

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

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"Beware Of False Prophets"

Jesus often warned his disciples that there were false prophets and teachers who were out to deceive them. He also explained to them how they would come to them in sheep's clothing but that inwardly they were revenging wolves. (Matthew 7:15). He goes on to show them how they can tell whether they are of God or of men. He said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruits, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matthew 7:16-20).

There were many in the days of Christ, like the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and others, who were most zealous for the law, but their worship was vain because it was according to the doctrines and commandments of men. (Mark 7:7). Speaking to them directly about their practices, Jesus said, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and

Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer : therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees ! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Matthew 23:13-15). He called them blind guides, fools, killers of the prophets of God, and so on. Christ warned that these people would come in sheep's clothing, that is, they would come pretending to be righteous, keepers of the Law, and preaching righteousness, but he said that they were actually like wolves seeking to devour the innocent. Jesus showed that the difference in these king of people and God's people could be seen in the kind of fruit that they brought forth. Good does not produce bad, but neither does bad produce good.

Don't we have the same thing in our day ? Sure we do. We have God's people, the Lord's one church, those who are Christians only, and then we have in the world all kinds of churches, names, doctrines, and practices. There are those preachers and teachers who go around pretending to be of God, supposedly preaching the Bible, telling everyone how much they love them, and all of the many things that sound good to those who don't take the time to study God's word for themselves. These kind of preachers, along with their teaching, appeals to those who want to hear things that sounds good to their ears, to those who are envious and jealous of those where they are and they are looking for someone to sympathise with them, to those who are unfaithful to the Lord and they are told that they are all right as they are. But how can we identify these false teachers ? As Jesus said, by their fruits. What are the fruits of these false teachers today ? Their converts end up in man-made churches, wearing man-made names, and practicing and teaching things that is contrary to the Bible. My friends, beware of these teachers. They will deceive you and cause you to be lost. If you are going to be religious then seek the truth, believe it and obey it, and be what the Lord would have you to be.

But do you know how these false teachers would react to these things? They would try to turn this things around and point to people like me as being false teachers. Was Jesus a false teacher when he pointed out that there were those in his day that were

teaching and practicing things contrary to God's will? Are we false teachers today when we show from the scriptures that these preachers are preaching many things that are not to be found in God's word? But do you know again how we can tell who is false and who is of God? By simply observing their fruit. What kind of fruit is being produced?

On another occasion, Jesus said, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before: Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." (Matthew 24:23-26). Did you hear what Christ said? He said that there would be those coming who claimed to be the Christ, that they would do great signs and wonders, but he said to believe them not. Why? Because they are false, they are imposters. But don't we have that kind of thing today? Sure we do. There are those who claim to be Christ, the Saviour, the Messiah, or some great prophet or teacher. They also claim to do great works, miracles, and such like. Then they claim to know when Christ is coming again. Oh yes, there are many such preachers and teachers in the world today. Not only so, but they manage to deceive hundreds of thousands of people. If such people would but read God's word then they would see that the Lord warns against such people, they would see that these people cannot do the things they claim, and they do not know the time of the Lord's coming when Jesus himself said that only the Father in heaven knows that time. (Matthew 24:36).

The Apostle Paul warned the Christians at Philippi, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." (Philippians 3:2). To the Colossian Christians, he said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Colossians 2:8). John wrote, "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 : For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11).

Speaking to the Christians at Rome, Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly : and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17,18). Now how does one cause divisions? There are several ways but the one most commonly used is through teaching something that is false. Truth brings about unity, but a rejection of that truth, and especially when error is taught, then it results in division. And what should be done with those people who cause division? Paul says that they should be marked, provided they will not repent of it. He says that such people do not serve our Lord Jesus.

But false teachers are not only found outside the church, they may also be found within the church. They usually are the result of not having been truly converted, not knowing the truth well enough, having too much pride, seeking the glory of men, the clash of personalities and such like. The Apostles Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus about such things, when he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:28-31). Please note that Paul says that false teachers would come from two directions : from without and from within. Those without would come in a cunning, deceitful manner, but Paul says that they will be as wolves sparing not the flock or members of the church. Those would represent false teachers who are not members of the church. Then he says that there would be those of your own selves that would rise up "speaking perverse things to lead away disciples after them." These would represent members of the church who had turned away from the Lord.

because of some false teaching or because of some problem that had arisen in the church. Rather than to forget the matter, they begin to teach other members or to gain sympathy from them for the purpose of taking some of the disciples with them. It is much easier to deal with false teachers from without than it is to deal with those within the church. When they are in the church, then they are more likely to gain the sympathy of the weak, cause problems that would result in envy, jealousy, and a clash of personalities which again can result in some following the disgruntled member. Finally, such can result in a bad example being set before both the Christians and the non-Christians that can do much to harm the cause of Christ. This is a sad occurrence but it happens again and again. Human beings have their weakness, and even Christians are human beings, and so such things do happen. That is why our Lord, Paul, and others warn us about false teachers. We would do well to take heed.

