

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Prostitution, Harlotry, And Whoredom

The Bible talks about prostitution, harlotry, and whoredom. All three have reference to the same general practice. They are condemned of God and those who engage in these immoral and impure acts will be lost for all eternity unless they repent of them and obey God.

1. Prostitution.

It has been said that this is the oldest profession in the world. It is the act of selling one's self, of a woman taking money for sex.

This is a practice that has never been stamped out. In some parts of the world it is even legalized and supervised for health purposes,

Young girls are often led into this way of life by older people. Sometime they are even forced into it or kept in homes of ill repute against their wishes. There are rackets where women are furnished to business people, or they are offered in return for some service. Night clubs and bars are their favorite places to hang around.

The lower class prostitute takes to the street and is labelled a street walker.

In the Old Testament we have a reference made to prostitution, when it says, "Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness." (Leviticus 19 : 29).

It is sad to think that a young girl, or even an older women, would sell her body for money. This is about as low in sin as one can go. But it is likewise true with a man who would offer the opposite sex money for her return favors. For there to be one, there has to be the other, and both are equally guilty of sin. This is impurity glorified. It is a work of the flesh and those who do such cannot enter the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6 : 9, 10; Galatians 5 : 19-21; Revelation 21 : 8).

Parents have a great responsibility in bringing up their children, and especially their girls. They must bring them up pure and whole and teach them to always remain godly in all of their conduct. They must guard them against bad characters and their influence. They must see to it that they have the proper friends to associate with. They must bring them up with love and care and instill within them the highest of morals.

The boys should be brought up to respect young ladies and never to say or do anything around them that they would be ashamed for their parents to know about. They must also be brought up to be pure and godly in their conduct. They must be taught high moral principles.

As far as prostitution is concerned, the only way it can be wiped out is through proper moral teaching. But since there will always be some who will not give their children the training and teaching they need, and because there are always some who will

exploit others, then probably there will always be some who will give themselves over to this immoral practice. This is true here in India and all parts of the world. But that doesn't mean that we should give up and quit and condone it. It is like murder or any other evil. We must continue to oppose it and try to save as many from it as possible.

2. Harlotry.

This was another term referring to those women who had prostituted themselves or who offered themselves for hire. The Bible speaks many times of this class of women. Solomon describes her activity and warns that her house is the way to hell. Listen to what he says : "For at the window of my house I look through my casement, And behold among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night : And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house : Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with the linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning : let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey : He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; all a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the share, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded : yea, many strong men

have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." (Proverbs 7 : 6-27).

The city of Corinth in the first century was a great city. It was a port city and it was a centre of all kinds of immorality, the eating of meats offered to idols, and many other evils and problems. The church was there and it was faced with these problems. The Apostle Paul wrote to them and said, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient : all things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord : and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot ? God forbid. What ? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body ? for two, saith he, shall become one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6 : 12-20). Paul was saying several things here :

- (1) He points out that he could eat meat but if it was going to become a problem for someone then he could leave it off.
- (2) The body is not for fornication but it belongs to the Lord.
- (3) He tells the Christians at Corinth that they are members of Christ, that they represent him. That being true, should those members be taken and joined to a harlot ? He says that God forbids such. If the harlot was immoral, and she was then that would make the members of Christ's body immoral if they joined themselves to her.
- (4) He reminds them that to be joined to a harlot then they would become one body with her. That is, when a man's body and

a woman's body are joined then they become one body or one flesh. This is true whether in a scriptural marriage or in an act of immorality. But the Christian is joined to the Lord and is therefore one spirit with the Lord. Could the Christian then leave that high position and stoop so low as to be joined to a harlot?

- 5) Then he exhorts them to flee fornication or such an immoral act. He warns that those who do commit fornication sin against their body. In this case, they were destroying their body through a sinful act and perhaps by bringing some disease upon themselves. In addition they were destroying themselves spiritually through such immoral conduct.
- 6) Finally, he reminds them that they were not their own but they had been bought with a price. They had been purchased with the blood of Christ. They should therefore keep their bodies holy because it was the temple of the Holy Ghost. Surely the Holy Ghost would not want to dwell in a body that was engaging in the sinful act of fornication.

In Old Testament times, as well as in New Testament times, and the example that we just referred to at Corinth, a number of the heathen nations, peoples, and cities had fertility cults. They had sacred prostitutes along with shrines and goddesses. You will observe that the Bible even refers to various ones of their idols as being female goddesses. Of course God condemned that and warned his people not to go off into such practices.

Even here in India the sexual organs are glorified in some of the religions and there have been cults of "sacred" prostitutes where sexual activity was engaged in, and may still be practiced, in honor of some god or goddess. Needless to say, this is an abomination to God and to his people. There is no such thing to be found in the church or among the Lord's people.

