

“I Will Joy in the God of My Salvation”

Bill Cavender

For though the fig-tree shall not flourish, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive tree shall fail, and the fields shall yield no food; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength; and he maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and will make me to walk upon my high places (Hab. 3:17-19, ASV).

Through the years when I have taken time for meditative reading, study and thinking, I have often read the prophets. Not studying for sermons to preach nor classes to teach nor lessons to prepare, but for my own edification and increased understanding of our Father's will, I find the prophets to be especially instructive and edifying.

Reading again some days ago the book of the prophet Habakkuk and studying each word, phrase and sentence, my thoughts were stirred by the above passages, the last three verses of this small book, small in number of verses but immeasurably lengthy and enlarged is “food for the soul.”

Habakkuk prophesied in Judah, contemporary with Jeremiah and Zephaniah, some six hundred years before the advent of our Savior. The shadow of death was descending on Judah. The Chaldeans — Babylon — Nebuchadnezzar were coming to destroy Judah, ravage the land, and take the people captive into a far away land.

Gloom and the grave were before them, captivity and slavery. Their doom was sealed. Habakkuk justifies the plans and ways of God to Judah. In chapter 1:2-11 righteous people ask how can Jehovah allow wickedness to go unpunished, lawlessness seemingly unending. The prophet tells them that God is raising up the Chaldeans to punish the evildoers.

We have “joy in the God of my salvation” for he has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ who died for us.

“Unto the Angel of the Church Write”

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Mike Willis

So opens each of the seven letters to the churches of Asia in the book of Revelation. Men have wrestled with the meaning of the phrase which is somewhat enigmatic. Swete opts for the understanding of “angel” in its normal sense (*The Apocalypse of St. John* 22), Summers states that it means “the elder, the leading pastor, of the church” (*Worthy Is The Lamb* 108), Caird describes the angels of the seven churches as “no doubt also the seven planets, pictured as a necklace of glittering jewels hanging from the hand of the Son of Man” (*The Revelation of St. John* 25), Hailey believes “the stars may well represent the inward life or spirit of the congregations addressed by Jesus” (*Commentary on Revelation* 116), Dusterdieck says the angel “appears as the living unity of the one organism of the church, which, as it were, in mass clings to the Lord” (*Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament* 119), “angels representing the communities” (TDNT I:87), and the list could be extended.

A few months ago, I was reading the following interesting observation by John Lightfoot about the organization of the synagogue. I will reproduce his original languages:

Besides these there was ‘the public minister of the synagogue,’ who prayed publicly, and took care about the reading of the law, and sometimes preached, if there were not some other to discharge this office. This person was called *rwbyc xy1#\$, the angel of the church*, and *t snkh Nzx*, the Chazan or *bishop of the congregation*. The Aruch gives the reason of the name: “The Chazan (saith he) is *rwbyc xy1#\$, the angel of the church (or the public minister)*, and the Targum renders the word *h wr* by the word *hzw x one that oversees; tw r1 Kyrc)wh# \$ for it is incumbent on him to oversee how the reader reads, and whom he may call out to read in the law.*” The public minister of the synagogue himself read not the law publicly; but, every sabbath, he called out seven of the synagogue (on other days, fewer) whom he judged fit to read. He stood by him that read, with great care observing that he read nothing either falsely or improperly; and calling him back and correcting him if he had failed in anything. And hence he was called *Nzx*, that is *eOp1 /skopoj*, or *overseer*. Certainly the signification of the word *bishop*, and *angel of the church*, had been determined with less noise, if recourse had been made to the proper fountains, and men had not vainly disputed about the signification of words, taken I know not whence. The service and worship of the Temple being abolished, as being ceremonial, God transplanted the worship and public adoration of God used in the synagogues, which was moral, into the Christian church; to wit, the public ministry, public prayers, reading God’s word, and preaching, &c. Hence the

see “Angel” on p. 313

Baptism for the Remission of Sins

Connie W. Adams

R.L. Kilpatrick of Huntsville, Alabama edits a magazine called *Ensign* which he says “Advocates the restoration of spiritual freedom in Christ” and is “further dedicated to the teachings of ‘justification by Faith’ and the imputed righteousness of God as the basis of our relationship to God. Manuscripts to advance these teachings are welcomed.”

