



The Salvation Army

J.S. Smith

The bell-ringing kettle attendants are now out in full force again as the Salvation Army begins its Christmas offensive. Many think of the Salvation Army as a simple charitable organization, but in fact, it is a full-fledged Protestant denomination. A contribution to the Salvation Army is no different than giving money to any old denomination.

Unless otherwise noted, the quotes in this article are from the Salvation Army's own Internet web site (www.salvationarmy.org).

A Brief History of the Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an international religious movement with a very clear focus on the social gospel concept of converting the world with food and other physical lures. It was founded in 1865 by William Booth, a Methodist preacher in London. His objective was to house and feed the poor as a means to bring them to God. Gradually, he and his son established the new organization on a military pattern, complete with ranks, uniforms and orders (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1995 ed., 10:369-70).

The Salvation Army considers itself a separate denomination. "William Booth's original aim had been to send his converts along to the established churches of the day. Nowhere in his plans was there an intention to commence another Christian church. But he soon found that many of his converts would not go to church." Over a period of a few years, General Booth instituted his own answer to the denominations of his day, creating the Salvation Army sect. Members began to be called "Salvationists" as the Baptist church makes Baptists and the Methodist church makes Methodists instead of the "Christians" that the Bible makes exclusively (Acts 11:26).

The new church grew quickly and today is found in more than 80 countries, preaching its "gospel" in 112 languages in 16,000 evangelical centers. The Salvation Army operates more than 3000 social welfare institutions, hospitals, schools and agencies.



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see "The Salvation Army" on p. 728

Editorial

“Play Responsibly”

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Mike Willis

Advertisements for the lottery appear frequently on TV. They contain about the same message. The Lotto Jackpot is now standing at so many millions of dollars. To win you have to play. You have until a certain time to buy your lotto ticket to be a part of Saturday night's drawing. Don't miss out! Go buy your ticket today.

The problem is that the advertising has been more successful than it was intended. Fathers and mothers are taking the money they need to pay the rent and buy food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their children to play the lotto. Those with the least ability to afford to play the lotto throw their dollars away with the unrealistic hope that they might be the lucky winner. They have a greater chance of being struck by lightning than in winning the Lotto Jackpot!

Another problem is that legalized gambling has increased the number of people addicted to gambling. Gamblers Anonymous groups have been formed in all of the major cities in an effort to cope with the numbers whose lives have been and are being destroyed by gambling.

Admitting the evils that gambling has created in our society, those promoting gambling sear their conscience and give a semblance of social responsibility by adding at the end of their message, “Play Responsibly!” The contradiction between the main thrust of the advertisement and the blurb thrown in at the tail end of the commercial is conspicuous. If they actually thought this was going to do any good, they may reverse the message by making the main thrust of the commercial emphasize the dangers of gambling and add a blurb at the end of the commercial that says, “Buy today's lotto ticket!”

The truth of the matter is that this is another ploy that Satan uses to placate the conscience of those who are still bothered by sin. This ploy is not only used by gambling proponents, it is also used by other interests.

Safe Sex

The Planned Parenthood clinics and other sex education groups have worked for thirty years in our society to teach our children that sex relationships outside the bonds of marriage are acceptable forms of behavior that are quite natural. Only those with outdated puritan moral standards believe otherwise.

Furthermore they have promoted the belief that homosexuality is an equally acceptable form of sexual expression as is heterosexual relation-
see “Play Responsibly” on p. 729

Editorial Left-overs

Connie W. Adams

Holes in the Floor of Heaven

Steve Warriner, a country singer and guitarist, won a CMA award recently for his recording of “Holes in the Floor of Heaven,” a nostalgic piece about departed loved ones who, on special occasions shed tears which leaked through these holes in the form of rain. I must admit I liked it better than songs about drinking and cheating. But Bill Anderson interviewed Steve later and good-naturedly asked how could tears fall down from Heaven when there are not supposed to be any tears in heaven. Good question. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:4). The Preacher said of the dead: “Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Eccl. 9:6). I guess it must be poetic license. At least that is how we explain some of the unscriptural songs we offer in worship to God.

Blue John Preaching

In recent years I have taken to drinking skim milk, something I would never have thought of doing during my younger years. Back then such milk was considered fit only for the pigs. We called it “blue John.” All the good stuff was removed. I believe we have too much blue John preaching. We have extracted anything which might possibly offend or mess up someone’s “self-esteem.” We have deleted doctrinal teaching with any teeth for fear that our denominational friends might get the idea that we think they are wrong and need to change. We have watered sin down to the point where it does not seem so bad after all. We must not be judgmental. Anything but that! Even our nation is divided over whether or not it is as bad to lie under oath about immoral behavior as it would be on other things. There are congregations that have never practiced corrective discipline on the disorderly. Well, maybe we will just leave their name off the next directory. Some discipline! We have had to strip away preaching that identifies error among brethren and goes so far as to name those who have promoted it. I hope you understand that the “we” of this article is used accommodatively and is not meant to indicate that every single preacher has succumbed to “blue john” preaching. Could that be more “poetic license”? By the way, who issues these licenses? “Let your Yea be Yea and your Nay, Nay” (Jas. 5:12).

As Others See Us

A brother in Texas has taken a special liking to me. He regularly consigns me to Hell. He thinks I am some sort of clergyman. Recently I wrote a little piece in this column about preaching in the dark and commented that much

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of the preaching done these days is in the dark. He wrote me a note that said if I wanted to see a perfect example of one who preaches in the dark, "just look in the mirror." Critics are good for us. I am blessed.

Refreshing Christians

Paul said of Onesiphorus, "for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" (2 Tim. 1:16). We get to meet and spend some time with people who truly love the Lord and whose zeal and dedication, often amid great trials in their own lives, indeed refreshes us. For starters, we meet many fine young people who have their heads on straight and are not ashamed of the Lord. Many of these come to our meetings. They have to work after school, late at night, early the next morning, to complete home work assignments. Many of these sit near the front, often in a group, listen attentively, take notes and many of them bring friends. Then we have parents with small children who never miss a time. There are young mothers (and fathers) who cope with restless children whose routine has been interrupted, or are cutting teeth, or who are disturbed for who knows what. Still they come. I have had young mothers say to me: "That sounded good, what little I was able to hear." Then there are people who have worked late (some starting very early in the day) who come straight to an evening meeting without eating. Others have rushed home just in time to grab something to eat quickly, changed clothes, rushed through traffic, and still manage to stay awake. Then there are the older members whose gait is slow, some with canes or walkers. But you can set your watch by them. They will

be there. They not only listen well, but they often say the most encouraging things. Many of them have quick wits and I love to banter with them. They have not given up or given in to the ravages of time. These folks don't do all this to impress anyone. They would be surprised that a visiting preacher in a meeting would even notice. But in moments of discouragement (even preachers get the blues) these Christians are there to refresh our spirits and make us want to keep on trying. Thank you folks for the refreshments.

An Interesting Event

Recently, while in a meeting at Mooresville, Indiana, Bill Cavender was also in a meeting the same week at Lafayette Heights in Indianapolis. They asked brother Cavender and me to speak and briefly review our experiences in preaching and impressions of the present state of affairs as we see them. They advertised this as "Over 100 Years of Gospel Preaching." Brother Cavender has been at it for 52 years and I am now in my 53rd year of trying to declare the unsearchable riches of Christ. Our experiences have often run along parallel lines and our assessment of the present state of affairs is very much alike. After both of us spoke, we fielded questions for about an hour. We had a good turnout with good interest and good questions. A number of preachers and elders and their wives, along with others were present.

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The Story of Two Contractors

Donald P. Ames

Two men, good friends, decided to build homes on the ocean front. The first man consulted an engineer, who advised him to build back about a block on a good rock foundation. This required a road to be made to deliver the materials, the clearing of the land, and not quite as pretty a view as he had hoped for. Nevertheless, taking the experience of the engineer into consideration, he followed his instructions. Finally his house was finished, and he moved in.

The second man looked at all the “extras” the first had incurred, and decided he had learned from the first man’s “mistakes.” He built his house much closer to the beach. And since he did not have to hire a special engineer, clear the land, and build a special road, he was able to build an even nicer home than the first man. Indeed he was proud of his fine home and happily moved into it.

As the summer came, the second man enjoyed many advantages. He had a nice beach for his kids to play on right by the house. Friends flocked in, admiring the view, the sunset over the ocean, and the convenience. “Why one could almost fish from the front porch and not have to sit in the hot sun,” they said. And he would point out his friend’s house and openly wonder why anyone would want to build so far from such beauty.

Even his friend began to have second thoughts. If he had not spent so much on the “extras,” he could have had an even bigger, nicer home. And he grew tired of lugging all his fishing gear down to the beach. Friends seemed to flock to his friend’s house, but not nearly as many came to his. He even began to question if perhaps he had made a mistake since his friend was doing so well. Maybe he ought to put his house up for sale, and build one down on the beach like his friend had done. After all, his friend had lived there for several years and was having great fun. His friend’s house was bigger and nicer. It was certainly more convenient. And his friend was a good man, well informed and practical; and in this case, maybe had shown the greater wisdom. “Why had he listened to that engineer in the first place?” he wondered.