3. Whoredom.

Whoredom is another descriptive expression or title for harlotry and prostitution. A whore is a frequent fornicator, one who is immoral, one who is habitually involved in illicit sex. The scrip-

tures speak often of this practice. The wise man said, "For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men." (Proverbs 23 : 27, 28). Speaking to Israel, God said, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow : for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 23 : 17, 18).

The New Testament writers state again and again the final end for all whores. Paul wrote, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Ephesians 5 : 5). In writing to Timothy, Paul says, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully : Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." (1 Timothy 1 : 8-11). The Hebrew writer said, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled : but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Hebrews 13 : 4). Then the Apostle John warned, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death." (Revelation 21 : 8). Again, he said, "For without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Revelation 22 : 15). All these verses are saying the same thing. They are saying that whoremongers, those who are involved in whoredom, cannot be saved as long as they continue in such a corrupt way of life, but in the end they will be judged by God and will be cast into the lake of fire to be destroyed.

The Lord spoke of Israel from time to time as having committed whoredom. That is, instead of remaining loyal and faithful to him, they had gone off to join forces with heathen nations or had bowed down to false gods or the idols of their day. He condemns them for this practice. (Ezekiel 16 : 20; 16 : 28; 43 : 9; Jeremiah 3 : 2).

After obeying the Lord, becoming members of his family, it is possible for us also to go back into sin, or become involved with some religious sect, cult, or denomination, and thus to commit spiritual whoredom. That means that when we belong to the Lord, and then do such, that we are selling or prostituting our very souls for the praise and glory of men, or for some material gain. This again is clearly condemned in the scriptures.

In conclusion, let us not be deceived and misled by the world to sell our bodies or our souls for the little that we can get in return. God wants us to remain pure, physically and spiritually. It is in our interest that we remain so, both for the sake of this world, and the world that is yet to come.



**associate
editorial**

Denominational And Interdenominational Churches

Today we live in a world of churches. There are all kinds of churches. We enter into a city like entering into a market where there are all kinds of shops, so there are all types of churches. Almost all of these churches are either denominational or interdenominational.

The word denomination suggests fraction, division, and religiously speaking, a sect. It should be pointed out that there were no denominational churches in existence in the first century, A.D., when the apostles lived and preached. There was, however, an attempt made, at least once, in this direction by some erring Christians at a place called Corinth. But as soon as the apostle Paul learned about it he very strongly condemned them in no lesser words than these: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by 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 perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1 : 10-13). Had the apostle not spoken immediately against their action there would have then come into existence a St Paul's church, and a St Apollos' church, and a St Peter's church, and surely, many others such churches. But as long as the apostles lived the church remained united as one body (Ephesians 4 : 4), and individual Christians as many members of the one body (1 Corinthians 12 : 12-27).

Soon after the death of the apostles, however, there began a departure from the New Testament pattern. The forces that began to distract the church were from many sides. Externally, there was Greek Philosophy, and internally the church was torn by various interpretations of its relationship to Judaism. In fact, the impact of Judaism was so strong that it is still alive in denominational churches in various forms, such as, saying of the ten commandments of the Old Testament, burning of incense and candles, a separate priesthood, etc. But the problems originating from the pride of men also led to new interpretations and changes in the organization of the church as ambitious men led off groups of disciples. It is worthy of note that the apostles had already warned the church that the departure would come through drifting away from the original teaching. (1 Timothy 4 : 1, 2; 2 Timothy 4 : 3). Even though there was a rapid growth in the number of

sects from the middle of second century, but by the beginning of sixth century, and to be exact in 606 A.D. the first denomination, what is now known as the Roman Catholic Church, was established when the Roman Emperor designated, Boniface III, Pope of Rome, was formally and legally recognized as the universal bishop of the church. But later with the rise of Protestant movement, which actually began as early as twelfth century and concluded in sixteenth century, various protestant churches came into existence. Today there are over three hundred various denominational churches in the world, also known as Protestant churches, with different names, organizations and doctrines. But since they are not the church which Christ established (Matthew 16 : 18; Acts 2), and, in fact, are contrary to his will and prayer (John 17 : 20, 21), they are, therefore, as we can see, merely man-made organizations. All denominations follow the New Testament partly but not fully, for if they did they would no longer be a denomination.

But with the growth of the various denominational churches and the confusion and division they represent many members of these churches began getting tired and disgusted of them and in an effort to bring harmony within these denominational churches they began working and fellowshiping with all denominational groups, irrespective of their conflicting belief. Today there are various interdenominational evangelical organizations. But such is wrong in view of 2 John 9-10, which states, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." There cannot be three hundred or even three or two doctrine of Christ. There is only one doctrine as revealed to us in his New Testament, and if we all follow it only then we will all be one body, the church of Christ, and nothing else.

I realize the fact that there are many sincere and fine people in those denominational or interdenominational churches, who might be zealous and are doing many wonderful works in the name of Christ. But not every one who does things in the name of Christ is going to enter into God's kingdom, Christ said, "but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," will enter into His kingdom. (Matthew 7 : 21-23).