There is no doubt that we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). Neither is there any doubt that the sinner is made free from sins. Paul said the Romans had “obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). God does not impute sin to one whom he has forgiven. “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom. 4:7-8).

The question arises as to what kind of faith saves. Is it inactive or active? Is it obedient or disobedient? Throughout the Bible saving faith has always been obedient faith. Hebrews 11 clearly shows that to be so. Does God’s grace save conditionally or unconditionally? This has always been the battleground with denominational preachers.

In *Ensign* the editor has advocated the inherited depravity of man, has argued that it is legalistic to preach that there are conditions upon which God proposes to save the sinner. Now in the March 1999 issue, he has an editorial entitled “Baptism FOR The Remission of Sins” in which he states, “Nowhere in scripture is the sinner commanded to be baptized ‘for the remission of sins.’ It is not a commandment, or an act that can be obeyed by the sinner. He can only submit and God takes care of the rest.” If the sinner “submits” is that not an act? Or do we round them up and drag them kicking and screaming to be baptized? Certainly forgiveness of sins takes place in the mind of God. But whom does he promise to save?

The statement that “Nowhere in scripture is the sinner commanded to be baptized ‘for the remission of sins’” flies in the face of several well-known passages. Let’s start with Acts 2:38. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .” *Eis* here is variously translated “for” or “unto” in translation after translation. God grants the remission of sins to those who “repent” and are “baptized.” Kilpatrick argues that it does not matter whether

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or not a sinner understands the purpose of baptism or not. If he does not need to understand that baptism is “for the remission of sins” then does he not need to understand that repentance is also included “for the remission of sins”?

Saul of Tarsus was told to “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). This penitent believer was to be baptized for the same reason as those on Pentecost — to wash away, or receive remission of sins.

In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” What “he” shall be saved? Is it not the “he” that believes and is baptized?

In Acts 10:48 Peter “commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” There is no difference between baptism “in the name of the Lord” and baptism “for the remission of sins” or baptism to be “saved.”

God’s revelation is addressed to the understanding of man. “Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). Isaiah said, “he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths” (Isa. 2:2-3). On Pentecost it was not until they “heard these things” that they were pricked in their hearts and cried out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” They had come to “know assuredly” certain truths. “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

If the sinner does not need to know that baptism is “for” the remission of sins, does he need to know that the blood of Christ was shed “for” the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28)? Same word both times. Kilpatrick says that insistence that the sinner must understand the purpose of baptism has come to be a requirement “only in recent times.” The preaching of the inspired men as reported in the New Testament surely pre-dates the “recent times” to which R.L. Kilpatrick refers. P.O. Box 69, Brooks, Kentucky 40109

Tired of Tradition

Morris Hafley

Everywhere I go worship is just the same.
Meeting AM and PM wearing the same old name.
Two songs, a prayer, and another song,
For years I’ve just gone along.

All this time following the old tradition,
I’m making a change in the churches’ condition.
At first I’ll mention it to just a few,
To get their pulse and see what they do.

I’ll tell the young my tho’ts and not the old.
Can’t go to too fast, or get too bold.
I know there’ll be problems I can tell,
But eventually I’ll make the sale.

Every service will be different, I can see it now.
With my great wisdom I’ll make a change, and how.
After the order of worship is changed,
I’ll show other things that need rearranged.

Why we could have a chorus and clapping of hands.
We’ve too many dead members sitting in the stands.
We could make our services come alive.
Just think of all the things we can contrive.

Changing of the name will take a little longer.
“Old Timer’s” defense will be loud and stronger.
We’ll just wait till they die or move away,
Then another Victory and we’ll shout “Hooray!”