Then one year an “E1 Nina” developed. The weather began to change and storms became more frequent. As the storms increased in intensity, so did the size of the waves. Soon the beach began to erode and disappear. Before long, the house of his friend was endangered. They tried to stop the erosion, but to no avail. The sand began vanishing, and the house began to totter. Finally it cracked in half and fell into the ocean. The waves soon moved up and the rest of the house collapsed. His friend was ruined. All that he had was tied up in that home. His furniture was gone. The insurance did not cover this type of storm. It was a total loss!

However, since his own house was further away and on a solid foundation, it was not affected. “How thankful I am,” said his wife, “that we hired that engineer. Our house may not have been as big and convenient as his, but at least we still have a home.”

So is he that hears the word of the Lord and does it. Others may evaluate both houses, and maybe even proclaiming the one bigger, better, and nicer than the other. They may regard the character of both contractors to be equally as good. You may even begin to question of what value is it to be a Christian — he has all of the advantages! But watch and wait . . . wait . . . wait! When the storms of life do come — and they will come — when the storms of grief, of bereavement, and of temptations, etc. come; the house built solidly on the word of God will be the house standing strong after the sweeping storms are passed. It will be able to weather the storms because it had God as its engineer! It had God as a sure foundation! And it had God in its future!

Now, what kind of a foundation are *you* building on? Go back and read Matthew 7:24-27 and Psalm 73!

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Preaching the Gospel in a Postmodern World (2)

David McClister

In the previous article we introduced the basic tenets of postmodernism, a way of thinking that already has a firm foothold in the educational and social institutions in this country and that promises to be a formidable opponent of the faith in the days ahead of us. What can we do in the face of this great enemy of the truth? How can we preach in a world where more and more people are rejecting the ideas of absolute truth, a spiritual realm, and a transcendent God who is the source of life and morality? These concerns deserve some attention.

Of course, we must not sell out to non-biblical ideas. There will be the temptation on the part of some to postmodernize the gospel and change it to make it more palatable to those who have accepted the postmodern way of thinking. It may be that this is already behind some of the efforts of some of our own brethren to broaden fellowship beyond biblical limits. Could it be that a postmodern devaluation of the truth and a despising of the idea that God's truth does not change is playing a part in some attempts to create fellowship with those who are not in fellowship with God? I fear this may be the case. The only way to allow for more latitude in fellowship is to deny that there is only one legitimate faith (Eph. 4:5), and the movement in this direction by some brethren shows all the signs of a typical postmodern shift.

Is it possible to find something useful in postmodernism, something that will help us communicate the gospel to others? Again, we must not change the gospel, and we must not be ashamed to preach it when it is "out of season" to do so (2 Tim. 4:2). If the world is at odds with the gospel message, so be it. We must please God rather than tickle the ears of men. But it seems that there may be a few things about postmodernism that may give us room to present the unaltered gospel. For example, when rationalism was in its heyday, defenders of the Bible rightly emphasized that there are rational grounds for belief and they appealed to

the evidence (rational, archaeological, scientific, etc.) supporting the biblical claims. They used a rational method to preach to people whose thinking was dominated by rationalism. The same kind of thing may be possible in various ways with postmodernism.

First, postmodernists believe that significance lies only in society. Can we not similarly assert that man's real happiness and worth and purpose lie not in looking to himself or to this world, but that it is found only when he is a member of God's society, the church? Like the postmodernists, we agree that isolation and retreat within oneself is no way to find meaning in life. Life has meaning only in relationships. But it is not in a set of purely human relationships that such happiness and purpose is found. Those things are found only in relationship with God and with others who are in relationship with him also. God has created a fellowship, a spiritual society if you will, a spiritual community in which we can find our proper place and be happy. The postmodernists are right to assert that man can find significance in society, but they are looking for it in the wrong society. What man wants and needs exists in God's society, the church, not in man's society.

Similarly, postmodernists deny that reason is the means to the truth. They have rejected the claims of modernism that man could somehow, on his own, find such a thing called the truth. Well, we would agree. Man cannot, on his own, know the truth. He needs revelation from God to do that. Human reason is not a tool for discovery of the truth. It is instead a tool for analyzing information that is fed to it. That is, reason needs something to work on, it needs information to be supplied to it. Reason then appropriates that information by comparing it to what is already known. In a similar way, can we not preach that reason alone cannot get a man to God? Man's knowledge of the truth is the result of revelation from God, not the result of the working of his own reason (see 1 Cor. 2:6-16). We would then agree

Congregational Worship in Song

Hobart D. Kanatzar



I believe that the five parts of a worship service are of equal importance. We tend to put greater effort toward the teaching of a lesson than the breaking of bread, praying, giving, and singing. I have observed that in some congregations the part of the

worship service given to singing has a lack of forethought. Some congregations are selecting songs in the last few minutes before the start of the worship service.



Singing of hymns during a worship service is required by God. As we sing praises to God, we teach and admonish each other (Col. 3:16). To best use the song service it should complement

the lesson given by the evangelist. The use of songs to complement the thoughts of the lesson requires pre-planning by the evangelist and the song leader. The two confer during the week and select songs that lead one's thoughts to those to be presented by the evangelist.



After the songs have been selected, the song leader reviews the words in each song. The words used by the poet will establish the tempo that the song is to be sung in. Some songs are to be sung as an anthem, some as reflecting joy and gladness, and some as serious. Some songs are written to have more than one tempo to express the thought being portrayed. I have in mind the song "Did You Think To Pray." This song starts with somber and serious thoughts. The chorus changes to thankful thoughts and the last four words put forth a strong remembrance. A properly sung

with the postmodernist that reason does not bring us to the truth. The mistake the postmodernist makes here is that he comes to the erroneous conclusion that there is no truth at all. We assert that there is truth, but that we do not know that truth simply by reasoning our way to it. It comes from God and is received by faith.

A third area of agreement with postmodern thinking is in the way it views information. Modernists were convinced that man could find, through reason and other means, the truth, and that this truth would be the answer to man's problems. Under modernism man searched and learned more about the world than he ever had. It was under the tutelage of modernism that the information age came into full bloom. Man thought that the answer to his problems lies in knowledge, that the key to a longer and better life was to gather information. Some great things came from this, such as the advance of medical technology. Postmodernism, however, rejects the idea that knowledge or information is our savior. With this we can agree. Secular knowledge (which is often more speculation than anything else) is not the answer. We could even go as far as to say

that even information about God is not enough. The gospel is not simply data given to us from God, and receiving the gospel is not like storing information in a computer database to be rearranged and manipulated. The gospel is wisdom from God (1 Cor 1:24) and it produces faith and its fruits in our lives. Preaching and receiving the gospel is not an intellectual exercise. It has to do with creating a new man with a new heart, a new mind, and a new character. The information alone does not save. What saves us is when we make our lives conform to the revealed truth of God.

Changing the gospel to fit a changing world is not an option, but we can usually find a way to use the unbeliever's thoughts to introduce him to the gospel. Paul used this very method in Acts 17 when he preached to the Greeks in ancient Athens. We should try to do the same thing in the present day. If history continues on the course it has been going, postmodernism will someday be replaced by something else, but while it is here we have to find ways to preach to those who are steeped in it.

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song will lead the congregation to sing from the heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

Another point that a song leader must consider is to determine if the songs selected meet the singing capabilities of the congregation. If selected songs have leading parts done by the alto, bass, or tenor voices, the congregation must have the capability to sing the parts. Selecting songs that the congregation cannot sing properly has a negative effect on the worship service.

The evangelist studies how that he may best present the lesson to the congregation to achieve the best results. A song leader must work toward the same end results in the song service. A song leader must use expression in his voice to match the words of the song. Good eye contact is necessary to lead the congregation in the thoughts expressed. Beside having a complementary facial expression, the song book should be on the podium so that, when necessary, both hands and arms can be used in directing the song. At times alto, tenor, or bass parts need to be brought in on time. The director should be well enough known by the congregation that he can use his left hand to bring in whatever part is required. The words of a song can, at times, be better expressed by singing softly or mid-voice or loudly which requires a director to give the proper arm and hand motions to the congregation. This is another reason for the song book to be on the podium and not held by the director.



To be able to start a song on the proper pitch can best be accomplished by a pitch pipe. Each member of the congregation should hear the pitch whether it comes from the pitch pipe or the director. When a song leader pitches a song so that he is the only one who hears the pitch and starts the song, it may be several words into the song before the congregation can find their note and start to sing.

Some song leaders do not have a voice strong enough to lead a congregation in a song service. The song leader must start strong and be able to be heard by the congregation throughout the song. Usually, a song leader not heard by the congregation will allow the congregation to pull the tempo down to a funeral dirge which detracts from the meaning of the song.

Today's attitude towards dress is of a casual nature. This is an area that we need to seriously consider. In the Old Testament, God required the priests that served in the temple to wash and clean themselves and dress as prescribed by God. When you attend a wedding or a funeral, the accepted dress is a suit for men and a dress for women. Here you are only honoring a human being. It is of far greater importance to dress in clothing that is the best that we have for a worship service. I say the best that we have because during the Great

Depression some people owned only work clothes. These people would be clean when they came to worship. I have never seen a preacher get up to deliver a worship service lesson dressed in anything other than a suit. My feeling is that a song leader is as important to the worship service as a preacher; therefore, a suit is appropriate for the song leader during a worship service. Some people today dress for the Sunday morning service in a suit or dress and then come to the evening and Wednesday worship services dressed for some casual sporting event. My understanding is that all worship services are of equal importance. By dressing in a casual manner we automatically establish that one worship service has more importance than the other.