Thank God, we can follow His will through His word. We can be only Christians and members of the church of Christ as were the disciples in the first century. We can do the same thing what they did to become members of Christ's church, and we can have the same blessings of the Lord what they received in doing so. (Acts 2 : 38, 41, 47).

The Christian's Responsibility

C.L. Powell

The responsibility of a Christian actually turns to an opportunity by the great blessings that comes as a result of the promise of a Christian life. I am sure that the greatest neglect in the church today is that so few assume the needed responsibility.

First, our responsibility to God in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ.

1. Putting them first in our lives.
(Luke 9 : 23-24).
2. Worshipping God through Christ.
(John 4 : 23-24).

Second, the love and concern for our fellowmen—Luke 22 : 39. And thirdly, the love and first place for the church—Matt. 6 : 33.

These responsibilities could certainly be wrapped up in the first, that is our responsibility to love and care of God and His Son. Very few understand that if we put them first then all of the other will fall in line. Remember that Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14 : 15). With this life we will love our fellowman and we will want to worship God and we will have a concern and love for our fellowman. (I John 3 : 11). "For this

is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another". In verse 14 of the same chapter he says, "He that loveth not his own brother abideth in death". Then he goes on in verse 15 to say, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The Bible is full of passages that teach the necessity of loving and forgiving one another. To constantly and continually hold a grudge is unbecoming to a child of God. We need one another so much in this life that it seems that it would not take Christianity to draw us together, but that the mere fact that we are of the human race and have knowledge of the fact that we do need each other should be enough. In John 13 : 35, the writer says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Does the community around us know that we are His ? Does the way that we act in the presence of our fellowman tell him anything ? How many of us are reaching down to help someone in a strain ? May God help us to help recover those that are lost!

The youth of our time are faced with a terrible challenge. Will they continue to believe the Bible in a time when skepticism, modernism, and liberalism are rampant. This is a time when the Bible is attacked in many educational institutions. We that are older should be there to help them in these shakey years.

Worldliness and loss and intimate relations are being condoned and sanctioned. We should be there to try to pull them over the hump. May God help us to accept our responsibility.

A hunter raised his rifle and took careful aim at a large bear. When about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft soothing voice, "Isn't it better to talk than to shoot ? What do you want ? Let us negotiate the matter."

Lowering his rifle, the hunter replied, "I want a fur coat."
 "Good," said the bear, "that is a negotiable question. I only want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise!"

They sat down to negotiate, and after a time, the bear walked away alone. The negotiations had been successful. The bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had his fur coat.

Satan says, "Let us negotiate." But there are some things that cannot be compromised. If we try to compromise with sin, we are deceiving ourselves and will fall into a trap that will destroy us. "Abstain from every appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5 : 22)

Selected

A Matter of Life or Death

Mike Stoma

In this passage, the Apostle Paul exhorts his Christian brother to hold fast to the basic, life-giving traditions which were taught by him and the other Apostles. These basic Christian traditions are rooted in the concepts of believing that Jesus is the Son of God, having faith that God will do what he promises, and love for God and fellowman. Paul also warns in many of his other writings in the New Testament that any deviation from the basic principles he and the Apostles have taught could result in spiritual death.

Throughout the centuries, as the church has evolved, man has strayed away from the basic teachings of Christ and the Apostles, adding his own traditions to those which were preached long ago. The addition of these man-made traditions to church doctrine has resulted in the devastating, decaying division of the church, Christ's body.

Today, by examining the recent actions of certain denominations, we can see how man is adding more and more of his decaying traditions to the true traditions of the church. Most of these traditions are added in the names of popularity and convenience, lowering the high standards of our Lord in order to appeal to a moral and spiritually decaying society.

Catholicism is a prime example of a "christian faith" which makes constant changes in true Christian traditions for the sake of popularity and convenience for its members. The traditions that were handed down by God and taught in the Bible are of little importance to the catholic faith. If a rule or commandment is unpopular or inconvenient to its members, all they have to do is appeal to the papacy for the necessary changes. In order to keep his popularity, the Pope, usually and eventually, gives the "co-

mandment" which changes catholic traditions and further divides the true traditions of the true church.

The Episcopal church is another "christian body" which creates traditions that splits the true church even more. In the last few years, Episcopalians have split within their own religious sect, disagreeing on whether or not to let women become priests, and whether or not to permit homosexual to openly participate in their church rituals. Whether the Episcopalians resolve these problems or not is of no importance. What is important is that **NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH WHICH IS REVEALED IN THE PAGES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.** and all for the sake of popularity and convenience.

Brethren, now, more than ever before, we must make ourselves aware of any man-made traditions that may creep into the doctrine of the true church. We must not compromise ANY of the Lord's word on behalf of popularity and convenience! We must continually examine ourselves, our worship, and our motives so that man-made traditions do not infiltrate and divide our body, the Lord's body. After all, **IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE, OR DEATH!**

Judging Others On The Basis Of Numbers

Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr.