The Apostle Paul again speaks about some who would turn away from the faith when he said to Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgivings of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Timothy 4:1-3). Again, he says to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:1-4). In these statements, Paul says that the day will come in which there will be a departing from the faith and that this will come about as a result of some giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, not continuing in sound doctrine, having itching ears, and turning their ears from the truth to fables. In other words, these were people who began to turn to false prophets or teachers.

Finally, John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1). Did you hear what John had to say ? He said that we should not believe every spirit or every preacher, but rather try them or test them, because many such false preachers and teachers have gone out into the world. That was not only true then but it is just as true today, or even more so. There are many preachers and teachers, aren't there ? Some of them are well educated, speak eloquently, preach love, and so on. But John says that we should be careful. They may be false teachers. How can we know ? We can compare their teaching with God's word. If they are preaching the truth they will not mind. But on comparing their teaching with the Scriptures, if it is found that they are teaching things that God's word does not support, then they are false teachers and should be marked. If they are teaching the truth, still we should not follow them, but the truth that they are teaching. We are told that only the truth will make us free. (John 8:32).

My friends, I want to encourage you to read and study the scriptures for yourself. Don't let any man deceive you. There are preachers who are proclaiming God's word, but there are many who are not. You'll have to be careful or you will confuse their kindness and good deeds with the things that they are teaching. They may have charm and influence. They might even be foreigners. But remember that they are just men and it is possible for them to be wrong. Again, compare what they teach with the word of God. They may be wrong but the Lord is always right. Follow Christ and you'll be right.



**associate
editorial**

Christmas and Christians

December 25th is generally considered and accepted by the religious world as the birthday of Christ. The Bible tells us

about Christ, about his birth, and about the place and the purpose of his birth. But nowhere in its pages we can read about the date of Christ's birth. God has just not revealed to us the date of his birth. I believe there is a reason why He didn't do so. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," we read, "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3 : 16, 17). So we understand that all that is written in the Bible is written by the inspiration of God, and God has revealed His will for man, whatsoever He wants that man should know and do. But He didn't reveal on what date His Son, Christ, was born. Had He wanted for man to know about it then He certainly must have told him as He did about all the other, things. So the question is, why God did not tell us on what date Christ was born, add especially when it was going to be such a great day that the whole world would celebrate it ? Why didn't God inspire any of the writers of the New Testament of the Bible to write somewhere in its pages the date of birth of His Son, Christ ? Simply because God knew that man would idolize that particular day and would give more importance to it then Christ himself and his teaching and above all to his death which is more important then his birth. But although God has not revealed the date of Christ's birth, man in the recent centuries himself has invented a date and it has been now accepted all over the world, as though God has authorised it in the scriptures. Ever thought about it ?

Then also think about all of those things which usually go with Christmas celebration, such as drinking, dancing and indolatory. Yet the Bible teaches that such are the works of the flesh and that they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5 : 19-21). Surely, God would not allow such things for celebrating His Son's birthday, even if he had revealed to us the actual date of his birth and desired for us to observe it as a special day.

True Christians, those who wish to abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9, 10), and want to be faithful to him (Revelation 2 : 10), will never add any religious significance to December 25th, because this is not God's teaching but a doctrine of man. (Matthew 15 : 9). We sin when we add to the teaching of God. (Revelation

22 : 18). We should be content with what God has revealed for us in His book, the Bible, knowing that whatsoever is necessary for us, and all that He wants for us to know and do he has fully told us.

However, now I would like to draw your attention to the fact the although adding any religious significance to Christmas is wrong, yet the spirit which is generally exhibited during this time of the year is noteworthy and the one that God would have us all possess the year around. Firstly, we notice, during the Christmas time people seems to be very religious. They want to sing religious songs; want to by religious pictures and wall-hangings with Bible verses, etc. Then on December 24th most of they want to attend the night service, braving the cold weather of December, and many of them would return again for the morning service on the 25th. On this day church buildings are generally packed to capacity and people are seen even standing outside of the building. On this day people want to pray, sing and take part in various religious activities. But the fact is that our God want us to be religious the year around, and not just once in a year. Speaking of the assembling together of Christians on the Lord's day for worship, the Bible says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25). Christians should assemble on every first day of the week to worship the Lord. They should always pray and sing God's praises and study the Bible. (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 3:16). Instead of revealing the birthday of Christ, God has, in the scriptures, revealed to us the day one which Christ was resurrected from the dead (John 20:1-14), the first day of the week, or Sunday, and this is the day on which He expects for us to assemble for worship and remember the death of Jesus by partaking of the Lord's supper. (Acts 20:7, cf. 1 Corinthians 11).