One other thought that is necessary to consider. An evangelist spends hours preparing a lesson that will hopefully cause a person to become a child of God. The evangelist will bring the congregation's thoughts to a point where someone may be encouraged to answer the invitation. The song leader should be on the front row so that he may take only a few steps and start the song with a minimum of delay. Some song leaders want to sit with their families in the rear of the building. This requires some bit of a delay to walk to the front of the building to start the song. This delay could cause a negative effect on some who may have been considering answering the call.

Song leaders should strive to attain a trained level equivalent to that of a preacher. This requires continuous practice and training. Some congregations want to spread the song leading around to any one who can carry a tune. We do not place a preacher in the pulpit just because he can make a talk. Since all worship services are of equal importance, those who serve in the various worship services should be trained and efficient in how they lead each service.

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C.B. Shropshire

November 14, 1908 - July 17, 1998

Charles Benjamin Shropshire, long-time gospel preacher in the Pacific Northwest, passed away on Friday, July 17, 1998 in Sherwood, Oregon. The funeral was conducted at Finley's Sunset Hills Memorial Park in Portland, Oregon on Thursday, July 23, 1998 with Mark Dunagan of Beaverton, Oregon, Jerry Earnhart of Canby, Oregon, and others speaking to a gathering of family, friends, and brethren. He was buried the following day at the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Baker City, Oregon.

Ben was born to Benjamin W. and Annie D. Shropshire on November 14, 1908 in their ranch home in the community of Paint Creek, near Robert Lee, Texas. He was baptized into Christ at the age of twelve, and preached his first sermon at fourteen. He grew up as a "cowboy," working on the family ranch and for other nearby ranchers. At the age of fifteen he began working in a cotton gin in Robert Lee, and continued in this trade for the next four years, moving from the Rio Grande Valley to southern Oklahoma. In 1925 he was enrolled for one term at Abilene Christian College, during which time he preached by appointment for nearby congregations.

By 1927 he had advanced to "chief ginner," earning enough money to pay cash for a new Chevrolet convertible. On a blind date he met Dainey Laird, whom he married on November 27, 1927. He went into business with his father, raising cotton, but lost money when prices fell, and had to seek employment elsewhere. He began to work as a "farm-to-farm" salesman for a general merchandise store during the early depression years. Later, he found work with a new grocery store in Eldorado, where he managed the meat department. In the spring of 1931 he was invited by the congregation in Crane, Texas to move there and work with them, which was the beginning of a long relationship with that congregation from which he received support on an "on again, off again" basis that lasted until he retired from full-time preaching in 1992.

After two years Ben and Dainey left Crane and moved to work with a congregation in Wink, Texas, and, after that he preached for congregations in Monahans, Odessa, Meadow,

and Farmersville. During these years he also traveled some for Boles Orphan Home, raising money from churches to support the home. After a conversation with Roy Cogdill and much further study, however, he determined that it was not scriptural to support such institutions from congregational treasuries.

Early in 1941, while working with the congregation in Farmersville, Ben received a letter from Jimmy Lovell, asking him to consider moving to Portland, Oregon to work with the 43rd and Division Streets congregation. The move was made that spring. During the next few years thousands of people would move from the south to the Northwest to work in the defense industries (primarily ship yards), and this would greatly contribute to unprecedented growth of the church during the war years. He held meetings all over Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and in Alaska (at the end of the war), and helped to establish many new congregations. After the war he moved his family to Goldendale, Washington to work with the congregation there, and subsequently worked with congregations in Vancouver, Washington, and at Dalles and Hillsboro, both in Oregon. In 1960 he began working with the congregation in Reno, Nevada, but moved back to Oregon in 1964 to work with the church in Beaverton, and, later, in Hermiston. He then moved to California to work with congregations in Napa and San Pablo for two or three years, but returned to Oregon, where he worked with congregations at Pendleton, Baker City, John Day, and Tualatin, until his retirement at the age of 84 in 1992.

Though he had many opportunities to work with large congregations that could have supported him comfortably while he preached the gospel, for the most part, he chose to work with newly established, weak, or small congregations that could not support him adequately. To support his family he received wages from other congregations and individuals, and sometimes found secular employment either to supplement the support he was receiving from churches or, sometimes, to provide his total income. He lived to preach the gospel wherever he could, and without

Perverted Religion: “An Empty Vine”

Ron Halbrook

“I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.” “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself” (Hos. 8:12; 10:1). God’s people rejected God’s Word, substituting their own will and way. They multiplied places of worship and acts of piety, but God compared it all to a running vine which produces no real fruit. When the prophets protested against the empty vine of false religion, they were threatened and told to preach somewhere else. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, complained of Amos, “The land is not able to bear all his words” (Amos 7:10-15). Amos claimed no worldly scholarship or renown, but he preached the truth to please God and would not compromise to please men.

The empty vine of false and perverted religion is running in every direction today, giving multitudes a false sense of security. Most people do not want to hear it, but the truth must be told about the rampant perversions of the Bible, morality, gospel preaching, the church, and worship.

The Bible Perverted

The Old and New Testaments are “given by inspiration

of God” as the infallible standard of truth, revealing “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3, 21). The Bible is being butchered today as it was when King Jehoiakim had the prophecy of Jeremiah cut into pieces and burned (Jer. 36:23). Men are cutting out what they do not like and pasting in their own opinions, which God forbid under extreme penalty (Rev. 22:18-19).

Roman Catholicism added several books to the Old Testament and copious notes to the New Testament to justify doctrines and practices not found in the Bible. The Jehovah’s Witnesses published *The New World Translation* to eliminate references to the deity of Jesus Christ. *The Book of Mormon* claims to be another gospel of Christ, though the Bible warns against such claims (Gal. 1:8-9). Perverted paraphrases of the Bible are being pawned off as “new translations,” revising God the Father to “Father-Mother,” the Son of Man to “the human one,” and subject in a wife’s role to “committed,” and correcting other political offensives in Scripture. Men write their own creeds, catechisms, articles of religion, and confessions of faith as norms of truth in addition to Scripture.

regard to whether he would receive sufficient support while doing so.

His first wife, Dainey, passed away in the summer of 1982, after several years of severe heart problems. Ben had suffered a severe heart attack himself in 1980 and another one in 1982. In January 1983 he and Carrie Patton Gatson were married, and they continued to live for awhile in Baker City, Oregon. After his retirement in 1992, Ben and Carrie became members of the Beaverton, Oregon congregation, where Carrie remains a member.

Ben is survived by his wife, Carrie Shropshire of Sherwood, Oregon; by his four children, Peggy Meyer of

Moraga, CA, Benj. M. Shropshire of St. Louis, MO, James H. Shropshire of Hermiston, OR, and Janice Rich of San Marcos, CA; and by other step-children, two sisters-in-law, sixteen grandchildren and twenty-three great-grandchildren.

Ben’s life and work made a significant impact on the cause of Christ in the Pacific Northwest, though he would be the first to give God the glory and praise. He will be long remembered by the host of brethren and friends in that part of the country who were blessed by the life he lived and in which they were privileged to share.

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True preaching declares “all the counsel of God” as it relates to God’s pattern for the church and his teaching on every aspect of daily life (Acts 20:27).

Morality Perverted

God gave in Scripture the only perfect and absolute standard of morality. We must forsake our own wicked ways and accept the ways and thoughts of God as higher than our own (Isa. 55:7-9). “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Ps. 19:9; 119:128). Our own ways seem right but lead to destruction (Prov. 14:12). God’s way is the true way of love; we cannot cloak our sins under a false banner of love (Rom. 13:8-10).

Abortion on demand is not a legitimate “choice” of love, but is an unmitigated act of evil against the innocent, like all other forms of murder. Homosexuality is not a lawful “alternative” to the marriage of one man to one woman for life but is unnatural, abominable conduct (Rom. 1:27). Sexual intercourse outside marriage is immoral, irresponsible, and destructive to man’s stability and well-being. No such evil act can be made “safe.” The only safe way is to obey God’s command of abstinence before marriage: “Flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). All the immoral behavior mentioned above has been endorsed by some priests, pastors, church boards and panels, and other religious spokesmen. The nationwide Metropolitan Community Church openly affirms homosexuality.

God warned of “perilous times” when men would teach “doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron,” “blasphemers, . . . without natural affection, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). God demands of the faithful preacher, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,” but many like the priest Amaziah complain, “The land is not able to bear all his words” (Amos 7:10-15).

Preaching Perverted

God ordained gospel preaching to convict men of sin (John 16:7). Peter said the Jews crucified the Messiah “by wicked hands,” and they were cut to the heart (Acts 2:23, 37). When Paul “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled” (Acts 24:25). Paul said of Jew and Gentile, “All have sinned, and come short

of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

Next, true gospel preaching points the sinner to Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, and as our only hope for heaven. The gospel which saves tells us “how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The gospel saves when obeyed. We must believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Son, repent of all sins, confess our faith in Christ, and be immersed in water (Acts 2:36-38; Rom. 10:10). Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). True preaching declares “all the counsel of God” as it relates to God’s pattern for the church and his teaching on every aspect of daily life (Acts 20:27).