Few people in the brotherhood have spent more time than I have in recent years studying the statistics that relate to church growth. I believe that these statistics have a very real value, though that value is not as great as some seem to think. I am seriously concerned, however, with the way some brethren are using these statistics. It seems to me that there is a growing trend in congregations and individuals to judge one another's faithfulness on the basis of statistics which measure visible growth : the number

of baptisms, attendance records, contribution records, the number of dropouts and the like.

On this, as on most other matters, there are several extremes which we should be equally careful to avoid. One dangerous extreme would be to care about numbers just for the sake of numbers. I would be very concerned about the extreme if I thought it was common but thus far I have not seen very much indication of this particular error. Another extreme which is all too common is the position of those who do not care about numbers at all. Obviously numbers are not important within themselves but numbers represent people and people are important.

In the new Testament, especially in the book of Acts, there is a great emphasis on numbers and growth. Rapid growth in numbers was one of the most notable characteristics of the early church. People who are suspicious of any congregation that reports rapid growth may be using the "Sour grapes" approach as a defense mechanism to excuse their own lack of growth. There is, however, another error which is more specifically the subject of this article and that is the tendency of those who are reporting rapid growth to judge as being unfaithful those who are not reporting rapid growth.

The numbers which are typically used in studies of church growth are useful in looking at overall trends throughout the brotherhood and in studying growth patterns with individual congregations. However, there are so many complex factors involved that any judgment of the faithfulness of other congregations or individuals should be left entirely to God. Only God knows all the factors that are involved. Some fields of labour are more difficult than others. Some individuals are more receptive than others. Two congregations may be equally faithful and equally diligent in their evangelistic efforts and yet, because of factors other than faithfulness or effort, one congregation may experience rapid growth while the other does not. It would be a serious error of judgment to conclude that congregations which are not experiencing rapid growth are unfaithful. The error that is involved in such judgments is in the underlying philosophical assumptions that are implied.

Some of our brethren seem to have accepted a philosophy of pragmatism. We often hear the claim that rapid growth is proof that God has blessed a congregation and therefore that God must prove of everything they are doing. However, the logical conclusion of that line of reasoning would lead one to leave the church of Christ and join one of the denominations that is experiencing more rapid growth. In fact, if the conclusion of that line of reasoning is carried far enough, it would lead one to renounce Christianity and join the Communists. They are growing faster than any other group. Success in achieving numerical growth is not a guarantee of God's approval. An increase in size is not always healthy spiritual growth. Sometimes it is just an unhealthy swelling. An increase in size is healthy spiritual growth only if it is based on God's word.

Those who assume that rapid growth in numbers is a guarantee of God's approval and that the lack of such growth is proof of unfaithfulness are falling into the error of another false philosophy: determinism. The way many of us talk about conversion clearly reveals a false assumption of determinism. We do not ask a person, "When did you convert?" Instead we ask, "When were you converted" We do not use the active voice, the way the Bible does in original text. Instead we use the passive voice. Our speech betrays an underlying assumption that conversion is something that we do to others. The truth of the matter is that conversion is something that a person does for himself. Of course, God is active in conversion; the word is active and the Christian evangelist is active. But the person who obeys the gospel is also active. He is not passive. He is a free moral being. He is a creature of choice. He can choose to accept or to reject the gospel. When we judge other congregations or individuals as being unfaithful on the basis of numbers, we leave out the important factor of the free will of the people they are seeking to influence. The fact that a congregation is not successful in achieving rapid growth in numbers does not prove that they are unfaithful in preaching the gospel.

All things being equal, the congregation that is most faithful and most diligent in its evangelistic efforts will experience the greatest growth in numbers. But the point is that all things are not

equal. It is the error of deterministic linear causality to assume that the right source sending the right message through the right channel can control what the receiver of that message will do. It is not as simple as that. There are too many other factors involved. And the most important factor is the free will of the persons who received the message.

But if we are not to judge the success of others on the basis of numbers, how should we measure success in evangelism? For those we seek to influence, success may be defined, at least in part, in terms of whether or not they are baptized and that can easily be reported in number. However, success for the Christian evangelist is not defined in terms of baptisms but in terms of proclamation. Like the apostle Paul, Christ sent us not to baptize but to preach the gospel.

The criticism of this article is not the "sour grapes" excuse of one who is suspicious of any congregation reporting rapid growth. The congregation where I serve as one of the elders, the Garnett Road congregation in Tulsa, Okla., is in the "top ten" in every category. Typically used to measure church growth: second largest number of baptisms (340 in 1976, over 900 in 3½ years since we started our bus ministry); second largest bus ministry (26 buses, 800+ riders) sixth largest attendance in Sunday morning Bible classes, Sunday morning worship and Sunday evening worship; seventh largest membership; eighth largest Wednesday evening attendance and tenth largest average weekly contribution. Please understand, therefore, that this is not the criticism of one who has no interest in numerical growth. This criticism simply reflects my very real concern with what I seen as some dangerous philosophical assumptions.