I can see it now, and no one will recognize
With increase in attendance and our new building’s size.
Surely by the Lord we will have been blessed,
As we entertain ourselves into our heavenly rest.

And so it has been throughout the years.
Such attitudes cost Paul his many tears.
The number of souls lost no one can tell.
We must be watchmen too and save them from hell.

Why make a change just for change’s sake,
And to bind it makes our hearts to ache.
I must be careful not to push my opinion,
And end up in the devil’s dominion.

The Lord commanded “decent and in order,”
We’ve not been accused of being on sins’ border.
So why all the hassle we’d like to know
Confusion and trouble are the seeds you sow.

Why change the name of the church of the Lord?
Are we afraid of people or have we just gotten bored
With the name of the One who saved us from hell?
What started all this it is hard for me to tell?

Old Timers have used expedients our Lord to praise
So that on the Resurrection our souls He will raise
Then we can raise our voices and sing.
Where there will never be a desire to change a thing.

Philippine Report, January 1999

Steven Locklair and Jim McDonald

These brethren are turning the world upside down just as was done in the first century and some are enduring persecution (Acts 17:6).

Acts 14:26-27 — It was a great encouragement for these churches to hear all that God had done with them. I hope and pray that this report will be to you also. Jesus said to his disciples, “Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest. Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this case the saying is true, one sows, and another reaps. I have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor” (John 4:35-38). The fields are white unto the harvest right now in the Philippines and former denominational preachers who have been converted are laboring to preach the gospel to every creature. These brethren are turning the world upside down just as was done in the first century and some are enduring persecution (Acts 17:6). Jim McDonald and I were able to reap what they have sown and God gets the glory. Paul asked the Thessalonians that the brethren pray for the word of the Lord to spread rapidly and God be glorified as it had done with them (2 Thess. 3:1). The gospel is spreading rapidly and I don’t want to leave any of you out who were joint participants in the spreading of the gospel through all of your prayers. Paul mentioned Epaphras, a brother at Colossae, and he said about him, “Always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers” (Col. 4:12). I know that many of you have labored earnestly for us in your prayers and the peace, joy, and love we can have as fellow heirs in the grace of eternal life as souls are being saved.

As a result of Jim McDonald and myself preaching the gospel of Christ, I baptized 17 at Cagayan de Oro City (two denominational preachers) and 19 at General Santos City (15 denominational preachers) in Mindanao. There were at least nine others that were baptized at San Carlos City (six denominational preachers) and in the Manila area (three the last weekend). Over one-half of the conversions were denominational preachers (23) who were willing

to sacrifice their income and error to become a Christian only and preach the truth of God’s word. Jim McDonald especially emphasized before they were baptized that there was *no promise* of financial support to preach if they obeyed the gospel. There is an atmosphere of great joy and enthusiasm in hearing the word of God in the Philippine islands.

Arrival at Manila and Travel to San Fernando La Union (1/1-1/5)

After 23 hours of travel, we arrived late Friday night in Manila, on Luzon, the largest of the Philippine Islands. We were met at the airport by 25 or 30 brethren who traveled to welcome us. We were taken to the home of Ben Cruz, fed dinner and put to bed. I have learned that the brethren here are very hospitable and friendly. Saturday was spent getting tickets, making further travel arrangements for the remainder of the trip, and driving to Angeles City. Sunday morning, I preached two sermons at Angeles City where **Lordy Salunga** labors. Lordy will be publishing a bulletin “Sword & Shield” which will be sent out to about 600 Filipino preachers. This should be a tremendous asset in helping to build the work of the Lord in the Philippines. He is 37, having preached 16 years, has a great zeal, love, and desire to contend earnestly for the faith and save lost souls. Sunday afternoon, we drove up to San Fernando La Union, where Jim was meeting with three preachers there to help work out problems. Jim reported that the problems were resolved as far as he could tell and there seems to be unity and peace among the brethren there again. On our return trip, we stopped at Luna (way out in the country) where Jim preached a short lesson. We stopped again at Angeles City to pick up Lordy, who would be our traveling companion for a few weeks, and then returned to Manila.