Then, secondly, during the holiday season of Christmas it is observed that people want to be more giving, and especially on the Christmas day than on any other day of the year. Many are seen giving gifts, helping the poor, sharing, giving more contribution in the worship services. But again the Bible teaches that God expects that Christians should always give. They should not give only once in a year but should give on every first day of the week,

when they assemble for worship. The apostle Paul wrote :“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” (10 Corinthians 16:2). Christ also taught, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35). As much as possible, we should always help those who are in need. (Galatians 6:10). Sad to say, however, many do not give on the Lord’s day, the first day of the week, as the Lord has prospered them, and especially when we fail to attend the worship services on the first day of the week then we fail to give as the Lord expect from his people. Giving is a Christian grace (1 - Corinthians 8:7), and as we have noticed, the Lord has said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. We need to practice giving the year around if we want to be blessed by the Lord the year around. We need to give for the Lord’s work, for the preaching of his gospel, and for helping the needy.

Again, and thirdly, we notice that fellowship and love are more evident in this holiday season. Greetings, handshakes, smiles are exchanged quite often, even among the people who have not greeted each other in the past several months. Does it sounds familiar ? Oh, yes, human hearts are soften during the holiday season of Christmas. People talk more of love and forgiveness during this time of the year than at any other time. I have seen people, even close relatives, who live like enemies the whole year, but then there come the Christmas time and their hearts become soft for each other. They want to forgive and forget. Sad to say, however, this spirit of forgiving and forgetting does not prevail the year around. Yet forgiveness is a fundamental doctrine of Christ. Jesus put forgiveness even before our worship, (Matthew 5:23, 24), and said, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:15). Christians need to practice forgiveness the year around, at all times of the year. The apostle Peter on one occasion asked the Lord, “How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ?” and then added, “till seven times ?” The Lord said, “I say not unto thee, Until-seven times, but until seventy time seven.” (Matthew 18:21, 22). Thus the Lord taught that his people should practice forgiveness always, the year around, every time someone sins against them. To Christians, the apostle Paul wrote, “Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.....avenge not yourselves,

but rather give place unto wrath: for it is witten, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shall heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:14, 19-21).

Then, fourthly, and finally, it is the time of happiness and joy. People are in happy mood. They want to go out to meet their friends and invite them to their houses. Many would paint and decorate their houses; buy new things; give gifts, and do several other things to show how happy they are. But this rejoicing does not last with them for very long. God, however, wants his people, Christians, to be happy always, and not just once in a year. To his disciples Jesus had said, "Be of good cheers." (John 16:33). Then the apostle wrote to the Christians at Philippi and said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice." (Philippians 4:4). At another place he said, "Rejoice evermore." (1 Thessalonians 5:16). True happiness is found in serving God and doing good to others. Christians are happy people, not because they possess the things of the world, but because of what Christ has done for them and has promised to them. Listen to him, he said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). Again, Christians are happy people, not only because Christ was born, for his birth alone would not have saved us from sin, but because he died for our sins. The Good News of the Bible is : "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3).

I Was Going To The Prom !

Johnny Thompson.

I was going to the prom ! I thought about it for days and then decided to go. After all, I would be a senior but once. So why not ?

I knew well that informing my parents would be most difficult. I was a minister's son who had been taught all my life the problems and dangers involved in the modern dance. I decided to tell them at breakfast.

"dad" I said, "since I am a senior, I have decided to go to the Senior Prom." I waited for his reply, but there was only silence. I expected my father to take me to task severely. I thought certainly mother would cry. But still there was silence, a terrifying silence. Then my father replied, "So you are going to the prom?"

"Yes sir," I said, "after all I'll be a senior only once." He looked at me and then hung his head. Then he said words I'll never forget; "son, your mother and I have tried to teach you for the past sixteen years what is right and what is wrong. We've done our best to bring you up a Christian young man. But you're right, son, you are a senior. You are almost grown. So if you have decided to attend the Senior Prom, go ahead, but please remember this; If the Lord should come and find you there, please tell Him that you came because You wanted to, not because we sent you!"

Those sobering words shook me into reality. I then knew that this was a temptation that I must overcome. I must not go! I have never regretted not going, but continue to thank God that I was given the strength to throw my influence fully behind the church and its work in the community. Remembering this temptation, I take encouragement from James 1 : 12, "blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

The Best Things In Life Are Free

David Shaw

Money can provide many of the finer things in life but the best things of life cannot be purchased with money. Money can buy pleasure but cannot buy joy. Money can buy medicines, but it cannot buy health. Money can buy fear, but it cannot buy respect. Money can buy associates, but it cannot buy freedom. And money can buy a house, but it cannot buy a home. For the best things in life are free! And these things are found in the Christian home,

Paul lists these intangibles in Galatians 5:22-25 as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. These blessings are called the fruit of the spirit and they cannot be bought with money. They are developed from within the person and within the Christian family. It is these characteristics that distinguish the Christian home from the sinner's house.

