing praises to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19), to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), and to give of our means. (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). Christ tells us that we are to do this in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24).

We are blessed to be able to live the Christian life, to love God and our fellow man (Matthew 22:37-39), to follow in the steps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21), to live a godly life (Titus 2:11, 12), and to set a good example, (Matthew 5:16).

We are blessed to be able to take the gospel of Christ to all the world, to every creature of every nation, of all the world. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). That means that we have God's word, that we have complied with it, and now we are taking it to those who are lost. By so

doing we are able to change people and even the world itself. What a responsibility we have but what a blessing to be in such a relationship with God that we can do so. Why would anyone ever complain or refuse to do this if he values his salvation and would like to see others saved?

And finally, think of having the hope of eternal life. We can appreciate this even more if we will stop and think about the fact that life is short, and as proof of that, look at those all around us who are dying. Furthermore, things of this world do not satisfy. It is only when we obey God and remain faithful to him that we are in position to live life to the fullest, to enjoy the things of this life, and then to have the eternal abode of God to look forward to in the world to come. Remember that Jesus said that if we will remain faithful unto death that we will receive a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10). Then John said, "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). Regardless of what we have in this world, nothing can compare with what God has in store for his people.

Truly, the Christian is the most blessed person in the world. There is really nothing to compare to it. Don't ever feel sorry for the things that you are missing in the world, because those things only bring heartaches and death. A child of God represents royalty, belongs to the King, and has a King's portion of both the material and spiritual blessings that only the Father in heaven can bestow on those who are members of his Kingdom.

More Precious Than Rubies

FRANCES PARR

"Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding, for her proceeds are better than the profits of sliver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies" (Proverbs 3:13, 14a).

Is there anyone who is not attracted by a beautiful ruby, especially when it is mounted in a striking gold or silver setting? Red, the vibrant color of rubies, is the warmest of colours and the chosen favorite of many. It affects emotions, stimulates the palate, and inspires action on the part of the observer. This jewel is formed in highly decomposed.

May 1996

igneous rock, and, depending on its size, a true ruby is more rare and valued more highly than a diamond. In addition to being lovely to look at, a ruby is tough. It has a hardness of nine, second only to a diamond.

Our God knew His humans would love beautiful jewels, gold and silver, and would put great value on them. Rubies, pearls, coral, along with gold and silver, are mentioned in the Bible. They decorated the first tabernacle, were used as gifts, presented to God for atonement for sins, and compared with desirable personality qualities. John, in his description of heaven, cited every precious stone known to man as being a part of the splendor of the eternal home of ones who obey God.

Solomon, the son of David, was God's choice for king of Israel. God promised him anything he asked. With great humility, Solomon asked only for understanding to rule the people well. God was so pleased with his response that He not only gave Solomon great wisdom, but also honor and riches such as the world had never seen. Nevertheless, this king, demonstrating his wisdom, states that the possession of wisdom and knowledge is far more precious than rubies or any jewel man can own.

In his book of Proverbs Solomon describes the attributes of a virtuous wife. The literal translation of virtuous is "valor and all forms of excellence." Her worth is far above rubies. Considering his tremendous wealth and that he had hundreds of wives and concubines, he was in a position to know!

Within each ruby is an axis, or centre line, which acts as a prism when light is introduced. The colour and richness of the gem depend upon which way the light strikes the axis, whether transverse or parallel to the axis. Just as a ruby absorbs and reflects light according to the direction from which it comes, consider this same principle working within a Christian. Jesus said of Himself, "I am the light of the world." A person makes the decision as to how much or little his life reflects the light of the Savior. An open heart, letting in a full measure of light and reflecting it back for others to see, can become a beautiful jewel for Christ.

It is unknown whether a ruby is formed molecule by molecule around an axis or created instantly during the intense heat of a volcanic eruption. The name "ruby" actually means "small coal." When the first ruby was discovered, glowing red in the midst of cooled lava, the finder might have thought he'd uncovered a live coal. Sometimes during the formation of a ruby, minute cavities are trapped within. These are like tiny needles piercing the heart of the gem. When light touches these particles the reflection is in the form of a six-pointed star. These stones are more valued because of their flaws.