Modern preaching is a running vine, an empty shell. Conviction of sin is replaced by the positive-mental-attitude of pop psychology. Self-denial is replaced by self-esteem (Luke 9:27). Man’s accountability for sin is dissolved by appealing to social conditions and medical explanations. Drinking, stealing, and adultery are caused by slums and genes, not by sin. Modernism denies the virgin birth, miracles, and resurrection of Christ, and offers instead the platitudes of social and political liberalism. Some preachers offer a gospel of “health and wealth” — “name it, claim it.” Sermons address the carnal concerns of here and now, not the spiritual concerns of eternal redemption. Preachers are expected to be stand-up comics and show directors. Drama and theater have invaded the pulpit as people seek to be entertained.

The Church Perverted

Jesus promised to build his church through the preaching of the Apostles (Matt. 16:18-19). He purchased the church with his own blood and is “head over all things to the church” (Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament is the standard of faith and practice given by Christ to guide his church. He taught there is only *one* true church, *one* true Spirit, *one* true hope, *one* true Lord, *one* true faith, *one* true baptism, and *one* true God (Eph. 4:4-6). Each local church with its own elders, deacons, and teachers was given the mission of spreading the gospel with no added levels and layers of organization, hierarchy, or denominational machinery (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-16). The church’s focus is on saving souls for eternity.

After the New Testament age, a great apostasy developed which ultimately produced many new levels and layers of organization, a hierarchy, and an elaborate bureaucracy. This new institution is called the Roman Catholic Church. The capstone of its organizational pyramid is the Pope. Christ ordained no such pyramid with its myriad of offices and powers. The Pope claims both religious and political

Modern preaching is a running vine, an empty shell. Conviction of sin is replaced by the positive-mental-attitude of pop psychology. Self-denial is replaced by self-esteem (Luke 9:27).

powers, but Jesus repudiated political power in the church (John 6:15; 18:36). The Pope claims to be a bishop but must be unmarried; Bible bishops were married men with children (1 Tim. 3:1-5). Though not as elaborate, Protestant denominations have layers of organization and bureaucracy above the local church. These synods, presbyteries, and conventions unauthorized by Christ are running vines of false religion.

Churches have lost the focus of saving souls for eternity. Churches have become social welfare institutions, religious versions of the Red Cross. They organize political campaigns. They offer recreational activities such as social meals, ball teams, and bowling leagues. They build "fellowship halls" (euphemism for party rooms) and family life centers (euphemism for gyms). Some churches even attract people with the bait of sin: gambling, dancing, and drinking parties!

Perverted Worship

Christ ordained worship as a sacred occasion for spiritual songs, Bible study, and prayer. On "the first day of the week," the Lord's supper is observed as a memorial to his death, and Christians make freewill offerings of money for the work of the church (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Eph. 5:19; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Every action in this simple pattern of worship exalts and glorifies God. Man has no authority to "add unto these things" or to "take away" anything from God's revealed plan of worship (Rev. 22:18-19).

When worship is changed to please men, it is perverted. All its elaborate beauties and attractions are running vines, an abomination to God. The personal participation of each Christian is sacrificed for solo and choir performances. Concerts and contests parade as worship. Men have tried to improve God's simple plan of worship by adding instrumental music, incense, and candles. Some churches "take away" from God's plan by not having the Lord's supper every Sunday, others "add unto these things" by having it on other days of the week.

Entertainment is disguised as worship with orchestras, jazz concerts, dramas, monologues, mimes, movies, puppet shows, dances, celebrity appearances, talent shows, and

comedy theater. Often, preachers and popes are glorified and commercialized. They allow people to fall at their feet in reverence, something not allowed by Apostles or angels (Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10). Hats, shirts, mementos, and assorted paraphernalia are sold. Religious festivals and celebrations unknown to the Bible are held, such as Mardi Gras, appealing to man's sensual and carnal appetites. Much of modern religion has fallen to the level of a circus or carnival. This running vine may be beautiful to behold, but it bears no fruit unto God.

What Is the Answer?

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16). We must repent of all sin and error, and return to God's Word as the standard of true religion. We must return to the original gospel of Christ found in the Bible. It alone "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). We must "hold fast the form of sound words" found in the New Testament regarding the authority of the Bible, the standard of morality, true gospel preaching, the pattern for the church, and God's plan for worship (2 Tim. 1:13). To receive forgiveness of sin and to begin a Christian life, we must believe the gospel, repent of our sins, confess Christ as God's Son, and be immersed in water. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

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Christmas, Brought To You By: Jesus!

Larry Ray Hafley

Our title was on a sign I saw south of St. Louis. Doubtless, it was placed there by people with the noblest of intentions. I am sure they meant nothing but the best for the religion of Jesus Christ! However, they could not prove that statement if their lives depended on it. (Sadly, unfortunately, their spiritual lives may!)

How would one prove that Jesus introduced “Christmas,” that he is its author?

- *He might begin by showing that Jesus was born on December 25.* Scholars and historians admit that this is unlikely, or that, even if it were possible, it cannot be proved.

However, even if one were to find a birth certificate citing December 25 as the birthday of Jesus, he still would not have proved that Christmas, as we know it, was “brought to” us by Jesus. All he would have proved is that Jesus was born on that day.

- *One might find a prophecy showing that men should observe the birth of the Savior.* We find prophecies that tell us to hear, honor and obey the Son, the coming, crowned King of Israel (Ps. 2; 110:1-4; Isa. 11:1-11; Zech. 9:9, 10). But, where, O where, is the prophecy that speaks of the exaltation of his birth as a matter of reverence and remembrance? And, if there be such a passage, where is it tied to December 25 and to the custom and manner of men today?

- *By showing that Jesus himself authorized his disciples to observe his birth, one might show that Jesus initiated Christmas.* Jesus did say that his disciples were to be taught to “observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). In all the revelation of God, where is such a citation to be found? Further, if such an observance were found, would it be in the motive and after the manner of “Christmas” as it is kept today?

For example, Jesus indeed authorized water baptism

in his name for the remission of sins (Matt. 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). Baptism can be found authorized by Jesus, but baptism, as practiced by Catholicism bears little resemblance to the baptism Jesus ordered and ordained (Acts 8:12, 38, 39; Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12). So, even if we were to find Jesus approving of his birthday, are men noting it after the plan and pattern of God? If they are, where do we find that plan? Where is the blueprint for the structure of Christmas as we know it today (Col. 3:17)?

- *Finding Christmas in “the apostles’ doctrine” might show that Jesus instituted it (Luke 10:16; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 4:6; 14:37).* To reject and repudiate the word of the apostles is to refuse God (1 Thess. 4:2, 8). Truly, as Jesus said, “He that heareth you, heareth me.” To hear the word of the apostles is to hear the very word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). Thus, if it can be shown that the apostles told “the Christmas story,” then it can be shown that Christmas is brought to us by Jesus. Where, though, is that testimony? Where is that evidence? We have “all truth,” “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Where is Christmas, as seen among us today, displayed in the Bible?

- *One could find Christmas was brought to us by Jesus if he could find an approved example of it in the New Testament.* Jesus said nothing about the day upon which the disciples were to show his death in the Lord’s supper. The apostles did not specifically and directly command a set day. However, we find that the disciples came together “upon the first day of the week” to “break bread” (Acts 20:7). When we do as they did, when we follow their ways, we are following Christ’s ways (1 Cor. 4:17; 11:1, 2; Phil. 4:9). Thus, we remember and show the Lord’s death in eating the bread and drinking the cup “upon the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Now, is there a similar narrative with respect to commemorating and celebrating the Lord’s birth? If so, where is it? Find it, and we may agree that Christmas has been brought to us by Jesus.

Conclusion

For The Gospel's Sake

Richard Boone

Wednesday, September 9, 1998, Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia: 90 minutes after takeoff from New York's Kennedy airport, an MD-11 jet, Swissair Flight 111, disappeared from radar and plunged into the Atlantic Ocean. 229 people died; known only to God is the number who lost their souls. The most frequent question has been, "How could this tragedy have been prevented?" More specifically, what could we have done to prevent it? Due to our training and locations, likely little or nothing.

A more important tragedy faces us — spiritually lost people die every day; what are we doing to "snatch them from the fire" (Jude 23)? I want to focus on three actions that we may not think about often enough. Paul thought about and practiced them "for the sake of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:19-23; cf. v. 23). Notice what he did:

He Restricted Himself

To win Jews to Christ, Paul was willing to be Jewish (v. 20). By lineage and upbringing Paul was a Jew, an above-average Jew (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:5-6). He did not, however, remain a Jew when he learned the truth about Christ (Acts 9:1-22); he began preaching "the faith" he once destroyed (Gal. 1:23-24).

We are not doubting or denying that Christ, the Son of God, was born of a virgin and placed in a manger (Matt. 1; Luke 1-2). We are simply saying that the Christmas tradition was not brought to us by Jesus. He did not authorize it. Therefore, as Christians, we cannot observe that which God has not sanctioned (2 John 9).

How many other things, like Christmas, can you think of which God has neither authored nor approved? Infant baptism? Sprinkling for baptism? Easter? Churches becoming social, recreational, and entertainment centers? If you are tired of worldly religion, why not study the Bible, serve God, and worship with us? If you have questions, we would love to hear from you.