The family that lives and walks according to the direction of God is fulfilling God's original expectations that he had for his first family, Adam and Eve. The peace and tranquility of the first home in Eden were lost because of disobedience (Rom. 5:17-21). But in the obedience of Jesus, the possibility of having a God-centered home, with love, joy and peace abounding has been restored. And this kind of home is not on the real estate market for sale. For it cannot be bought with money; it's free! It was paid for by the blood of Christ when he died for us!

How Do You View The Bible ?

Maxie B. Boren

What do you think of the Bible ? Is it just another book among multiplied thousands ? Do you think of it as a collection of ancient writings of value and merit, but not anything more than that ? Or do you view the Bible as being the revelation of the Almighty God to human kind ? Do you believe that the Bible is indeed the word of God ?

These questions are extremely important. How a person views the Bible determines to such a great extent his out look on numerous matters. One's estimation of the Bible is vital to his religious beliefs, to the formation of his life style, to his moral sensibilities, and to his general philosophy.

Personally, I believe with all my heart that the Bible is the inspired word of God. There is really no other way to account for it. Holding to this conviction, I read the Bible with reverence and respect, and with a sincere desire to be humbly submissive to its directives.

What about you, my friend ? How do you view the Bible ?

Cleaving To The Lord

J. V. Copeland, Jr.

The word "cleave" has a number of meanings. That which I am writing about is "to adhere to, cling to, be faithful to". Other definitions are, "to stick fast, become attached".

An illustration of "cleaving to" is when a small child is out with its parent and a vicious looking dog begins to approach. The child will run take hold of its parent or get inside the arms of its parent and stick as close as humanly possible. Most parents have had such experiences. child The cleaves to the parent because of love and because of the need for protection in time of fear, or danger. Children will even cleave to dolls, cling to toys, and sometimes even hug a blanket. Parents feel honoured to have their child or children feel the need of the parents and to cling tightly unto them. This is a part of being loved.

Barnabas was sent by the church in Jerusalem to Antioch that he might strengthen the church there, especially the young Christians. Upon arrival he began to exhort them, "That with purpose of heart they would "cleave" unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). Joshua urged the Israelites that they "cleave unto Jehovah your God, as ye have done unto this day". (Joshua 23:8).

The Lord teaches that the husband is to forsake all other and "cleave unto his wife." (Gen. 2:24). When Naomi began a return to her home in Palestine, she requested her daughter-in-laws to return to their own people. Orpah did, but Ruth cleave unto her (Naomi).

The apostle Paul teaches us to abhor that which is evil, but cleave unto that which is good. (Rom. 12:9). There is no stronger word to use in urging the Lord's people to be faithful and stay close to the Lord. It expresses man's love for God which arises from his need of God, and God's love for man arising out of being needed by man.

It isn't hard to know when a child cleaves to its Parents, or when a man cleaves to his wife, or when any person cleaves to one he loves. Neither is it difficult to know when one cleaves to the Lord. It is another way of saying a person puts God and His

kingdom FIRST. First before self, before jobs, before pleasure and even before others.

I Believe

C.L. Powell

Before the Ethiopian eunuch could be baptized, Philip said to him "if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." He believed this because it was taught to him. Back in verse 29 of Acts 8, the Spirit had instructed Phillip to go to the eunuch. When he came to him he found him reading from the prophet Esaias. Phillip's question was logical for all ages. He said, "Understanest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he should sit with him." From there Philip taught him. Verse 25 says "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." This was proof of the existence of Jesus Christ.

Notice what Philip said he believed was not just so much of a testimony. It was what the man really believed after the teaching of Phillip on the subject. This was not just so many words but it was what was really in the thinking of the man. This thought of the man had to come about by the teaching of the word of God.

Paul taught more about this in Romans 20:9-10. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." You see this confession is not mere words, but it is what is really in the heart or mind of that person because the person has heard of Jesus Christ and it has made a rich impression that a person is willingly and happily able and ready to express himself.

We do not wish to give the impression to people that this is a denominational ordinance, but it is what is taught by the word of God! This taught word causes us to want to voice our faith.