Again, comparing a Christian with certain rubies, all have imperfections within. The light of Christ can take all our flaws, cleansing them and shining through, making us more wise and understanding because we have known suffering. Paul states in 2 Corinthians 4:6, 7, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."

God told the Israelites, "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people." Surely the people of His church can be just as special.

What Is Christianity?

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Christianity means that a person has a goal, a name, a purpose, a friend, an influence and a very bright future. To be a Christian, in the Bible usage of that world, means that I am free, forgiven, happy, anchored, urgent and concerned for others. To follow the Lord is the only way to walk the sands of time on the road to glory. Any other emphasis in life falls short of full joy and depth. There are personal relationships that exist between the Lord and His loyal friends. Notice these words that form the epitome of what it means to be a Christian.

Soldier

In a stirring battle with Satan we militantly use the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) as we fight the good fight of faith against spiritual wickedness in high places. To be sure, this is not carnal combat with physical weaponry, but it is mighty toward God (II Corinthians 10:5) and is capable of making friends for the Lord out of former enemies. Christianity has the power to bring peace to nations, families and individuals. These words reminds us of this truth:

Sometimes God calms the raging storm.

Sometimes He lets the storm rage, and calms His child.

Saint

The people of the Lord are pure, holy and distinctive; (John 15:19)

May 1996 7

set apart for the master's cause (I Peter 2:9). A Christian will not allow the world to deter him from His march toward heaven. He will be the light of the world and not permit darkness to arrest his progress in spiritual commitment.

Purer yet and purer I would be in mind
Dearer yet and, dearer, every duty find . . .

Disciple

A disciple is a pupil, a learner . . . one who adheres to the mandates of his teacher . . . that is what it means to follow Jesus (John 8:31; 15:8). The power and purpose of discipline is an undergirding virtue of the gospel system. Without it we would only have chaos in Christianity. Revelation 3:19 proves that God uses chastening as an act of love designed to make us better people as we correct our lives so as to better serve the Savior. Easy street is the broad avenue many compromisers seek. It takes real effort to be a disciple of Christ. We should never forget the following maxim:

Some people had rather pray for forgiveness then fight temptation.

Too many people reject the value of discipline by always following the line of least resistance.

Fellow-laborer

Paul reminded the Corinthians that they were co-workers with the Creator. In Philippians 2:12-13 we have an even fuller statement concerning this tremendous association. To serve the Redeemer is life's grandest relationship.

I walk with the King

In pastures so green . . .

We glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14) as we partake in the glory of saving souls and edifying the brethren.

Success is not a destination; it is a road . . .

As long as we live there will be wonderful work for us to do in Jesus' name. To be a follower of the Man of Calvary makes our days so meaningful and productive.

O land of rest for thee I sigh, When will the moment come, When I shall lay my burden down

And dwell in peace at home . . .

What is Christianity? It is truly the only life that counts for time and eternity. May we pursue this magnificent obsession with the zest and gratitude it so richly deserves.

Heaven holds all to me
Brighter its glory shall be
Joy without measure
Will be my treasure
Heaven holds all to me . . .
Such hope should motivate us to pursue a closer walk with God.

Some Say Jesus Will Dwell On The Earth Again

CECIL CORKREN

Jesus, "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him" (I Peter 3:22). One of the very prevalent doctrines of our time is that Jesus will return one day soon to this earth. According to this theory, He will come to set up His kingdom and reign here on earth, and His throne will be in Jerusalem. This doctrine uses the book of Revelation, and Matthew chapter 24, as "proof." One evidence offered, that you occasionally see on bill boards, is Revelation 3:11. Is this an adequate proof text of Christ's return to earth? No. Nothing is said about when or where He will rule and reign. The thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20:2-3 is often taken literally, i.e. that He will reign on earth a thousand years before the end of time and the judgment. There are a number of things that clearly contradict this theory.