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His strong desire was to save his fleshly kinsmen. He was willing to be accursed from Christ that they might be saved (Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1). He was willing to go to any extent lawful in the gospel to win Jews to Christ. Though free from all men, he willingly became a servant to all "that (he) might win the more" (1 Cor. 9:19).

For influence's sake, Paul was willing to restrict himself in certain ways toward Jews. He would first go to synagogues to teach Jews about Christ (Acts 13:14, 46). He had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3). He took a vow, then shaved his head when it was completed (Acts 18:18), interesting in light of Jewish opposition at Corinth (Acts 18:4-6, 9-10, 12-17). On another occasion, he paid for the completion of others' vows (Acts 21:20-26). He used the Old Testament to teach Jews, rather than demanding submission to his apostolic authority (Acts 17:2-3; 18:4; etc.). "Fine," you might say, "But how is this relevant to me?" Excellent question; I'll proceed with an answer.

Occasionally we are in circumstances where, for the sake of the gospel, we should refrain from certain liberties we have. For example, several years ago a sister in Christ washed her laundry on Sunday afternoons and hung the clothes outside to dry. She was approached by a neighbor who questioned her "working on the Christian Sabbath." This sister faced a dilemma — continue her laundering on Sunday, knowing that she was at scriptural liberty to do so, or restrict herself "for the sake of the gospel." She moved her laundry-washing to another day, as I recall. When no violation of Christ's law occurs, we can (should) restrict ourselves where necessary for the greatest influence on those who are not Christians.

He Released Himself

While Paul was concerned about Jews, he knew his primary mission was to Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Eph. 3:8; Gal. 2:8-9). In Christ he was no longer obligated to keep the Mosaic covenant and its requirements to be saved (Acts 15). As he went to Gentiles he released himself from Jewish restrictions (1 Cor. 9:21).

... a greater tragedy also occurs daily — people who die unprepared to meet God. Our work as Christians is well stated by Paul to Timothy: “Save yourself and those who hear you” (1Tim. 4:16).

A good example is circumcision. Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), but refused to have Titus circumcised (Gal. 2:3-5). Was Paul hypocritical? No; the circumstances explain the difference. With Timothy, circumcision was expedient (profitable, helpful) because the Jews of that area knew his father was Greek (Acts 16:1, 3). Timothy was circumcised for the sake of influence. Titus' circumstances, however, were different. The compulsion for circumcision of Titus was from Judaizing teachers as a requirement for salvation. Paul yielded not “even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:5). Paul knew that circumcision was not required for salvation in the New Covenant, and he did not allow others to bind it as law when God released all men from it.

Other examples include Paul's association with Gentiles (Acts 16:34), clearly a violation of Jewish standards and practice (Acts 10:28). He taught Gentiles from their perspective, not Jewish perspectives (Acts 17:22-31), thus leading them from where they were to where they needed to be. Paul released himself and Corinthian Christians from Jewish restrictions on eating meat bought in the marketplace after it was sacrificed to idols — as long as no homage to idols was involved (1 Cor. 10:23-27). Observance or non-observance of days as a personal scruple was allowed (Rom. 14:5-6).

We pause to note the relevance of this to us. One example will suffice. In the area where I live is a large 7th-Day Adventist population. On Saturday, one community practically “roles up the sidewalks.” If I were engaged in spiritually-acceptable activities on Saturday and learned it was a stumbling block to Adventist neighbors, I would forego them on Saturdays. On the other hand, if I were in an area where my neighbors were of some other religious group, my Saturday activities would likely not offend them. I would proceed freely with those activities. In the first case I would restrict myself “for the sake of the gospel;” in the second case I would release myself from such restrictions, even to discuss spiritual matters with my neighbors!

He Reduced Himself

In verse 22 of our text, Paul “became as weak” to the “weak” so that “(he) might win the weak.” He reduced himself to the level of others so that he might “by all means

save some.” Who are “the weak” in this passage, and to what did Paul refer when he “became as weak”?

Perched perfectly in the middle of a discussion of personal liberties, 1 Corinthians 9 reveals Paul's practice of what he taught the Corinthians in chapters 8 and 10. In chapter 8 he makes two vital points about meat sacrificed to idols: (1) Idols are nothing (v. 4); and (2) Meat is not inherently helpful or harmful in God's kingdom (v. 8). Verse 7 is the key: “There is not in everyone that knowledge.”

The “weak” person of this context is without adequate knowledge and understanding of some matters. (He is not one engaged in inherently sinful actions, or one who, out of stubbornness or belligerence, is a Diotrophes, 3 John 9-10). In light of one whose knowledge is incomplete, Paul would forfeit his liberty to eat meat (vv. 9-13). Why? “That I might win the weak” (1 Cor. 9:22) . . . “For the sake of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:23). This “reduction” principle guides one's conduct before weak Christians (1 Cor. 8) and unbelievers (1 Cor. 10:23-33) alike.

We face situations frequently where we apply Paul's teaching, especially in teaching the lost. Once I was discussing some biblical subjects with a coworker to lead her to obey the gospel. It was during the “Christmas” season and she asked why I did not celebrate Christmas as “the birthday of Jesus.” I had two options in answering her query: (1) There is no authority to observe December 25 as his birthday, with all the attendant aspects of Bible authority; or (2) Ask some questions on her level to provoke her thinking and study. Both options would be acceptable, but since she had no knowledge of the importance of Bible authority, it would have been futile to respond on that basis. I asked some questions that caused her to think and study for herself, and was still able, on her level, to teach about Bible authority. I'm sure you have faced similar circumstances in your Bible discussions with those whose knowledge was/is at milk stage (1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; etc.). I am also confident that you, like Paul, became as weak to the weak “that (you) might win the weak.”

Conclusion

Tragedies that kill people, like the crash of Swissair 111, occur daily. While they are devastating to those affected by them, a greater tragedy also occurs daily — people who die unprepared to meet God. Our work as Christians is well stated by Paul to Timothy: “Save yourself and those who hear you” (1Tim. 4:16). By the Spirit's words and by his own life, Paul taught Christians how to better accomplish those tasks — restriction, release, and reduction. This he did, and so must we, “for the sake of the gospel.”

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We Ought to Agree Among Ourselves

F.D. Srygley

Note: *The following article written 100 years ago is as timely today as it was when first published. It was submitted by Paul K. Williams. It was the front page editorial written by F.D. Srygley in the Gospel Advocate, some time between 1889 and 1900 and is taken from the book, The New Testament Church, edited by F.B. Srygley, 193-195.*

The “Baptist and Reflector” refers to the differences and discussions among “us as a people,” and suggests that we ought to agree among ourselves and quit arguing with each other before we push “our plea” for the union of all Christians on the Bible much further.

The brother errs, not knowing the Scriptures. Because we differ in opinions and argue questions among ourselves, it does not follow that we are not united as Christians on the Bible. We have never proposed or desired to unite Christians in any institution that is too narrow to allow them to differ in opinion or argue with each other. We are in favor of giving everybody room to think and liberty to speak for himself.

For myself, I am opposed to any institution that allows no one but the bosses and grand moguls to entertain an idea or express an opinion. For the life of me, I can’t see that I am under any more obligation to agree with Alexander Campbell than he to agree with me. I would never unite with him or anybody else on the Bible on any other condition than that I am as free as he to study the Bible. This is the only kind of union we have ever proposed, and it is the only kind that is practicable or right among men.

Whenever it comes to human organizations in which no one but the framers of doctrinal standards are allowed to do any thinking, I beg to be excused. My thinking apparatus is not very large, I admit, but I claim all the room the Bible allows me in which to operate it.

The *Reflector* evidently thinks that because every man, with us, is free to think for himself and to differ from and argue with everybody else, therefore we are not united. That

is an error. We are united, and the beauty and strength of the union is to be found largely in the fact that it is a union in Christ wherein every one is allowed to study the Bible and think for himself, without being amenable to ecclesiastic authorities or doctrinal standards of human make.

The *Reflector* seems to have the old, bigoted idea that if a man should happen to differ from me and undertake to argue a question with me, he must get out of my church and start a little concern of his own. That has been the trouble with religious bigots all along the ages. It takes just such bigotry as that to build up denominations and keep Christians apart. “We as a people” are a rather contentious set, I admit, but we have not yet given in to that idea.

It is just at this point I file my objection to the Baptist Church. One must accept its doctrinal standards, written by uninspired men, or get out of it. Here is the “Baptist and Reflector,” for instance. It could think out some very good ideas of its own and express them in very creditable English if it only had room. But, my! Wouldn’t the Baptist bosses sit down on it with a crash if it should happen some day to think a little thought all by itself, without consulting the doctrinal standards?

The basis of our union ought always to be as broad as the conditions of salvation. No man has any right to make his plea for union narrower than this. It is wrong to make anything a condition of fellowship which is not essential to salvation. We draw the line here. That which will damn a soul and separate us in the next world should divide us in this; nothing else should.

There are a few men among us who are trying very hard to “organize” the thing called “us as a people,” so as to shut off all investigation and stop all discussion; but they are entirely too narrow in their ideas to fairly represent this reformation. They say that if something of this kind is not done very soon, “our plea” will burst into smithereens, “our organized mission work” will break all to flinders, and “we as a people” will go to smash on general principles; but I

Do You Curse Without Realizing It?