Those who are not interested in numbers need to repent of their indifference to the salvation of the people represented by those numbers. Those who are interested in numbers just for the sake of numbers should repent of their shallowness. And those who judge the faithfulness of others on the basis of a simplistic approach to church growth statistics should repent of their narrow pride. We should all rejoice when more and more congregations report rapid growth in numbers. But we must not judge all others as

being unfaithful. Noah preached for 120 years and only had seven lasting conversions to report but where would we be today without his work?

The Bible: A Complete Revelation From God

Gary C. Hampton

In the last two hundred years, it has been far from unusual for a new religious body to appear. Most of these new groups have claimed that God has given them some new revelation and it is their purpose to carry it to the world. Events such as these may cause one to question his own faith and wonder if he really does have the complete revelation from God in the Bible. In other words, does he have the essential ingredients necessary to form a belief which will bring about salvation?

The New Testament does not leave any indication that there is a revelation to follow. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work." (II Timothy 3: 16-17.) All of man's spiritual needs are provided for in the Scriptures. (II Peter 1: 3-4.) If this were not the case, Peter could not have gone on to say, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (Verse 10.) John by inspiration says that we have all that is necessary to receive eternal life. (John 20: 30-31). Paul was convinced that he had preached the gospel and warned against anyone who preached anything contrary to it. (Galatians 1: 6-9.) He also admonished the Corinthians to "stand fast in the faith." (I Corinthians 16: 13). All of these passages point strongly to the belief of the apostles in a complete revelation from God. It is no wonder that Paul warned Timothy against those who would turn away from the truth. (II Timothy 4: 1-5).

The New Testament does have a claim to completeness. In speaking of Colossians 2 : 9, James D. Bales says, "Since in him 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' there is no one who could bring a fuller revelation of God". He goes on to pen these words : "Immediately after saying that in Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily', the apostle Paul said : 'and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power,' (Colossians 2 : 10). Since in Christ there is nothing lacking in God's revelation of himself to man, there is nothing lacking in Christ for man." Further, "Christ did not prophesy that anyone would take his place. Who could supersede the Son of God ? He is God's spokesman to us today, and his word has been revealed and confirmed by the Spirit through the inspired men of the first century. (Hebrews 1 : 2; 2 : 3-4; John 16 : 12-14; Matthew 28 : 20; Acts 2 : 42). The apostle Paul said that the new covenant was to be everlasting. (Hebrews 13 : 20-21).

While all of these verses will show the Bible to be God's complete revelation to man, I feel that a proper understanding of Jude 3 is the strongest argument of all. Jude writes, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints". Vine says of the word here translated *faith*, "by metonymy, what is believed, the contents of belief, faith." Of the word *once* he says, "once for all, of what is perpetual validity, not requiring repetition".

After observing the meaning of these words, one can easily see why Woods makes the following comment: "The 'faith' for which Jude's readers were thus earnestly to contend.....is the sum of all that which Christians are to believe and obey." Also,

This faith has *once for all (hapax)* not simply formerly as the King James' Version implies, but for all time been delivered to the saints. The meaning is that the truth is delivered for all time; it is a permanent deposit, it will never be superseded, emended or modified. As it now stands it is a perfect, adequate, complete and inviolable deposit of truth, providing the means with which to

confute the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine. This deposit of truth was infallibly delivered, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 1 : 11; II Peter 1 : 21), and no part of it is superfluous or unnecessary.

While all of these new religions, to my knowledge, claim that the Bible is inspired, they attempt to hold to the inspiration of their new revelation. One can well see that this will not work. There is no mention of a new covenant that is to follow the one delivered by Christ. The gospel is complete and was established to last forever. Finally, the faith was delivered to the saints during the time of Jude and that faith is complete, so there is no need for any addition of it.

Some Thoughts on the Place of the Old Testament Today

Jack W. Vancil

More than ever, the message of the Old Testament is needed in the classroom and in the pulpit. We live in a world pervaded by the spirit of mysticism and the occult rather than the Spirit of God. Also, recent years are potent testimony that the spirit of scientific achievement has faltered in the enrichment of the inner man.

We have the opportunity to let the Old Testament (unfortunately, often perceived as "a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore") speak afresh to our generation. Its power and majesty will become apparent to those who take the time to hear its great truths. We do ourselves and the world a disservice if we ignore this citadel of spiritual insight. Jesus and his disciples made frequent use of the Old Testament. The Scriptures were accorded a historical continuity with the emerging revelation of the "New." Jesus' words are well-known: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets: I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them."