First, Jesus will not return to dwell on this earth. People sometimes follow the mistake in song books by singing "The Lord will return to this earth some sweet day," when we could change that to read in the lyrics "The Lord will return in His glory some day." Jesus told the apostles, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). The Bible teaches that Jesus is now at the right hand of God in heaven (Acts 2:33; Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22). Jesus is preparing a place in heaven, not here on earth. Further. Paul says that when Jesus returns we will meet the Lord in the air, not here on the earth (I Thessalonians 4:17). Peter declares that the "earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10).

Second, Jesus will not return to set up His kingdom, for His

May 1996 9

kingdom already exists! The kingdom is the church! Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Notice here that the text plainly says that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of those who heard the message that day. Paul spoke of uja kingdom in his day, later in the first century, as then being in existence. Speaking of God, he wrote, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). The church and the Lingdom are used interchangeably in (Matthew 16:18-19).

Third, the doctrine that teaches Christ will reign on earth a thousand years is taken from the book of Revelation which is highly figurative. In revelation 20:1-6 there are nine symbolic references made. Why take one literally? It doesn't make good sense to take eight of them symbolically, and one which supports their pet doctrine, as literal.

When Jesus was beginning His return to heaven (Acts 1:11), he promised He would return in the clouds of heaven. Revelation 1:7 bears this out. When Jesus returns He will receive up in the air to be with Him, those who have obeyed the gospel, and have remained faithful. They will have the wonderful privilege of being with the Lord forever (I Thessalonians 4:17).

Christians Only

ALAN E. HIGHERS

There is no plea more thrilling and meaningful in religious thought than the call to be Christians only—unsectarian, undenominational, unbranded members of the church revealed in the New Testament.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter proclaimed the gospel, exalted the resurrected Lord, and announced the conditions of salvation to the assembled multitude. He admonished them to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Three thousand souls gladly heard the word and were baptized (Acts 2:14-47).

Although they were obedient to the gospel, received the remission or forgiveness of their sins, and were added to the church, they did not become members of any denomination, sect, or religious party. They were just Christians, Christians only, if you will, "only this and nothing more."

This was the plea of the pioneer preachers of the gospel in this

country. There was an urgent effort to call men out of denominationalism with its human creeds, sectarian names, and party spirit, and to persuade them to be purely and simply Christians. It was acknowledged by brethren, and, so far as I know, has always been acknowledged, that some Christians could be affiliated with the denominations. There are some individuals who have heard, believed, and obeyed the truth, and have been added to the church about which we read in the New Testament, but who have later been influenced by spouse, family, or other causes to join a denomination. There are other instances where people have read, studied, and learned what to do to be saved, and have done what the three thousand did at Pentecost, but have thereafter affiliated with denominationalism. Many of these have not understood that one could be a Christian, a member of the church of the Lord, without belonging to any sect or denomination at all.

It was to these individuals that our brethren made an especially fervent plea, a clear call to come forth from denominationalism and to be Christians only; to forsake human creeds and sectarian names, and to be only what children of God were in the first century; to lay down the badges of sectarianism and religious division and to unite upon the divine name and the inspired word, but it was never stated, suggested, or even hinted that it was acceptable for them to remain where they were, continue as they were, and to be what they were.

It was within this context which I have described that brethren have declared, "We are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only." It is important, in fact, it is crucial to an understanding of this principle for us to define who is meant by "we." If we are referring to the New Testament church as such, one cannot scripturally say, "We are not the only Christians," for as we have seen from a previous study, all Christians are in the church, and it is neither smug, self-righteous, nor arrogant for us to say so. But, it is clear from an examination of the context that, in making the foregoing statement, brethren utilized "we" to refer to all Christians who were undenominational and unsectarian.

On May 5, 1917, G.C. Brewer preached a sermon at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on the theme, "Are We a Denomination?" He immediately recognized the need to define the terms of his address and asked as a main heading in his lesson, "Who are we?" In answering he replied: "No, we do not mean to include all Christians in the 'we'—if there are Christians in the denominations, we do not include them for we are speaking of Christians who are not in a denomination— Christians who do not compose a denomination." Let it, therefore, be clearly understood: When our brethren have stated that "we" are not the only Christians but that "we" are Christians only, the word we was not a reference to the New Testament church, but rather it was a reference to

May 1996 11

those Christians who have never affiliated with denominationalism. Thus: "We (Christians who are undenominational) are not the only Christians, but we are Christians only (in that we claim to be nothing more)." Therefore, it is not ugly, hateful, or sectarian, as has been suggested, to say that we, as members of the New Testament church, are the only Christians; for all the saved are in the church.