Donald Townsley

Many good members of the church who would not think of using the vile gutter language of the man of the world, will turn right around and use the euphemistic form of the same words and think nothing of it. Christians need to realize that they will give account for their words, thoughts, and actions. The Lord said in Matthew 12:36: "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Following is a list of some of the words many members of the church use without thinking anything of it, but which are euphemisms (softened forms of a word or phrase that is considered less offensive) of the "real thing."

1. "Blamed" — "damned" — a euphemism (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*).
2. "Darn" — a euphemism for "damn" (the curse). (*Funk & Wagnall's Dict. of the American Language*).
3. "Dickens" — "the devil" (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*).
4. "What the Deuce" — "deuce" means "devil" (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*).
5. "Dog-gone" or "dog-goned" — A euphemism for "God-damn" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

6. "Gee" — a minced oath: "Jesus" (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*); a euphemistic contraction of "Jesus" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

7. "Golly" — a euphemism for "God" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

8. "Gosh" — a minced oath, used as a substitute for "God" (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*); a euphemism for "God" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

9. "Heck" used euphemistically for "hell" (*Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary*); a euphemism for "hell" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

10. "Goodness" or "For Goodness Sake" — a euphemism for "God" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

11. "Blasted" — "damned" (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

12. "Confounded" — "damned"; a mild oath (*Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*).

Brother and sister, don't use words that you don't know the meaning of. If you do, you may find yourself cursing without realizing it!

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think not. The shortest route I know to such a crash is to organize us and undertake to compel us all to quit thinking and arguing and accept the conclusions and carry out the plans of "leading men and papers," without the liberty to conceive an idea or express an opinion of our own.

Paul K. Williams, P.O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa

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Romans 14 — An Unscholarly Approach

P. J. Casebolt

I have never made any claims with respect to being a scholar, and so far as I know, no one has ever accused me of being a scholar, at least not to the extent that I have formal training or credentials which are prescribed by the literary community. But I think that I have enough intelligence, knowledge, and experience to recognize scholarship when I see/hear it (or don't see/hear it, as the case may be).

I have respect for those who have made special efforts to obtain knowledge in a given field, and have also obtained a commensurate degree of wisdom to go with their knowledge (Prov. 1:1-9; 4:7). I am still trying to learn both the writing and speaking of the English language, and a few experts in this area have flattered me into believing that I have at least obtained a passing grade in my efforts.

With the Greek language, it is an entirely different matter. I can neither speak, read, nor write Greek, unless it be a transliterated term like "baptism," or the Greek word for God's called-out people, the church. But, I do know some Greek scholars (though not personally), who translated the New Testament from Greek into English, and I'm a pretty good reader of the English language, as well as a fair speaker and writer. And I'm not too overly impressed by philosophers or scholars who resort to human reasoning and what they term "a new hermeneutics," while "intruding into those things which he (they) hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his (their) fleshly mind(s)" (Col. 2:8, 18).

I used to think I knew where Romans 14 fit into the Book of Romans, and into the other New Testament epistles (to wit, right between chapters 13 and 15). But if some things I'm reading and hearing are true, Romans 14 has at least an hundred more verses than it used to contain, and several of the other New Testament epistles have been deleted to get their contents into Romans 14, and said epistles are rendered completely meaningless.

For instance, let us use Matthew 14 and 16 as an ex-

ample, then return to Romans 14. In Matthew 14, we have chronicled the events which led to the beheading of John the Baptist. The body (whether with or without the head, I know not), was dutifully buried by his disciples, then they "went and told Jesus" (Matt. 14:12). Without claiming to be a scholar, I know that some events recorded in the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, are not always recorded chronologically. But in the case of John the Baptist's death, Jesus visited several other places around the Sea of Gennesaret (Galilee), eventually "came into the coasts of Caesarea" (Matt. 16:13ff), and among other things said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). John the Baptist had been dead for two chapters and several months before Jesus even promised to build his (Christ's) church at some future date. So, John never built any church for himself, much less one for Christ, the "bridegroom" (John 3:29, 30). Now, back to the Book of Romans . . .

If Romans 14 admits as many false doctrines and teachers as some scholars and their non-scholar disciples claim, then the language of Romans 16:17 is utterly superfluous as well as contradictory. In the latter passage, Paul admonishes, even commands and beseeches, ". . . mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Such doctrines and their advocates are further identified in the following verse, who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (v. 18). If I understand English, the "doctrine" of Romans 16:17 is the same thing as the "doctrine (gospel) of Christ" in 1 Timothy 1:9, 10.

Scholars tell us that 13 or 14 of the New Testament epistles were written by Paul (and though not a scholar, I can count that far). This being the case, much of what Paul wrote in later epistles (as they appear in the New Testament order), including Romans 16:17, contradicts or nullifies what he wrote in Romans 14. In practical application, as far as false teaching/teachers are concerned, the New Testament ends with Romans 14 the way some interpret it.

“The Bible And Gays”

Andy Alexander

“The Bible and Gays” is an article by Deb Price of *The Detroit News* reprinted in *The Louisville Courier-Journal* advocating the homosexual idea that the Bible does not address homosexuality as a sin. This is wishful thinking at best, but the liberal press runs these articles attempting to sway the thinking of their readers. They know that if a lie is repeated often enough, people will begin to believe it, and a biblically ignorant generation will eventually accept it.

Ms. Price uses a man named Peter Gomes and his recently published book *The Good Book: Reading The Bible With Mind And Heart* to promote her liberal views on homosexuality. She says of the book by Gomes that it is “a welcome testament to his faith that we all can raise our level of biblical understanding by seriously studying modern scholarship as well as the Bible itself.”

One other short paragraph from the article will demonstrate the thrust of the editorial, and the view of some homosexuals who search for approval from God’s Word: “And despite all the Bible-thumping hoopla these days condemning gay people, the Bible says little about homosexuality. The Ten Commandments didn’t mention it; neither did Jesus, Gomes points out. Sodom’s downfall, he

adds, wasn’t homosexuality. Old Testament authors referred to Sodom’s sins as ‘pride and selfishness.’ Jesus himself is under the impression that Sodom was destroyed because it was a place lacking hospitality, Gomes concludes from reading Matthew 10:14-15 and Luke 10:10-12.”

Ms. Price’s closing remark is, “If we open our minds as well as our hearts, it’s never too late to be transformed.” *The Courier-Journal* is known in the Louisville area as a paper that promotes many liberal ideas, but it seems especially dedicated to the homosexual movement. They have published articles and editorials with pictures illustrating the “normal” life that homosexuals lead in the Louisville area. They ran a special on gay bars and the gay lifestyle in the *Scene* section of the paper complete with addresses of each of the establishments and pictures of lesbians and homosexual men dancing together. This editorial by Deb Price is just another attempt to soften the public’s view toward this abomination.

What Saith The Scripture?

What saith the Scripture? As always, we must look to God’s word for the truth (John 17:17). It is not to be found in modern scholarship, *The Courier-Journal*, or any other human receptacle.

Further, it may be claimed that if we are going to have the peace enjoined in Romans 14:19, that we will have to fellowship or bid God speed to those who teach contrary to the doctrine of Christ with respect to marriage/divorce/remarriage, human institutions usurping the work/mission of the church, and even with respect to the plan of salvation itself (“What must I do to be saved?”). But James answers this supposed dilemma when he says, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable . . .” (Jas. 3:17). Without maintaining the purity of the doctrine of Christ, we can attain only to a worldly definition of peace,

and not a peace that is of God (John 14:27).

Let us leave the language of Romans 14 where it is in that epistle, and with respect to other New Testament epistles.

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Let's notice first the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord told Abraham before he destroyed these cities that their "sin is very grave" (Gen. 18:20). Now, all sin is bad and any one sin will keep a person out of heaven, but where in the Bible do we get the thought that inhospitality is an especially grave sin?

When the two angels, that appeared as men, entered Sodom, Lot met them and invited them into his home not knowing that they were angels (Gen. 19:1-2). He brought them into his house, fed them, and provided beds for them (Gen. 19:3-4). These angels found a hospitable home in Sodom.

While the angels were enjoying the hospitality extended to them by Lot, the men of the city came and asked about them. They told Lot that they wanted to meet the men so they could "know them" (Gen. 19:5). Now, if the homosexuals of our day are right, then these men were far from being inhospitable. It would even seem, as if they went out of their way in order to meet these two visitors of their city. However, the context and a knowledge of the Bible phrase "know them" reveals their most glaring sin. Lot went outside to talk with the men and he described what they wanted to do with the visitors as wickedness (Gen. 19:7). He even offered his two virgin daughters to them to do as they wished, but they refused this offer (Gen. 19:8). It would be extremely inhospitable to rape a visitor in your area, but upon reading the context and other Bible references to this incident, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is homosexuality, which is an abomination in the sight of God (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).

The phrase "know them" points to an act of wickedness wherein these men wanted to have sexual relations with these two visitors, and the level of their depravity can be seen in verse eleven when they wore themselves out trying to find the door of Lot's house even after they were struck with blindness! Another instance of this phrase being used to describe sexual immorality is found in the book of Judges. A Levite was the guest of a man in Gibeah, a town belonging to the Benjamites (Judg. 19:16). The men of that city were wicked and desired the visitor of Gibeah for the same reason the people of Sodom wanted the angels. The text reads, "As they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain base fellows, beset the house round about, beating at the door; and they spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him" (Judg. 19:22). The concubine of the Levite was given to these wicked men and they took her, raped her, and left her for dead (Judg. 19:25-26). These men "knew her" in the same way that the wicked men of Sodom wanted to "know" the angels who were visiting at Lot's house: a sexually immoral, perverse way.