Performing Surgery On The Sword Of The Spirit

Raymond Elliott

In the book of Jeremiah, chapter 36, there is an interesting story regarding the attitude and action of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, concerning the word of God. Jehovah had revealed unto Jeremiah his prophet that he wanted him to write in a roll of a book "all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day" (v. 2). In time, this roll made its way to the king himself. He had it read in his presence. In verses 22 and 23, we observe the reaction of Jehoiakim: "And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves [columns], that the king cut it with the penknife, and cast it unto the fire that was in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier." What motivated such extreme measures by Jehoiakim? Undoubtedly, he did not like what God had instructed Jeremiah to write regarding the impending destruction of Judah by the king of Babylon (v. 29). So, he began cutting the columns and casting the roll into the fire.

People, in principle, have been cutting out portions of the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" for ages (Ephesians 6:17). If one does not agree with a particular passage of scripture and does not intend on following its teaching, why not just take a knife and cut it out of the Bible? The religious organization which refers to certain of its leaders as "Father" may as well cut out Matthew 23:9 which reads: "And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven." The religionist who does not believe in the essentiality of baptism to salvation could do likewise with Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." The person whose heart is filled with malice and hatred could do a hatchet job on Matthew 5:43, 44: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." Then there is the professed follower of Christ who does not

attend the periods of worship faithfully. To soothe his conscience he takes a knife to Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh."

Most of us would not even contemplate destroying any portion of the written word of God, however, the true test of loyalty to the scripture is displayed in our submission and obedience to its teaching. Otherwise, we are simply doing as Jehoiakim did in the long ago, and that is casting aside that portion of the Bible with which we disagree.

One of the most daring examples in modern times of taking a penknife to the word of God is found in the proposed condensed version to be published by *Reader's Digest*. Mr. Jack Walsh, editor of the Bible project, explained it like this: "Many people want to read Bible but never have because of its length and complexity. It will sound exactly like the RSV, but 40 percent shorter. True condensation never interferes with the essential substance of a text." We are assured that all 66 books will be included in this shortened version. However, there will be a 'line-by-line cutting' as opposed to whole blocks of the text as explained by Herbert Lieberman, executive editor of condensed books for *Reader's Digest*. This work of condensing the Bible has been under way for some 2½ years (*The Montgomery Advertiser*, September 15, 1981, page 1).

The Bible itself teaches that it is inspired of God (the source of its origin); that the men who wrote it were guided by the Holy Spirit; and that the very words were chosen by God (See II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:20,21; I Corinthians 2:12,13). There are warnings given in the Holy Scriptures regarding the taking away of its commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18, 19). Man shall not go unpunished for dealing with God's word in such a disrespectful manner. The audacity of finite man is clearly seen when he says to the infinite God, "You have made the Bible too complex and too lengthy for modern man." The apostle Paul stated in Ephesians 3:3,4: "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the

mystery of Christ." Later he said to the same group of saints, "Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Multitudes of people throughout the centuries, since the complete revelation of God has been made known, have read, understood and obeyed the commandments of God.

We would like to ask, who determines the particular lines and the number of the lines to be cut from the Bible? What is the underlying motive for the removing of any of the lines from the Bible? Who is to say that one line is more important than another? By whose authority are these decisions to remove any portion of the Bible made? Surely it is not from God since he has given us the Bible in its complete and present form. The fact of the matter is that this group of uninspired men has decided according to human wisdom that some parts of the inspired word are not important and are unnecessary and therefore should be deleted.

Jehoiakim has nothing on these modern day knife-wielding "line-by-line" cutters. It is stated in Jeremiah 36:24 that when the king had the words of Jeremiah, the prophet of God, burned, the people in his court were not afraid. This same attitude of irreverence is present today. Those who tamper with the Word of God are unafraid and unashamed in their ungodly efforts.

The Problem Of Overcoming Daily Temptation

NO 2

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

In the previous article attention was directed as to how widespread temptation really is and the proper distinction that should be made between temptation and sin. They are not synonymous though many people think they are.

TEMPTATIONS VARY

A keen recognition of another vital principle is that not every person is tempted in the same precise way. Also what may be a

strong temptation to a person in one period of his life may not be a strong temptation to him at all in a later period of his life. One may have a weakness for loose women and the committing of immorality with a variety of partners across the years; another may have a weakness to make money by hook or crook; another may have a weakness to drink alcoholic beverages; another may have the weakness of gambling; another may have the weakness of lying, of never telling the straight of anything. Relative to women, one person may have the weakness of seeking the companionship of many men during her life, both married men and unmarried men, for immoral purposes; another may have the weakness of slander and gossip; another may have the weakness of a foul mouth; another may have a weakness for fine clothes and not having the money to purchase them honestly, she may resort to shop lifting; another may have the weakness of gambling. On and on the process goes.

In youth a person may have to fight a constant battle with his sexual passions; in older age he may have to fight an equally decisive battle to keep from becoming soured on the world and to keep himself from becoming totally selfish with what he has accumulated in life. A woman may be prone to lie in youth and not feel any resentment at the excellence of another. In older age she may get over the temptation to lie and yet in old age face a real battle to keep from being envious and jealous over the youth and good looks of the coming generation of women.