The brethren who proclaimed these principles in times past understood them; in the hands of neophytes, a little learning may, indeed, be a dangerous thing. Consider the powerful declarations of N.B. Hardeman:

"I do not claim, and have never so done, that those who have taken a stand with denominations are the only Christians upon the earth; but here is the contention: Having simply believed and obeyed the gospel, we propose to be Christians only and that we claim to be the only Christians. The Bible clearly predicts that the Lord's people, some of them, will be engaged in a state of confusion; and the Lord bids his people to come out of that state and just stand, if you please, as humble Christians only.

"The confusion of the twentieth century is denominationalism. There is no doubt about that." (Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. II, page 253).

The statement of Hardeman is beautifully consistent with that made by Brewer, and both are entirely consistent with New Testament teaching. It is manifest in the statements both of G.C. Brewer and of N.B. Hardeman that the "we" under consideration refers to "those who have taken no stand with denominations." It is significant that while brother Hardeman recognized that there may be Christians in the denominations, he regarded such as "a state of confusion," and not as a state of "sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among all the various denominations." The former has been uniformly acknowledged among our brethren, the latter is an innovation and a corruption of the truth.

F.D. Srygley, an early editor of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, was once asked if there were Christians in the denominations. He replied: "When there are Christians—not the best variety of Christians, to be sure, but the same sort that lengthen the lists of members of all 'our church books'—in saloons, in the ballroom, around the gambling tables, in the calaboose, behind the jail doors, in the penitentiary, and on the gallows, it should not create surprise or start a scandal if a few of the meanest specimens of them should occasionally be found temporarily in the most respectable and pious religious denominations of this degenerate age and God-forsaken country."

Srygley, so far as I know, however, never went so far as to suggest that sincere, knowledgeable, and devout Christians would be found in all the saloons, jails, and penitentiaries of his day. In fact, he plainly stated, "If there are Christians in all denominations," or in any denomination, they ought not to be there, and the sooner they get out, the better." I agree with Srygley.

It is regrettable that we have not continued to emphasize these principles with the same fervor as our brethren of an earlier day, and, more regrettable still, that we have permitted the plea to be nenewed by some whose comprehension of it appears to be woefully deficient. I am still convinced, however, that the plea to be Christians only, properly understood and properly presented, which I have heard and believed since my teen years, is the most exciting and needed message which we can deliver to this strife-torn and sin-weary world.

What About Hell?

GLENN COLLEY

A recent article in the religious section of the Birmingham News was about hell. Though not a pleasant subject, it is obvious that people have a large variety of opinions about the pit called hell. Here are some quotes from the article:

But damnation isn't what it used to be. Hell doesn't play well in growth-conscious churches or among feel-good baby boomers. "It is more of an absolute idea than baby boomers are comfortable with," said Robert Wuthnow, a sociologist at Princeton University. "We like to believe in the second and third and fourth chance."

These days, even fundamental churches that believe in eternal punishment in a physical hell play down the concept. "The thought of hell does not seem to motivate people to either serve God or accept Christ as their savior," says Bruce Kelpp...

E. Von Clemans, associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale . . . embraces the current psychological notion of hell as a separation from God. Salvation is peace of mind, even positive thinking. Damnation is fears, depressions, doubts, feeling bad about yourself.

"In a sense," he says, "it is eternal. God does not overrule our decision to reject Him. But it is not without hope because God is always waiting and anxious for us to accept His love and grace, and I think that

May 1996

offer extends into the after life."

Some disagree on whether hell is a location or a state of mind, but they agree on its temporary nature. "God's mercy is so comprehensive that it overcomes His anger, which means that people will be saved by divine mercy and end up in heaven," they believe.

Orthodox Jews believe all souls go to hell, but not for more than a year, according to Rabbi Solomon Schiff.