Another conclusive argument showing the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah to be homosexuality is found in Jude 7. Jude writes describing the punishment of the wicked saying "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Why are the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah suffering the punishment of eternal fire? They committed fornication by "going after strange flesh."

This is some of what the Bible says about the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and it does not describe a people given over to the sin of inhospitality. The Lord's reference to these cities in Matthew 10:14-15 and Luke 10:10-12 has nothing to do with inhospitality. These passages refer to the punishment meted out to those who refuse the gospel invitation, and as said by our Lord it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for those who reject him and his disciples (Luke 10:12). A severe warning to all of the importance receiving those who teach the gospel of Christ.

The Bible also condemns homosexuality in a number of other passages. The Law of Moses reads "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Lev. 18:22). "And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13). Asa, king of Israel, purged a people out of the land of Israel called Sodomites. "And he put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made" (1 Kings 15:12). These people were called Sodomites because of the sin they committed, not because they were from Sodom, which had been destroyed many years earlier.

The price of a dog was not to be brought into the house of God (Deut. 23:17-18). The Hebrew term translated "dog" refers to a male practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals. God's use of the term "dog" is interesting and informative when one considers the actual lifestyle of the common homosexual. The number of sexual contacts, the anonymous nature of many of the contacts, and the degrading acts committed by homosexuals of which it is not fitting to speak, all give rise to the term "dog" (Eph. 5:12).

Jesus, contrary to Ms. Price's belief, did address the sin of homosexuality in Matthew 19:4-9. Jesus teaches concerning marriage that it is a union of a male and a female, and that is as God established it in the very beginning. God created Eve, a female, for Adam, and declared that they should leave father and mother, cleave to one another, and become one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6). God did not create a man for a man, nor a woman for a woman, but a woman for a man and the two are to become one flesh

and remain in that condition for life. Fornication is given by Jesus as the only reason for breaking that union. The innocent party may divorce the one guilty of fornication and remarry according to our Lord's teaching in Matthew 19:9 and Matthew 5:32. Fornication is a broad term which includes the sin of homosexuality. The passage noted earlier in Jude 7 indicates that those in Sodom were guilty of fornication or sexual immorality and described that further as "going after strange flesh." The "going after strange flesh" is a phrase referring to homosexuality and/or bestiality. A man who has a sexual relationship with his wife is not guilty of "going after strange flesh" because God created the man and woman for each other. But, a man going after a man or a woman going after a woman is strange because it goes against the design and revelation of God. Jesus taught the truth, a man and a woman united for life; and fornication, whose definition includes homosexuality, is a sin which violates that relationship.

The apostles were Christ's spokesmen on earth (Matt. 16:19). They were commissioned by him to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). The message delivered by the apostles was the same message they received from Jesus (Gal. 1:11-12). Paul said concerning the things that he wrote, "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

Paul denounced homosexuality as a sin deserving of death (Rom. 1:26-32). He told the Corinthians that homosexuals will not enter the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). But, he went on to say that some of them were (past tense) homosexuals, "but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

They had been homosexuals, but they repented of this sin. This is contrary to what many homosexuals would have us believe. We are told by the elite of society that homosexuals are born that way and they cannot change their sexual orientation.

Peter and Jude both referred to Sodom and Gomorrah when discussing the punishment that awaits the wicked (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7). Homosexuality is mentioned a number of times in the Bible. The false ideas taught by Peter Gomes, Deb Price, and others of their persuasion will not stand up when exposed to the light of the gospel (Eph. 5:11-13).

Peter said that some would twist the Scriptures to lead disciples away (2 Pet. 3:16-17). Do not be misled by the constant bombardment of *The Courier-Journal* or any other source that contradicts plain teaching from the word of God.

3613 Garden Ct., Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165-8932

The A.D. 70 Doctrine

Johnie Edwards

A false doctrine is being taught in these words: "The Holy Scriptures teach the second coming of Christ, including the establishment of the eternal kingdom, the day of judgment, the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead, occurred with the fall of Judaism in 70 A.D." Thus, we examine these false teachings:

- *Christ Has Not Yet Come.* John records, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him . . ." (Rev. 1:7). Those who believe Christ has already come should not partake of the Lord's supper for the communion shows "the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). If Christ came in A.D. 70, then every person has already been eternally rewarded. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

- *The Establishment of the Kingdom Was Not in A.D. 70.* The prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-3, Acts 1:4, 8, Mark 9:1 was fulfilled in Acts 2 when Jews heard, believed, repented, and were baptized, ". . . and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). This occurred about forty years before A.D. 70.

- *End of the World and the Resurrection Did Not Occur in A.D. 70.* The end of the world and the resurrection will take place at the last day. Martha said concerning her brother, Lazarus, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24). To understand that the world did not end in A.D. 70, all one has to do is to look around and see that the world still turns! When the resurrection comes, ". . . all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). Go to any graveyard, look around and you will soon see that the dead have not yet been resurrected!

4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47401

“The Salvation Army” continued from frontpage

Very clearly, the Salvation Army is a most straightforward attempt at remolding the gospel of Jesus Christ into the “social gospel” with its emphasis on the physical. So pronounced is this focus that many do not realize it is even occurring. Most mistake those red kettles as purely charitable donations, when in fact, they are offerings of support to the doctrines of Calvinism and salvation by fleshly appeal and “faith only.”

Military Organizational Theme

When Booth created his army, he made himself general for life and began installing other men in lower ranks throughout the organization. “The basic unit of the army is the corps, commanded by an officer of a rank ranging from lieutenant to brigadier, who is responsible to a divisional headquarters. Divisions are grouped into territories.” Although these offices have military titles, they completely mirror the hierarchical setups of denominations with world and national headquarters and chains of authority.

The local platoon attempts to convert people and those “converts” may decide to enlist in the Salvation Army themselves. “Converts who desire to become soldiers in the Army are required to sign Articles of War and volunteer their services.”

Officers in Booth’s Army

The officers in the Salvation Army have the status of ordained ministers and are employed in a professional, full-time capacity.

On being commissioned (the equivalent of ordination in “other denominations”) they receive the rank of lieutenant. They can then be promoted to captain and major. Like Catholic priests with high collars, they wear vestments — military-style uniforms. “Women have always been accepted as officers on equal terms as men.”

“The majority of officers are responsible for a Salvation Army corps (church), with a pastoral role and community service. . . . An officer’s ministry includes preaching the Christian Gospel, distributing Salvation Army literature, visiting hospitals, institutions and prisons, counseling, conducting weddings and funerals, being a pastor to their congregation and administrating the church programme.”

Two Men

by Bill Hall

A collection of articles on practical Christian living.

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When someone asks you to support your local Salvation Army corps, they are asking you to support a denomination with all its error and misguided intentions, lending aid and comfort to the devil.

Adherents and Worshiping in The Corps

Adherents of the Army are “people who choose to make The Salvation Army their spiritual home and place of worship, but who do not wish to make all the commitments which a soldier would be expected to make.”

These people all meet in the “corps.” “This is the local Salvation Army centre seen in most towns and cities across the country which has been established to proclaim the gospel. Each week a variety of people will meet for worship, fellowship, musical activities and other events.” “Instrumental music, clapping of hands, personal testimony, free prayer . . . characterize the services” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1995 ed., 10:369-70). There may also be a variety of community works such as lunch clubs, mother and toddler groups, counseling services and so on which are part of the corps programme.”

Objections to the Salvation Army

One might note the following unscriptural practices of the Salvation Army as cause to refrain from contributing to its work:

- denominational (1 Cor. 1:10)
- teaches salvation by faith only (Jas. 2:24)
- unscriptural hierarchy (Eph. 1:22)
- human origin (Matt. 16:16)
- worship not according to truth (John 4:24)
- ecclesiastical garments (Matt. 23:5)
- ecclesiastical titles (Matt. 23:6-12)
- promotion of social gospel (Rom. 14:17; Gal. 1:6-9)
- women in authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12)

Conclusion

The majority of this article has been devoted to simply reporting what the Salvation Army says about itself. These undisputed facts reveal a distinct departure from New Testament Christianity and the work and nature of the church Jesus built.

Participation in the schemes of the Army — no matter how well-intentioned and seemingly benevolent — is tantamount to fellowship with error. The gospel of the Salvation Army is not the gospel of Jesus Christ and members of the church of Christ should abstain from supporting this latter day denomination.

Let us give our time and resources to the local church of Christ of which we are members and leave the corps adherents to take care of their own work.

1111 Faircrest Dr., Austin, Texas 78753

“Play Responsibly” continued from page 2

ships. Our children are spoon fed the belief that those who oppose homosexuality are the moral deviants, being afflicted with homophobia.

The consequences of these moral doctrines are coming home to the moral relativists. Unwed mothers have dramatically increased, leading to a drain on this nation’s economic system through Aid for Dependent Children. Children are growing up in homes without their father (some radical feminists are openly stating that fathers are not necessary for the normal development of children). In not a few homes of unwed mothers, the children have several different fathers.