Just as our desires change from one period of life to another so do our areas of temptations. In his early life Joseph was tempted with flesh; in later life he faced the challenge of whether to forgive or punish his brethren who had done him such grave injury when he was but a teen-ager. He did not give in to the demands of the devil in either realm. The devil would have suggested that he lie with his Master's wife. He would have suggested in later life that vengeance is sweet and so well deserved in the case of your heartless brethren who once sold you into notorious and cruel slavery.

Jesus was not always tempted alike. In Matthew 4 the devil once tempted him with bread for his hunger; another time he tempted him to show his power over gravity and thus to earn the applause of the public over the great feat of gliding safely to the ground

below from the dizzy heights of the temple on Mt. Moriah, another time he sought from him worshipful allegiance as he offered him as reward the whole world for compliance. The Bible teaches in Hebrews 4:15 that Jesus was tempted in ALL POINTS like as we are. Just as there was a variety of ways in which the Lord was tempted, so there is a variety of ways in which we are tempted today.

James recognized this variety in writing, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:14-16). Just as different people have different desires and at different periods in their lives, so there are different temptations set before men and women and at different periods in their lives. The devil is skilled in this business of tempting mankind to do wrong. He knows when to strike; he knows where to strike; he knows where objects are most vulnerable. This is why he approached Eve as he did. That is why he went through her to get to the man. Sometimes he strikes directly as he did with Eve; sometimes he strikes indirectly as he did with Adam. He knew how to get to the man. He still does. Many a man has fallen victim to sin through his wife as chief instrument. Ahab and Jezebel are concrete examples. Many a woman has been led into sin by the temptations placed before her by her own husband. The Bible says in II Corinthians 2:11, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices". Satan possesses many potent devices when it comes to temptations. He knows the desires that permeate human hearts. He knows what will excite those desires. The presentation of those forbidden objects is brought before the eyes of the tempted one. When the desire to participate is kindled and the yielding has taken place, sin is the end result. And the end of sin is death, spiritual death.

TEMPTATION IS COMMON AND UNIVERSAL

This is a third vital principle toward which we must be cognizant. No man lives without temptation in some form or another. If Jesus could not live here without facing temptation, and he did not, then we cannot expect to go through life without facing daily temptations. The Bible assures

us - of the clear fact that all mankind faces temptations. Paul told the Corinthians. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). The ASV renders the verse in this language, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." Thus temptations of one type or another are the common lot of man throughout his sojourn upon earth. Toward them we can take one of two alternatives. (1) We can give in to them or yield to them. This means sin when we so act. If this sin is persisted in, it means eternal punishment in the next world. (2) We can resist and say an emphatic and firm no to the temptation. This requires courage; it requires conviction; it requires steadfast determination to be a permanent "hold-out" toward sinful indulgences. But this is one sure thing to make the loose and lax world in which we live to sit up and take notice of what Christianity is able to do with a willing piece of human, pliable clay.

Paul in I Corinthians 10:13 assures us that no temptation has been placed in our way but that it can be dealt with; it can be confronted; it can be endured; it can be overcome. In fact he assures that God will be faithful in providing a way for escape. But God does not do it all by any means. He provides the way of the escape; the man who is being tempted must walk or perhaps even run that way of escape that has been provided. Relative to fornication Paul tells us to flee it (I Cor. 6:18). We are to make tracks and prompt ones at that from explosive situations that spell fleshly trouble and that in a hurry. There are some things that it does not pay to stay near and reason in regard to them. The functions of strong bodily chemistry constitute just such situations. In Genesis 39 Joseph fled from the scene planned for his total seduction by an abandoned woman. We can overcome daily temptation by seeking for that way of escape and then taking it permanently. Staying at the edge of sin or remaining nearby is not the way to overcome such; that is a sure fire way to be overcome by temptation. Then sin has entered into hearts and lives.

Stealing Hearts

Bob Duncan

When Absalom, a son of David, was preparing to lead a rebellion against his father and usurp the throne, it is said of him that he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (II Samuel 15:6). This does not mean necessarily that he lied to them outright or cheated them in some way. It means rather that he brought them over to his side "secretly and by strategem" (Keil and Delitzsch). How he accomplished this is described in II Samuel 15:1-6 :

"And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

Absalom knew he was going to rebel against his father, and he knew he was gaining supporters for his rebellion. But the people did not know that at this time.