Perhaps it is note worthy that throughout the lengthy article there was not one scripture reference offered.

Consider some Bible references on the subject of hell and damnation, and what they plainly teach:

- 1. II Thessalonians 1:7-9
- A. When the Lord returns He will take vengeance on them that know not God, and those who have not obeyed the Gospel.
- B. Those miserable souls will be punished with everlasting destruction.
- C. Those souls will be forever away from God's presence and His glory.
 - 2. Matthew 25:31-46
- A. When Jesus returns, He will separate people into two different groups. On His right hand will be the saved. On His left will be the lost.
- B. To the lost He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - C. The punishment will be "everlasting."

There are other passages to consider, (Luke 16, John 5:28, etc.), but these make some powerful points.

Now raise with me an important question: Is teaching on hell inappropriate for our day? Be careful how you answer. Consider first Jude 22, 23: "And of some have compassion, making a difference. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire . . . " This statement is given in the form of instruction. Religious teachers who fail to teach about hell and motivate people with it's fearful images, are in violation of this passage.

We do not believe that the subject of hell should be fed as a steady spiritual diet to the neglect of other important Bible themes and motivations. It is important, however, to tell people the truth about damnation. They have the right to know. How much better for people living in sin to "see" hell now through their mind's eye while listening to a sermon, than to see it for the first time when entering the tormenting home of the Prince of darkness. We must love the sinner enough to do

all we can to keep him from hell. It is torment, it is eternal,

No wonder the Hebrew writer penned, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

The Kingdom

JUSTIN BRASFIELD

Editor's note: The following article is by one of our younger members at 6th Avenue in Jasper. Justin Brasfield is 13, and already a fine and talented writer.

We want to applaud all of our outstanding youth who want to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3: 18).

To go about our Father's Business in His Kingdom we must first know what His Kingdom is. Daniel 2:44 says "In the days of those kings, (Romans), shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break into pieces and consume all these other kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This says the Kingdom will be set up in the days of the Caesars of the Roman Empire. This is also the time in which Christ established His Church.

Our Lord's Kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom. It is made up of the souls of Christians that have obeyed the gospel, which was the last will of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This brings us to the thought of His cruel crucifixion and death. Did He die for the church, or the kingdom, or both (making them the same thing)?

"Giving thanks unto the Father always which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Colossians 1:12-14. If we are translated into the kingdom by the blood of Christ, and as Luke stated in Acts 20:28, "feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood," then the Kingdom and the Church are the same thing, for Jesus died only once. To determine how we should act in this kingdom we should pattern our lives after it's founder and ruler Jesus Christ. He is the King of His Kingdom. If we know the behaviour, the attitude, and the life of the King, we will know how to go about our Father's business in His Kingdom.

May 1996

Our King did not live the rich (in money) and proud life of a worldly kind and did not live in a palace. He was born in a manger because there was not room in the inn. He didn't have a velvet bed and a crown of jewels.

The eyes of our King were full of compassion. In Luke 7:13 it says, "And when he saw her he had compassion on her, and said weep not." His eyes were of great wisdom.

The hands of our King did not wear rings of gold and silver and touch finery, but they were hands of service as shown when he washed the disciples' feet, John 13:5. They were the hands of healing, Matthew 8:3, "And Jesus put forth his hand touching him, saying I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." His hands were also of sacrifice, for in Matthew 27:31, he was crucified.

His mouth was not of self adoration; it did not order slaves, or command earthly armies. In Matthew 11:28, 29 He pleads for us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." It would utter terms of salvation, "except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3.

In John 18:36 He would say "My Kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." The next verse (37) is a scriptural example of Jesus' humility, his meekness, and his lowliness. In this verse Pilate asked, "Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I bear witness unto the truth."

Jesus, in this sense (among all others), showed His great wisdom and courage through humility. Imagine that you were the King of kings and Lord of lords! Imagine that you had the power to call legions of angels at your fingertips! Jesus had these things, and much, much more. He is the Son of God. Yet, He is Supremely humble and lowly. When comparing our power, our abilities, our being to His, we find that His is infinitely greater. In addition, and as important, when comparing our pride, our boastings, to His, we find that His is infinitesimal. Yet, He had so much about which He could boast.