Cagayan De Oro City (1/6-1/8)

On Wednesday, January 6, we flew to Cagayan de Oro City on Mindanao. After a brief rest, we traveled into the

for the remission of sins. The atmosphere was electrifying and emotions were very high as we discussed the Scriptures. One Missionary Baptist preacher, who did not obey when we were there, admitted he had been wrong and was open to study as he could not meet the arguments from Scripture. We answered questions about baptism, the church, the day of Pentecost, tithing, Christmas, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and blasphemy of the Spirit. We hope and pray that those who were converted will have the conviction to preach the truth. I copied some sermon materials that hopefully will be helpful in that regard. We along with Lordy and Jesse left at 3 A.M. Wednesday morning for what would be a very long journey to Romblon.

Romblon (1/13/-1/15)

Wednesday was the worst day of the trip as we had about a 16 hour trip by apex (similar to a taxi-van), jeep, fastjet boat, pontoon boat, and jeepney on a very bumpy windy steep dangerous road where we could only go about 10 MPH. The day ended after 16 hours, and we still weren't on Romblon, because there wasn't a boat available at night. We couldn't get to the island until the next day at about 9:30 A.M. We could have gone a shorter route straight to the island, but they were going to charge us \$250 (American money) so we couldn't afford that. It was a grueling and exhausting journey. We preached in an evangelical building to about 25 including at least ten male denominational preachers. There were also many women preachers there. They were so intent on studying that they took all the notes down we wrote on the board and were willing to study during the day without any power. They were so zealous to study God's word that a generator was brought in so we could preach to them. I was genuinely surprised and encouraged by their interest and agreement. We studied about eight hours that day with no A/C, it poured down rain, there was a dog in the building, the generator was very loud that night, and yet they were still desiring to hear God's word. On Friday, Jim preached on the church and I preached on authority. The preacher of the congregation voiced loud opposition to baptism and that we had taught on the fact that tithes cannot be bound today since they were under the Old Law. We had to leave on a pontoon boat at 1 P.M. and it was getting close to time for us to leave. We thought that he would sway the entire congregation against us as the Jews had done when people were listening to the word of God in Acts 13. Jessy Julom stayed that afternoon. Later, he reported to us that Rolle (the preacher) had apologized for the way he had acted and that all the denominational preachers would be bap-

mountains to meet with some brethren. It turned out to be a very scary trip. We rode in a jeepney, and there were others traveling with us in a smaller jeep. The jeep wrecked when the steering column locked up and they went in the ditch (thankfully not over the ledge). It was an exhausting day. The next day I preached a lesson on "How to Establish Authority" and after being translated into their language and a Bible question and answer session, we went to Mindanao Sea and I baptized 17 there. At least two of them were denominational preachers. One of them was 81 and a former Methodist preacher and the other was a 65-year-old lady who preached for the Methodists. I feel compelled to mention another one who was a former commander of the MNLF. This is a Moslem anti-government group that has killed many people. We had the opportunity to see the power of the gospel of Christ working on an individual's heart as he was struggling with the realization that God could really forgive his sins. He had tears of joy in his obedience to the gospel. Others from the Moslem group came to the gospel meeting also. Yes, the gospel still is God's power to save after 2,000 years. We left there on January 8 with Lordy and several brethren from General Santos City (**Leonardo Maste, Coen Manting, Jerry, Jessy, and Johnnie Julom**). Our travels included an all night ferry boat ride to Cebu, a drive to Toledo City, and a fast boat to San Carlos.

San Carlos City in Negros Occidental (1/9-1/12)

At San Carlos City there were over 50 preachers that attended, many of whom were denominational preachers. After two days of much preaching, debate, open forums with Bible questions and answers, there were six preachers from the Baptist church who were baptized into Christ

tized. We hope and pray that they have the conviction to do that and become a church that belongs to Christ. There are only four Christians there on the island and they are very weak. They desired to study more.