You see, Absalom did not say to the people, "I plan to rebel against my father and take away the throne from him, and I want you to help me in this rebellion." Had he said this, they would have recognized him for what he really was. He first had to prepare them to assist him in the rebellion by convincing them of two things: (1) that his father, David, was a bad king, with no real interest in the problems or the welfare of his subjects, and (2) that he himself was such a kind and beneficent individual who

genuinely loved the people and would always act unselfishly and in their best interests. Once he succeeded in convincing the people of these two things, it would be an easy matter to enlist their support in his rebellion. This he did by telling them if he were in position to do so he would most certainly see that they received a fair hearing, and by flattering them into believing he considered their case to be so good that judgment would be bound to go in their favor. This, along with his personal beauty and his amiability, caused the people to become devoted to him without ever realizing it.

Those who know the rest of the story know that Absalom's rebellion ultimately failed and he died a shameful death. While he was not successful in usurping his father's throne, his actions were the source of much trouble in Israel and much heartache on the part of his father. So it is with those who deal treacherously against the divinely constituted arrangement. They may disturb and hinder God's people, but they cannot ultimately succeed. Their cause may appear to prosper for a time, but it will end in shame. The final victory of those who are faithful to the Lord is guaranteed: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

Be careful of one who tries to convince you that you are being mistreated, but if he had his way everything would be all right with you. He is planning a rebellion, and is trying to steal your heart.

Fornication And Its Causes

Wayne Cobb

Within the last twenty years we have seen a revolution take place in our society. This revolution has been in the area of sexual attitude and conduct. To those of us who are calling men to God's righteousness and moral purity, the facts are not encouraging. The U.S. Public Health Service estimates that almost half

of all young people ages fifteen to nineteen have had premarital sexual relations. More than one million teenagers become pregnant every year and the numbers keep rising. Eighty percent of all first teenage pregnancies are conceived out of wedlock.

The statistics are simply alarming. No one can deny that this is a public problem of immense magnitude, but what is the cause of this tragedy of demoralized youth? Who is to blame for the growing immorality of our nation? What are some of the factors that encourage such sin? Perhaps if we knew some of the contributing factors we could better deal with the problem.

First, salacious movies and television are having an impact on sexual promiscuity. Most of the movies being produced today are geared to get teenagers interested in sexual exploits. Chastity and virginity are mocked while adultery, prostitution, fornication, homosexuality and other immoralities are glamorized. Illicit sex is laundered and presented as good. Teenagers cannot go to movie after movie, watch nudity and filmed sexual perversions in living colour and not be affected by such. Just as surely as television and the theater influences our purchasing behaviour (and every network sells its high priced advertising minutes on the basis that it does), television and the movies influence our social behaviour. As Charles Keating, a member of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, stated: "We have a condition in the motion picture industry that literally constitutes a course of instruction in decadence, perversion, and immorality."

Second, our generation has been led to accept a mode of dress that appeals largely to the vulgar and sensual. A famous New York dress designer, in giving the criterion for successful fashion design, said, "We feel a dress is successfully designed when it awakens in a man who looks at the woman, the wish to take it off her." Shorts, halter tops, tight pants, low cut blouses, and swim suits contribute to the sins of petting, promiscuity and lasciviousness. After looking upon the nakedness of Bathsheba, David lusted and committed adultery. There is an obvious connection between indecency of dress and fornication.

Third, the modern dance is calculated to stimulate lust and lust is the seed from which illicit sexual relations spring. Any dance can be killed simply by seeing that the men dance only with men and women dance only with women! What people dance for is sexual stimulation and sexual gratification. The suggestive body movements and lewd gyrations of the modern dance leave nothing to the imagination. The lure of the dance is the sex lure; its tendency is toward the immoral.

Fourth, pornographic literature encourages young people into sexual sins. Pornography stimulates erotic thoughts, lustful desires, and sexual fantasies that demand fulfillment. Make no mistake about it, pornographic material is shaping the character of its readers in one direction, and it is the wrong direction. It teaches that sex is to be used without control. It teaches that there are no God given rules to sexual conduct.

In Proverbs 6:27,28 the wise man asked, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" Filthy movies, immodest attire, dancing and pornography are the fires of lust and immorality. Those who play with these fires are burned and this is exactly what is happening in our society at the present time.

Peace On Earth ?

Dan Flourney

Eight centuries before the birth of Jesus, the ancient prophet announced that the Christ would be called "the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). As the angels heralded the Saviour's arrival, they sang "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

Nearly 2,000 years have gone by and still there is war and strife in the world. There have been bloody crusades and "holy" wars. Men negotiate peace treaties only to see them signed and set aside. What has happened to the promise of peace ?

The answer lies in Jesus' statement found in John 14:37: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The peace Jesus bring is not a worldly, political peace. It is not the cessation of war. Rather, it is a spiritual peace—a "peace that passes all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Because of sin, man is an enemy of God. However, it has always been God's purpose to reconcile lost mankind and end the hostility created by sin. This was accomplished by Christ when he paid the debt of sin on the cross. Thus, it was God's plan through Christ "to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross . . ." (Colossians 1:20).