Jesus' feet did not walk on palace floors or in royal mansions, but walked to a place called Gethsemane, walked on water, walked up the hill of Golgotha, and were pierced with Roman spikes. He suffered and died for us that we might have eternal life if we follow in his foot steps.

Our King wore a crown of thorns that we might have eternal life. he was buried in a tomb, as we must be buried in baptism. He arose from

the grave as we can arise from baptism to newness of life.

Jesus paved the road of heaven for us. Some day the King shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the earth." (Matthew 25:34).

Don't you want to go to that kingdom some day, that heavenly kingdom? Christ has no way to expand his kingdom but through you and me. We must let our hands be His hands, our feet be His feet, our mouth be His mouth, our heart be His heart. When we are with our friends, or our peers, we must not be ashamed of our Lord. When we're at school or with the football team we must not be ashamed of our Jesus, because if we are, we will never make it to that heavenly kingdom.

"Don't Fall Out Along The Way"

W.A. HOLLEY

The caption of this article is taken from Genesis 45:16-24, ASV.

In the context Joseph is sending his brothers into the land of Canaan to bring their father, Jacob, down into Egypt, to Goshen. As they go they are instructed to keep their minds on the purpose of their journey, and not to get lost along the way. We may not know just what Joseph had in mind, but we know how easily we can become distracted, and thus lose our way.

Jacob's family was a special family in God's sight. But there were many problems in Jacob's family just as there are many problems in our families today. Jacob had a favorite son (which should never be), and his brother hated him. They planned to kill him, but he was finally sold as a slave into the land of Egypt. Joseph, because of his grand character, and in spite of many unfortunate acts, finally became Governor of Egypt, second only to the Pharoah. We suggest that you read the full account (Genesis 37-50). Although we do not live under the laws of the Old Testament, there are many wonderful lessons there taught for our *learning* and *admonition* (Colossians 2:14-17; Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

Today God's family is His church (I Timothy 3:14-15). We enter God's family or church through the new birth (John 3:3-5; II Corinthians 5:17). The Lord God adds to His church all who believe obediently,

May 1996 17

repent of their sins, confess Jesus' worthy name, are haptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, and who remain faithful to Him (Acts 2:1-4, 36-38, 41-42, 47; Revelation 2:10). "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God . . ." "For our citizenship is in heaven . . ." (Ephesians 2:19; Philippians 3:20, ASV).

Christian friends, since you have started toward heaven, you must take great care lest you "Fall Out Along The Way." God keeps those who keep themselves through obedience to His will (II Timothy 1:12 with I Peter 4:19). "Once in grace, always in grace," is based upon an misunderstanding of God's word (I Corinthians 9:27; Matthew 25:30). Heaven would be ruined if drunkards and fornicators, et. al., could inhabit heaven (Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-9). Clean up your lives, brethren!

What are some of the dangers which might cause us to Fall Out Along The Way? We shall note—

- (1) We must avoid becoming mired in the swamps of religious division. Religious division is very destructive. A football team that does not play as a unit cannot win. There are seven ones in the Bible: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God (Ephesians 4:3-6). A house, or a church, or a city divided against itself cannot stand (Matthew 12:22-32). Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20ff). "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10, ASV). Don't become lost fighting each other.
- (2) Resolve not to become drowned in the ocean of doubts and fears and uncertainties of life. God Almighty is the anchor of your soul (Hebrews 6:19). Fear and doubts are emotions that destroy those who have a weak faith. In the days of John the apostle, when Christians often suffered persecution and death, he wrote: "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:17-18, ASV).

Dear Reader, do not be of a doubtful mind (Luke 12:29, here, consider context). Human beings are far more important than what they possess (Luke 12:13-21). One does not have to possess great wealth, or a great education, or hold high political office in order to go to heaven. In the midst of all troubles, God is ever with His children (Hebrews 13:5-6; see Matthew 28:18-20).