General Santos City (1/16-1/21)

From Romblon, we took a pontoon boat to Tablas Island. We then had to travel two hours to get to the airport. We spent the night and caught our flight to Manila. We were so excited to be going to General Santos City, because of the report that multitudes of people were being baptized in this city and region. We flew from Manila about

5 A.M. and were met at the airport by many brethren, who carried us to Jessy Julom's house. Worship services began at 9:30 A.M.. The week was a very exciting part of our trip. During the week, there were about 90 plus preachers present. About 50 of them had been converted out of the denominations in the past year. They are willing to come hear the gospel and discuss it openly with a good and honest heart. I'm not sure how many denominational preachers there were. What an exciting day it was to baptize 17 into Christ on Thursday! Fifteen of them were formerly denominational preachers. There were four Alliance, nine Baptists, and two Pentecostal preachers. Jim made sure that they understood that they were not promised any support to be able to preach but only out of their desire to have

the forgiveness of sins and be only a Christian. In the past year there have been about 65 denominational preachers converted. That is spectacular and hard to believe but we saw the evidence of their hunger and desire for righteousness during the week.

Many more have been converted because of a failed prophecy by the head of the Jesus Miracle crusade. Jose De Venecia predicted that a certain candidate for the presidency in the Philippines would definitely be elected and if he was not, then they could shoot him. It didn't come true, so one of his assistants named **Benjamin Asas** and 100 other congregations withdrew support from him. Benjamin was baptized into Christ a few weeks before we went to General Santos City and he was there the whole week that we were lecturing there. He was influenced for the truth by **Leonardo Maste** and his father-in-law who is a Christian. It has been reported that he has baptized about 1,200 people after teaching the truth to those under his influence as of early March and there should be many more. He plans to go soon to Surigao (northernmost city in Mindanao) to set up Bible lectures with denominational preachers there. As far as we know there isn't a church of Christ in that whole northeastern region of Mindanao. There is other talk about going into other areas like the islands of Masbate, Leyte, and Cebu. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian brethren and said, "Pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you" (2 Thess. 3:1). These brethren and many others are using their influence in the denominations to spread the gospel. Please pray that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly through these fertile areas. Many in the Philippines receive no financial support to preach the gospel and one of the great burdens in going over there is that many of them personally ask for support.

Taipei, Taiwan (1/23-1/25)

From General Santos City we flew back to Manila and then up to Taipei, Taiwan. Jim McDonald had received information that there was an opening door in Taiwan as a Christian had moved there, and we went there to try to locate others we had addresses for. **Jerry Toreja** has been studying with about a dozen different people from the denominations. Currently, Jerry is the only Christian in the immediate area. He has been inviting some of his other friends to meet in his apartment for worship on Sundays. On Sunday, Jim had the opportunity to preach the gospel to five non-Christians who came to his apartment. On Monday night, they have a group Bible study meeting at a Presbyterian building which we were invited to. They normally just give their personal testimony as to what God was doing in their lives but didn't really study the Bible. We didn't know what to expect when we got there. Albert Schweitzer, who had heard the gospel the day before and was impressed with Jim's knowledge of the Scriptures had asked him to speak. Jim spoke on the new birth from John

3. In the Bible question and answer period there was a lot of discussion. They made many excuses for those who have never heard the gospel after they saw the force of the Scriptural arguments for baptism. I had them go to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 which shows that those who don't know God and don't obey the gospel will suffer eternal damnation. We told them that was why we had made the trip — to preach to everyone. They were also stunned by Jim's answers to the questions about the "thief on the cross" which is a universal question. You could tell that they were stunned and had never heard this kind of teaching. They were thinking deeply about the subjects mentioned and desired to study more another time. Jerry doesn't have the capability of preaching but seems to be a good personal worker. We were unable to locate the other Christians, and contacted Virgil Bocarile to see if he had more accurate information. We returned to Manila on Tuesday and departed for Zamboanga City on Wednesday.