It is in Christ that one can have peace with God and peace with his Christian brother. There is no hatred between races of men who are in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-12; Galatians 3:27-29). It is in Christ that men "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah 2:4).

George T. Caldbeck in his popular hymn asks the question, "Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?" In other words, how can the Christian speak of peace in such times of turmoil? The answer of the song is right: "The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

Another hymn writer, Charles H. Gabriel, expressed it beautifully when he wrote, "Only in Thee, O Saviour mine, Dwelleth my soul in peace divine, Peace that the world, tho' all combine, Never can take from me."

Truly, Jesus is the Prince of Peace! Through him we are reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:18) and enjoy true and lasting peace.

Giving As Worship

W. Edwin Kearley

Compassion for the needs of others is a great motive in the heart of man. This is a great by product of one's faith in Christ.

TWO NEEDS ARE FILLED BY OUR GIVING. One is physical and the other is spiritual. (1) We must preach the gospel of Christ to all the lost (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; I Tim. 4:16). Much personal energy must be expended but it also takes finances to support those who give their lives in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. To the church at Philippi Paul wrote, "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Phil. 4:15-16). (2) The church has the responsibility to care for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the neglected. James illustrates pure religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). Paul wrote. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). John stated, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dewelieth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17). It is clear Christians must care for those who need our help.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE INSPIRED MEN PLACED GIVING IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH. Luke records, "And they continued steadfastly in . . . fellowship." Robert Young gives the meaning of the word *koinonia* translated "fellowship" as "communion" (*Analytical Concordance to the Bible*). It is translated "communion" in I Corinthians 10:16. "It is that which is the out come of fellowship, a contribution, e.g., Rom. 15:26; II Cor. 8:4" (*Epositary Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine).

WHEN ARE WE TO GIVE? To the Corinthian church Paul said, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. **UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK** let every one of you lay by him in store . . ." (I Cor. 16:1,2). This is the day the church comes together to observe the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). Sunday is the first day of the week.

WHO ARE TO GIVE? Paul said to the church in Corinth, "...let EVERYONE OF YOU lay by him in store..." (I Cor. 16:2). But first we must imitate the Macedonians. They "first gave themselves to the Lord . . ." (II Cor. 8:5). No one will give much consistently unless his heart is in the cause of Christ.

HOW ARE WE TO GIVE? "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7). The church purposed a year in advance (II Cor. 8:10). Paul then stated, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Cor. 8:12). He wanted them to give according to their ability with a readiness.

There is no New Testament passage that teaches we are to give a tenth of what we earn to the Lord. The author of the book of Hebrews does show how much more we are blessed under the new covenant. He said, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). Since this is so, gratitude would cause us to give more than those under the law of Moses were required to give.

No New Testament passage tells of the present highjacking in the name of religion. Many today go to the business people and remind them of the number of their members and friends that shop at their businesses. They then request a donation. There is not much difference in this method and the sixgun method. The practice of selling food and merchandise in the name of religion is not found in the Bible. The church has the responsibility to pay its way and not ask the world to do so.

THE CHRISTIAN IS BLESSED IN GIVING. Paul quotes Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Luke records Jesus saying, "Give, and shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Lk. 6:38).

“Give Of Your Best To The Master”

Don Williams

In I Corinthians 16:2 Paul writes : “Upon the first day of the week let every one you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” In this verse Paul sets forth the principle of giving to God. Notice that he says “everyone”—not just mothers and fathers; all of us are to give to God. And yet, why does the money basket pass the fastest on the rows where our children sit? One must conclude that (a) they didn’t make any money to give, (b) they spent all the money they made or (c) they don’t want to give. Which one is it?

When a person does not make any money, God does not expect him to give. But he does expect those who make money to give part of it to him. And yet, how many people offer God the leftovers from the previous week? A boy makes \$10 for mowing yards. He has to buy that new softball—and, yes, he needs to go eat out with the other fellas. There are some new pinball machines he wants to try out—and, alas, come Sunday morning, he has 35 cents to his name. So as the basket is passed, he feels great and noble as he plunks the dime and quarter in the plate (if it is a metal plate the plunking sound makes it sound like a lot more).

Oh, so you don’t like pinball machines, Don? No, it is not that. But I don’t think God enjoys receiving the leftovers. I don’t think God enjoys being cheated out by a machine, or a hamburger, or any object or person that comes *first* before giving unto him. After all, everything we have comes from him (James 1:17), and we must keep that in mind.

So, next time, plan to give to God first. Keep back a rightful portion of the money that you have made and give it to God on Sunday morning. You will feel better and God will give you the increase. “Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

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