(3) Uncontrolled anger leads many from the path of truth and

righteousness. Words or deeds spoken or done in anger does great injury to the cause of Christ. Anger is not always bad. God and Jesus are said to have been angry (Mark 3:5; Hebrews 3:11; 4:3). Anger is said to be "the strongest of all passions" (Vine, page 26). When wrath is permitted to smolder in the minds of its victims, it is deadly indeed (Romans 2:8; Galatians 5:19-21). Do not allow your anger to cause you to become lost along the way. Some become angry with the church, the elders, the preacher, or another member of the church and, because they cannot have their way, abandon God and His church altogether. Stop, look, and listen, before it is too late.

- (4) Brethren, do not allow envy to cause you to become side-tracked along the way. What is envy? Envy may seem like a mild and harmless mind-set of not serious consequences; but it is deadly indeed. What is envy? It is a feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others. A bad sense always attaches it. "A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Proverbs 14:30). "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16). God is not the God of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33), nor is He sympathetic to it. Back of the crimes of Cain, King Saul, King Ahab, and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the sin of envy. Joseph was sold into slavery because of envy on the part of his brethren. Yes, envy perpetrated the most atrocious crime ever planned in hell or executed on earth in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10). Malice and spite are deadly sins closely related to envy.
- (5) A lack of brotherly love causes many brethren to become lost along the way. We must not love in word only, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:13-18). Truly, love can be known only from the actions it prompts. For example, God so loved the world that He gave His Son to save it (John 3:16). In Luke 10:25-37, we have a demonstration of love in action. The lesson: On the Jericho Road, a man was beaten and robbed, a priest and a levite (two religious persons) passed by on the other side. A Samaritan, a despised man, stopped, rendered aid to the unfortunate man, took him to an inn, paid his bills and promised to pay more if need, thus showing genuine love for his fellowman. Jesus said, "Go, and do thou likewise." Do you love God? show it; do you love your family? Show it; Do you love the church? Show it.

We cannot fight the good fight of faith while using the devil's weapons (I Corinthians 13:4-13; 16:13-14; John 13:34-35). The race is not won until the race is over (Galatians 5:7). Don't Fall Out Along The Way.

Name Of The Church?

MIKE BENSON

- 1. Consider: If I mention to you the dog of John, I have told you that the dog belongs to John, but I have not told you the name of his dog.
- 2. Consider: If I mentioned to you the wife of Sam, I have told you that Sam is married, but I have not told you the name of his wife.
- 3. Consider: If I mention to you the *church of Christ*, I have told you that the church belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18), but I have not named His church.

The church of the Bible has no name. It is simply referred to as "the church" (Colossians 1:18), "the church of the Lord" (Acts 20:28, ASV), "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:2), or the church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

I have been unable to find the names Lutheran Church, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Baptist Church, Catholic Church, First Christian Church, Episcopal Church, Mormon Church, Nazarene Church, Presbyterian Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Brethren Church, Etc. anywhere in the Bible.

if these names cannot be found in the Scriptures, from where did they originate?

Do We Really Care?

EDSEL BURLESON

Herb Smith once wrote about a man who worked on a railroad in Indiana, who, one morning, discovered that a bridge on the line had fallen down. Remembering that a train was almost due he started along the road to meet it. As the train approached, he raised his hands and pointed toward the bridge; but the train sped on. Seeing that there was no time to lose, he threw himself across the rails. The engineer, seeing it, thought he was a mad-man, and instantly shut off steam, put on the brakes, and stopped the train. The man arose, told his story, and thus saved the train from disaster.

John Bizzell told a similar story of some men who, risking their lives, rushed to free a man from a heavy beam that was crushing him,

as the doctor feverishly worked to keep him alive. But he died. And as they pulled the doctor away, she looked back at the dead man with hurting heart and said, "I'm a bad loser!"

These stories should cause every Christian to take a good look at his or her concern for those who are dying spiritually. Paul frequently expressed his concern for the lost in such statements as: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:1-3). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

Real concern does not allow a Christian to be content as long as there are those in physical or spiritual desperation who can be helped by them. "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Rudy Wray tells about a certain person who came into his office one day excited and enthusiastic because of a home Bible study with a friend that was to take place that afternoon. The study was to be about Matthew 16:13-20.