An interesting point from grammar is the fact that the New Testament often employs the Greek perfect tense when introducing a quote from the Old Testament. The phrase, "It is written in the book of the prophets" (Acts 7 : 42), serves to illustrate the use of this tense. The purpose of this verb is to link a past act with its present consequence. Thus the writer or speaker uses the perfect to emphasize that the message from "the Scriptures" *stand written*. In other words, that which was said of old is "still ringing in our ears." Therefore, respect for the Old Testament never wanes; it continues to have significance for those who have inherited the New.

Nevertheless, the centuries since have proved a weary time for the Old Testament. A preservation of the unity of all the Bible has not been one of the virtues of institutional Christianity. A general frustration with the contents of this so-called "Jewish Book" led to an almost historical divorce between the two testaments. The Old Testament was practically an embarrassment. In fact, the issue became so critical, that in Germany during the close of the last century, the removal of the Old Testament from the Christian Church was seriously considered. Even presently, some continue to speak of "the Old Testament problem."

However, it is certain that we live in a brighter day. We have entered a new era of Old Testament study. The many and varied questions raised over the centuries have, at long last, led to a more positive re-appraisal of this ancient volume. The Old Testament is, in fact, being rediscovered. Some scholars now speak of the "dynamic unity" of the Bible. Numerous discoveries from the ancient Near East continue to illumine our pathway. The power and profoundness of the Old Testament is, perhaps, seen better today than at any other time since the first century.

In a world of complexity and unbounded philosophies the Bible remains the only hope of true enlightenment. Herein are revealed the Spirit of the one God and the noblest yearnings of mankind. The profound issues of man's existence are elaborated in the early chapters of the Bible. The prophets emphasize how religious must be the quality of the spirit and not a system of

legalized forms. The books of wisdom search out the issues of Divine justice in the created universe. The Psalms illustrate the beauty of faith and conviction from different times and circumstances. The hopes and dreams of man are given poetic expression by the seers who looked on time's horizon and saw the dawning of blessing for all the nations.

If one is to grapple with the serious business of other men's souls, he must take the time to listen to that which tells him the most about man and the soul. Surely, the final answer comes with the revelation of God in Jesus the Messiah. That answer becomes understandable when we have lived on the plain of life. The Old Testament leads us through that plain to the Promised Land.

Know The Truth

Marvin Rainy

THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name ..." (John 1 : 11, 12 ASV). Perhaps you are thinking that everyone has the right to become a child of God. Let us consider these important matters of life and destiny. Who has the right to become a child of God? We hear the universalist declaring: "All men have the right to be saved." But this is unmistakably false. All men do not have the right to be saved! Only those who believe on his name.

It is true that God wants all people to be saved. In II Peter 3 : 9 the apostle declared, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". All men do not receive the Lord. All men do not come to repentance; therefore, all men will not be saved. All will not believe. The Bible says that all who believe on his name have the right to become the children of God. This does not say that

all who believe are children of God or that all who believe will become children of God. It says that all who believe have the right to become children of God. There is a vast difference in have a right to become a child of God and already being a child of God. We live in a country that gives to all children the right to have a good education but not all children will take advantage of the right they have and will never have a good education. The same principle is true in religion. All who will believe will have the right to become a child of God but if someone does not believe and will not obey he will not be a child of God.

No, God does not send anybody to hell. Every man that goes to hell will go there of his own choice. There will not be anybody in hell who didn't want to go there. There will not be anybody in heaven who did not chose to go there, save the irrespsnible. Every man must choose his own destiny. Any one who will spend eternity in hell will go there because he chose to go there. If you will believe and obey you can go to heaven. We plead with you to obey.

WHAT ABOUT WITNESSING FOR THE LORD

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

A young man had come through a very crucial and critical period of his life. Religion had not been as important in his earlier life as it should have been. After this rather difficult period he said in essence that he was now a witness for the Lord. He was witnessing to all who would give him an ear.

Witnessing for Christ is a very common expression in our time. We hear it from one end of the country to the other end. It is one of the most common religious expressions of our day. In mass religious meetings all across our land we have religious leaders teaching young people and older ones also how to go out and witness for Christ. No doubt you have seen many of these people as they stood on street corners or knocked on doors engaged in what they call a personal "witnessing" for the Lord.

SOME PROVOKING QUESTIONS

What about all these "Go and Tell" campaigns? What about all this urging of people to go out and tell others what the Lord has done and what a wonderful set of new feelings they now possess and which each listener can possess in a matter of moments? Does this modern day witnessing for Christ fit into a Biblical framework of acceptability? Or is it another in a long line of religious practices for which there is neither warrant from the Word of God nor sanction from Sacred Scripture? Is this but another case of abundant zeal in the total absence of workable knowledge of truth? This tract will seek answers to some of these crucial questions.