Sexually transmitted diseases have increased. TV advertisements appear to tell viewers that, although there is no cure for some of these diseases, one can control the disease and have a relatively normal life. AIDS created a different problem for there is no cure for AIDS and even those drugs that have been most effective leave one’s life far from normal. Consequently, those with the loose sexual ethics have to educate Americans on what they should think about AIDS. For sure, one should not treat those who contacted AIDS through sinful sexual behavior as moral deviants whose immorality brought on this disease.

The moral relativists who have undermined the sexual morals of a generation of Americans are not about to say, “We were wrong when we promoted sexual relationships outside the bonds of marriage. We repent and encourage you to ‘flee fornication’ and abstain from sex until you are married and then be faithful to this monogamous relationship.” Rather, these people will salve their seared conscience by saying, “Practice safe sex!” That is, use a condom when you commit fornication or homosexuality.

The trouble is that using condoms does not always protect a person from the diseases that are transmitted through promiscuous sex. Furthermore, they do not always prevent pregnancies. For sure, they do not address the emotional conflict that occurs when those engaged in these practices are plagued by a guilty conscience. The “safe sex” philosophy may salve the conscience of the moral relativists who perceive that their loose moral teachings are producing evils in our society, but it is a flawed answer to preventing these problems.

Drink Responsibly and Have A Designated Driver

Another industry that is doing immeasurable harm to our society is the liquor industry. Those who oppose drinking alcoholic beverages are depicted as a bunch of crazy religious fanatics. TV characters are frequently portrayed drinking intoxicating beverages. Liquor commercials are among the best produced commercials on TV. I doubt that Joe Camel has done anymore harm to our children than

have Budweiser’s frogs!

America has a drinking problem. Alcoholic anonymous groups exist in every major metropolitan area. Drunk driving has killed enough people that insurance rates are driven up. Enough people have been hurt that special campaigns against drunk driving have been promoted by Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD).

The typical response to the evils of drunkenness is to teach people how to drink responsibly and to have a designated driver when a group goes out to get drunk.

Conclusion

What would you think of parents who brought home rattlesnakes and put them in the playpen with their two-year-old and said, “Play safely”? The government agencies to protect children would take away their children and reporters would condemn such parents across the front pages of American newspapers.

However, that is about what happens when we hold out gambling, fornication, and alcohol in front of our teenaged children and say, “Play Responsibly,” “Practice Safe Sex,” “Drink Responsibly” and “Have A Designated Driver.” About all that we are doing with these platitudes is placating our seared consciences.

The Christian answer to these problems is to practice self-control, abstaining from all forms of sinful behavior. Let’s not be deluded by the ethical teachings of moral relativists whose values conflict with the Christian ethic.

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Preacher Available

John W. Pitman: I am looking for a church to move and work with. I would prefer to locate in Kentucky or an adjoining state. Please write or call me at P.O. Box 9, Louisa, KY 41230, phone: 606-673-4421.



Bonner - Chastain Debate

David Bonner and Hoyt Chastain have recently met in two debates, one in Pernell, Oklahoma in June and the other in Lufkin, Texas in October. Chastain is a Missionary Baptist who has had about seventy debates, including four with W. Curtis Porter. Bonner is the preacher with the Fourth and Groesbeck congregation in Lufkin. Each affirmed that the church of which he is a member is scriptural in origin, name, doctrine, and practice. Following are a few highlights of the debates.

As to origin and name, Chastain affirmed that John was sent to make Baptists; thus, he baptized Jesus and the apostles and that was the beginning of the Baptist church. Bonner showed that John's work was to "prepare the way of the Lord" and not to start a church. He showed that John was called "Baptist," not as a name, but because he bap-

tized. He showed that the church which Jesus purchased with his blood had its beginning when people believed that Jesus was Lord and Christ, repented of their sins, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:30-41).

As to "name," Bonner showed that since the church was purchased with Jesus Christ's blood it is Christ's church and therefore "church of Christ" is a scriptural designation (name). Bonner pointed out that he is a member of the body of Christ that had its beginning in Acts 2 and that he is a member of the Fourth and Groesbeck congregation in Lufkin. He showed that the Fourth and Groesbeck church is scriptural in origin, i.e., it is a product of the seed, which is the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23), in name (Rom. 16:16), and in doctrine and practice as it can give Scripture for everything it teaches and practices.

The debates centered mainly on the subjects of baptism, apostasy, and Chastain's claim that Jesus is coming back to earth to set up his kingdom and reign on an earthly throne.

Chastain contradicted himself relative to Acts 2:38. He argued that *eis* means "because of" sins already being remitted. He strongly denied that *eis* meant "in order to" remission of sins. Then he argued that the phrase *eis apheisin* does not have reference to baptism, but to Christ, our scape goat. Thus, he had himself in the predicament that Christ died "because of" sins already being remitted or else *eis* does mean "in order to" remission of sins. He never even tried to harmonize these contradicting positions.

Chastain said that baptism is never tied to the gospel and that baptism is no part of the gospel, and that baptism is not of grace, but of self. Bonner showed that baptism "is tied-to" the gospel and is "part" of the gospel in Mark 16:15-16. To escape the truth of this, Chastain agreed that the last eleven verses of Mark 16 should not be in the Bible. Bonner asked him if it were in the Bible would it teach that baptism is necessary for salvation. Chastain never answered. Bonner showed that baptism could not possibly be of self since it is a command of Jesus.

Chastain referred to 1 Corinthians 1:17 and said Paul was not sent to baptize, but to save people thus, baptism does not save. Bonner explained the "not-but" passage and then observed that according to Chastain's teaching, Paul was not sent to make Baptists. Chastain left that alone also.

Chastain said that repentance is always placed before belief. Bonner showed that belief is placed before repentance in Acts 2:38. Chastain never replied to this. Chastain said that one is a child of God by faith and puts on Christ in baptism; thus, he has become a child of God *before* he puts on Christ. Bonner asked what the Bible would have to say to teach baptism is necessary for salvation. Chastain replied: "Except ye be baptized ye shall perish." Bonner

pointed out that John 3:5 teaches that very thing. Again there was silence from Chastain on this one.

Chastain taught that babies are born guilty of Adam's sin, thus depraved. But he also taught that babies are immediately saved by Christ's blood. Bonner pointed out the conclusion to Chastain's teaching is that a baby saved from Adamic sin by the blood of Jesus can fall from grace, but an adult saved from his own sins by Jesus' blood can not fall from grace.

Chastain said that the mind is carnal and must be regenerated, but the inner man is born of God and cannot sin. His main passage to try to prove the impossibility of apostasy was Psalms 89:30-33. Bonner showed from the context that the passage was teaching that the sins of David's descendants would not keep God from keeping his promise to David and had nothing to do with people falling from God's grace.

Chastain also used 1 John 3:9. But Bonner showed that the passage teaches one does not sin when "his seed remaineth in him," but does not teach one does not sin if his seed does not remain in him.

Chastain said that a man cannot look on a "half naked woman" and not lust. Bonner told him he should clean up his mind. Chastain said that he could leave his wife, run off with a sixteen year old girl and live with her until he dies, and that would not effect his salvation; in fact, he said it would work for his good and gave Acts 8:28 as his proof.

Chastain argued that Jesus is not now on David's throne, but is coming back to establish an earthly kingdom and sit on David's earthly throne. Bonner showed that there is no promise of Christ coming back to earth. He further showed that *if* Christ came back to earth and tried to establish David's throne, he could not prosper in that effort (Jer. 22:28-30; Matt. 1:12). Bonner showed that God promised David he would establish the throne of Christ's kingdom *while* he slept with his fathers, not *after* David's resurrection. He further showed that Daniel said Jesus went to heaven and was given his kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14) but that the Bible nowhere says he is coming from heaven to receive his kingdom. Chastain was silent relative to those arguments and passages.

Attendance averaged about 160 in Pernell, with as many as 30 Baptists. It averaged about 150 in Muffin, with even fewer Baptists. The behavior of both disputants was good. Good was done. One young man, in fact, the one who chose Chastain as the Baptist preacher for the debate in Pernell, obeyed the gospel as a result of the debate and is now a member of the good church in Duncan, Oklahoma. He was studying to be a Baptist preacher. He now desires to be a gospel preacher. **Jesse G. Jenkins, 16077 Bench Ln., Bryan, Texas 77807**

“Is it Nothing to You?”

(Lam. 1:12)

Don Alexander

Truth is trampled to earth.
Is it nothing to you?
Honest speech has no worth.
Is it nothing to you?
Do you care that so many
Seem to look past the sinner
If he's seen as a winner?
Is it nothing to you?

There are souls lost in sin.
Is it nothing to you?
Satan struggles to win.
Is it nothing to you?
Does it matter that neighbors
Never learn of salvation
Or the "sweet invitation"?
Is it nothing to you?

There are hearts in despair.
Is it nothing to you?
All their sorrows they bear.
Is it nothing to you?
Does your heart feel their anguish
From the guilt they are bearing?
Is your heart touched and caring?
Is it nothing to you?

There are children at play.
Is it nothing to you?
They don't know how to pray.
Is it nothing to you?
Does it matter that children
Know of sin's dark disasters
But don't talk to the Master?
Is it nothing to you?

Will you rise up and speak
In the cause of the Savior?
Will you stand on your feet
With God's sword in your hand?
Do not hide in the corner
While the devil is waging
And the warfare is raging.
Is it nothing to you?