Later that afternoon, they met again, but now the mood had changed entirely. Enthusiasm was now replaced by tears of sorrow. The friend had cancelled the study. It was truly a sorrowful moment, yet as he tried to console the person, he said it occurred to him that a great victory had been won. Here was a child of God so deeply concerned about the lost soul of another as to weep tears of sorrow. The Psalmist said it this way: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).

More concern for others would characterize each of us if we would realize these truths expressed by an unknown author.

"Christ has no hands but my hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but my feet
To lead men in His way
He has no help but my help
To bring men to His side;
He has no tongue but my tongue
To tell men how he died!"

Compassion

GLENN A. POSEY

Compassion literally means, "suffering with another; hence having pity or sympathy for another." Character, conversion, conviction, consecration and compulsion all are attributes of the Christian. So, also, is compassion.

Without compassion, a person is cold, unfeeling, unkind and uncaring. Christianity is a warm, feeling (empathy) religion.

God is a compassionate God. "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, gracious longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psalm 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8, also, Exodus 34:6-7).

Jesus is a compassionate Lord "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him" (Matthew 20:34). Jesus was moved by those blind folks. He knew how it would be not to be able to see. Because of His compassion he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, fed the hungry, and even raised the dead. Would to God all of us would have His kind of compassion.

The Good Samaritan had compassion. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Luke 10:33). He just practiced the golden rule (Matthew 7:12). Did he have time? He took time. He felt for that poor man.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8). Do we believe and practice this beautiful verse? When members of the church suffer, do we suffer with them? Do we help bear their burdens?

John said it best. "But whose hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (I John 3:17).

Forgiveness

BOBBY KEY

The late Knute Rockne, who was the great football coach at Notre Dame from 1918 until his death in 1931, said: "A football player cannot

have sufficient energy unless his emotions are under spiritual control." In fact, he went so far as to say that he would not have a man on his team who did not have a genuinely friendly feeling for every fellow player. "I have to get the most energy out of a man," he said, and have discovered that it cannot be done if he hates another man. Hate blocks his energy, and he isn't up to par until he eliminates it and develops a friendly feeling."

The reason to forgive another person is not primarily a favour to the individual that you forgive as much as to yourself. Forgiveness is the greatest act of self-interest in which you can possibly engage. When you forgive you quit committing suicide. A burden is lifted from your life. Happiness, together with a sense of release, comes with a measure that few have ever known.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). Forgiving means all emotional impact has been removed from the things which have happened. And once you have completely forgiven a person, you can think or talk about the things they did to you with no more emotional impact than you would have in discussing the price of a sack of potatoes at the market. Dear reader, if you would be healthy in mind and in body, forgive.

"No Man Cared For My Soul"

DAVID WADE

David lamented, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). When pursued by his enemies, earthly ties seemed to fail him. He felt he was a stranger among people who didn't care if he lived or died. For sure, some desired that David were dead. However, he seemed momentarily to forget the friends who cared very much for him and helped him escape the wrath of King Saul.

The very depressed feelings of David are typical of many people today who are lost and without hope. Some feel that no one cares for their soul. Perhaps it is as the song suggests, "You never mentioned him to me."

Some feel so distraught they convince themselves that God could never love a sinner like them. And yet we are assured, "Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:7). Jesus used the simple illustration of the birds sacrificed by the poor to underscore God's care. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7). No one should ever think for a moment that our God does not care, or cannot love the sinner. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

God's concern for the sinner is expressed in many ways. God has given the inspired word, his message of love and salvation, to the world. He gives to all, "life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

In addition, God sends you and me, faithful Christians, to share the good news with the sinner (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Solomon declares "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). Paul said, "I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more" (I Corinthians 9:19). James emphasizes the great blessing of soul-winning. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

When we have the opportunity to help the lost and refuse to help them, God will not hold us guiltless. Ezekiel's experience demonstrates this fact. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him no warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not him from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also theu hast delivered thy soul" (Ezekiel 3:17-21).

Can we say with Paul, "I am pure from the blood of all men, For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27)? Surely, there is someone we know who needs our help today. Let's get busy and show them that we care for their soul.

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