THE CASE STATED FOR REAL WITNESSES IN BIBLE TIMES

Early in our study it is wise to set forth definitions of the term under consideration. Mr. Thayer, the great Greek lexicographer, defines the term this way in his **Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**, "to be a witness, to bear witness, testify, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, that (so in the N.T.) he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration...to give (not to keep back) testimony...to prove or confirm by testimony." (P. 390) Mr. W.E. Vine, in his great work, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, says this on page 225, "denotes one who can or does aver what he has seen or heard or known." Mr. Webster gives these two definitions in which there is some overlapping, "one who beholds, or otherwise has personal knowledge of anything...Testimony, one who beholds or has personal knowledge of, to have direct cognizance of or to observe with one's own eyes." It is quite evident why the apostles, the eye witnesses, and the inspired evangelists of the first century really qualified to be witnesses. That is very evident. But can any reader see how people can be so equipped to do this in our day? If so, **how?**

With these definitions before us, let us now take a look at the real witnesses for Christ in the beginning days of the Christian movement. Witnessing for Christ and his Cause was never the wide open field of endeavor that many have imagined it to have

been. It was not something one took up on his own initiative. There are some well-established qualifications for witnesses in the Biblical use of the term and that is the only employment of the term in which we should be interested.

Biblical witnesses had to see Jesus. How could they testify in regard to something or someone they had not seen? In John 15 : 26-27 Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me : And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." Jesus was speaking only to the apostles in this text. He declared that both the Spirit and these apostles would bear witness. Quite obviously, the Spirit was in position to bear witness because he and the Second Person of the Godhead had been associated from all eternity. The apostles also were in position to bear witness because they had been with him; they had seen him. How long had they been with him ? From the beginning. The beginning of what ? His personal ministry. Have those who go out today as witnesses for the Lord been with the Lord Jesus Christ from the beginning of his personal ministry ? No! Have they ever seen the Lord with their own eyes ? No! They just do not fit one of the prime qualifications of a true Biblical witness, do they ?

In Acts 1 we read about the efforts to select someone to take the place of the fallen traitor, Judas Iscariot, who had already gone to his place of punishment in the intermediate state. We note these words in Acts 1 : 21-22, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." The one chosen to be a witness of the resurrection had to have observed the Lord in his personal ministry and in one or more of his post resurrection appearances. All the apostles were to be witnesses of what they had seen and heard. They were not to be second-hand witnesses or people who simply related what real witnesses told them. They were to tell what they had seen with their own eyes and to his death had seen a Risen Redeemer again. Nobody who professes to be a witness for the Lord today has these qualifications. The

so-called witnesses of today are not proficient witnesses; they are definitely deficient witnesses.

It should be recalled in the next place that Saul of Tarsus had to see the Lord Jesus before he could qualify as a witness. It is true that Saul was not with the Lord from the beginning of his personal ministry but the Lord showed himself to Saul the persecutor, later to be known as Paul the apostle, in order to equip and qualify him as a witness and as an apostle. The Bible says in Acts 26 : 16 "But rise, and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee....."

But even with what the apostles had seen and heard Jesus still laid down another qualification before they were fully qualified to be his witnesses. That was the miraculous reception of Holy Spirit. Luke states in Luke 24 : 48-49, "And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Again Luke says in Acts 1 : 8 as he quotes the Lord just prior to his ascension to the Palace of the Universe on high, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost (Spirit-ASV) is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Why did they need the Holy Spirit ? To make sure that all the witnessing and testifying they did was without any sort of error mixed within it. The statement in John 16 : 13-14 makes this obviously clear. Therein the Lord said to his apostles, not the rank and file of his disciples, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Biblical witnesses were inspired witnesses; we have **no such** witnesses today!

THE CASE EXAMINED FOR MODERN WITNESSES

Is the foregoing what the modern-day so-called witnesses of Christ possess? Absolutely not!! They have not seen the Lord

with their own eyes. They have not heard him with their own ears. They have not been given the Holy Spirit to keep them from making any type of error in what they say about Jesus. In fact much of what some of them say about Jesus is **not so!** The frank truth of the matter is that most if not **all** of these so-called modern day witnesses are not even Christians. They have not obeyed the gospel. They know next to nothing about the Bible. They do not understand the new birth. They believe that one becomes a Christian by faith only or by simply saying, "Lord, save me." They do not know the difference between the New Testament church and man-made churches. They think that one is just as well off in a denominational church as in the Lord's church. They think one is saved at one point and becomes affiliated with some denominational church down the line later. Some of them advocate the saying of yes to Jesus and of saying no to the Lord's church.

What is their basic appeal? Their feelings and experiences!! Their appeal is not basically the Bible for of it many of them are in dense ignorance! What is the total basis of their so-called testimony? What they **think** the Lord has done for them. And this is just as subjective as anything could be. Their appeal is not to the objective truth as set forth in the Bible.

Are we witnesses today? The writer of this tract is not and neither are you, the reader! Can we tell the world that we have seen and heard the Lord with our own eyes and ears? **No!** God has not made us into inspired witnesses incapable of erring when we teach his will. What then can we do? We can teach people what these real witnesses wrote in the Bible and the absolute testimony they gave. We can teach people the Bible answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" We can turn people's attention to the great cases of conversion that are spelled out in such beauty and simplicity within the book of Acts. But the modern-day so-called witnesses for Christ are not interested in making their appeal to these inspired accounts of gospel conversion, of real conversions. They want to tell their experiences, how they feel, what they **think** the Lord has done for them. They are not in the least interested in book, chapter, and verse testimony from the Bible; they are interested in personal experience and current feelings

based exclusively on human testimony and all such is a waste of time as far as moving people toward the Lord and real Christianity is concerned.

CONCLUSION

The so-called witnesses for Christ are not about to tell people to believe and be baptized as Jesus Christ commanded in Mark 16 : 16. They are not about to tell people that repentance and immersion are necessary to obtain the remission of sins as per Acts 2 : 38. They are not about to tell people that baptism as a burial or an immersion as Paul did in Romans 6 : 4 and Colossians 2 : 12. They are not about to affirm that baptism also now save as Peter did in 1 Peter 3 : 21. They are not about to tell people of the necessity of being in the church of the Lord and in regard to right worship and right living as are set forth within the earnest epistles of the New Testament.

Why is all this not a part of their testimony, their so-called witnessing ? Because they do not believe Biblical testimony that came from the inspired witnesses of Jesus Christ. For these reasons they are **not** witnesses for Christ, their colossal claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Reader friend, do not be deceived by such.

THE ONENESS OF THE CHURCH

Mac Layton

Since the Civil War two new denominations have begun each year. There are now over 400. To those anxious to find the truth this is often puzzling. Is such disunity and confusion from heaven or men ? Is Christ divided ? There is a happy solution. More and more people are wisely turning to the sacred pages of the Bible to see if God approves many denominations or one church. Surveying the Holy Bible from Genesis to Revelation these facts are found in the oneness of the Lord's church.

ONE CHURCH IN PROPHECY

By the prophets the Lord spoke of the coming of his church. Isaiah described it as "THE house" (Isa. 2 : 3). Daniel called the

church "THE kingdom" (Dan. 2 : 44). John the Baptist used the phrase "THE kingdom" (Matt. 3 : 1). God cannot lie (Heb. 6 : 18), and by the voice of the prophets he spoke of the coming of **one church**.

ONE CHURCH IN PROMISE

When Jesus came he said in clear words, "I will build **my church**" (Matt. 16 : 18). The singularity of the church is further emphasized by Christ when he said the church would be "**One flock, one shepherd**" (John 10 : 16). The Saviour himself said there would be **one church**.

ONE CHURCH IN PRAYER

Christ fervently prayed that all who believed in him "may be **one**" (John 17 : 20-23). In this prayer the Lord said the unity and oneness of His people would cause the world to believe in Him and know God's love. Today many foolishly thank God for different denominations. How contrary that is to the prayer of Jesus Christ!

ONE CHURCH IN PURCHASE

In John's record he says Jesus died "that he might gather together into **one** the children of God" (John 11 : 52). Jesus "purchased the church with his own blood" (Acts 20 : 28). The greatest price possible, the death of God's Son, was paid that there might be **one church**.

ONE CHURCH IN ESTABLISHMENT

When the church was established on Pentecost, A.D. 33, there was **one**. As the Gospel spread there was still **one church**, one faith, one organization. The same doctrine was taught in all congregations (1 Cor. 4 : 17). In all 27 letters in the New Testament only **one church** is mentioned. It was not until centuries later that divisions came and human denominations began.

ONE CHURCH IN FIGURE

To clearly set the church before men God illustrates it in several figures in the Bible. It is called the kingdom, the body, the house, the temple, the vineyard, and the bride of Christ. How absurd it would be to say Christ has many brides with many names! Yet the Bible declares the church is the bride of Christ.

(Contd on next Page)

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ALL ARE ENCOURAGED TO LISTEN

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(Eph. 5 : 23-32). Further God's word says the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1 : 18-23), and that there is only **one** body (Eph. 4 : 4-6). In each figure the church is pictured as **one**.

ONE CHURCH IN UNITY

Christians are to be of "**One** mind" (Phil. 2 : 3). They are to have "**No** divisions among them" (1 Cor. 1 : 10).

A DIVIDED HOUSE

Division is an enemy to the cause of Christ, and the Saviour said, "If a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand" (Mark 3 : 24).

It is possible for all who believe to be **one** in the Lord's church with the New Testament as the sole guide. To this noble work of uniting all as **one** in Christ and bringing New Testament Christianity to this age, members of the churches of Christ are dedicated. You have a very cordial invitation to visit all services of the Church of Christ!

No Book but the Bible.
 No Creed but the Christ.
 No Name but the Divine.
 No Plea but the Gospel.
 No Aim But to Save.
 In Christ—Unity.
 In Opinions—Liberty.
 In All Things—Charity.

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The Bible Teacher

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