Zamboanga City (1/27-1/29)

By the time we got to Zamboanga City, we were exhausted and ready to come home. We were thankful that we didn't have the confrontations that we faced at San Carlos and General Santos City. There were about 50 present there. Jim cut short our time here because of Moslem rebels who were active in that region.

Manila (Our last days in the Philippines)

We flew into Manila and stayed our last weekend with Ben and Delores Cruz, who have done so much for the kingdom of God in the Philippines. He is the main contact for American preachers going over there and is very hospitable. All of his three sons and four sons-in-law preach. Not all are full-time, but they are all capable. We had been

scheduled to preach on a radio program. He told us Friday night that the broadcast would reach possibly millions of listeners and would cover about one-half the Philippine islands. It was hard to believe but another American preacher who was in Palawan (about 500 miles away) was able to hear it. I received much encouragement from brethren who heard the program. After we were finished, there were questions about instrumental music, the thief on the cross, denominational baptism, and how is a man to be baptized. One congregation, which Jim and I had the opportunity to preach at the next day, was started because of the radio program. That last Sunday, we began preaching at 7 A.M. and preached at four different congregations. We ended our day about 8 P.M. We flew back to the States on Monday and got back on Tuesday, February 2.

Jim McDonald and I are requesting that faithful brethren consider going and spending ten days or two weeks to edify and strengthen these new preachers. It will do a tremendous amount of good for the brethren and will help equip them to teach others effectively the gospel of Christ. If you are interested in going or helping to support faithful gospel preachers over there, please e-mail or write to me or Jim McDonald concerning them. We will be happy to supply you background information. Many of the preachers and their families live on \$300-400/month, so even \$50/month would mean a lot to them. Please keep the Filipino brethren in your prayers.

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“Take My Yoke”

Irvin Himmel

The way of transgressors is hard (Prov. 13:15). The burden of sin is terrible. The service which Jesus demands brings rest to the soul and joy to the heart.

In Bible times plowing was done with oxen yoked together in pairs. Archaeologists have discovered yokes of many different kinds that were used in the distant past, but the common yoke was a heavy pole, shaped to fit over the neck with curved pieces of wood around the neck fastened to the pole. The front of the plow was hooked to the center of the pole. This rather simple device enabled the oxen to pull the plow by pushing against the yoke.

The yoke already was commonly used when the law of Moses was given. In one of the purification rites, the Israelites were commanded to bring “a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke” (Num. 19:2).

Frequently, the Bible uses the word “yoke” in a figurative sense to denote burdens, hardships, and oppressions. For example, Jehovah told Israel that he brought them out of the land of Egypt, “and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright” (Lev. 26:13).

In warning of the awful curses that would result from disobedience after their entrance into the land of promise, Moses said, “and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee” (Deut. 28:48).

Following the death of Solomon, when Rehoboam was petitioned to reduce the “heavy yoke” which his father had put upon the people, the heir to the throne answered roughly, “My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions” (1 Kings 12:4, 13-14). This sparked the revolt of the ten tribes against the rule of the house of David.

The prophet Jeremiah, at one period during the rapid decline of the kingdom of Judah, was commanded of the

Lord to make “bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck” (Jer. 27:2). Jeremiah’s wearing of this contraption was to symbolize that Judah and neighboring nations would be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Hananiah took the yoke from off Jeremiah’s neck and broke it, predicting that the yoke of Babylon would be broken, but Hananiah prophesied falsely (Jer. 28:1-17). God said through Jeremiah, “I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him . . .”

Peter referred to the law of Moses as “a yoke . . . which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10). Paul called it “the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

In the great invitation, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

The “yoke” of which Jesus spoke is the obedient service which he demands. The Jews were burdened with tithing, animal sacrifices, feast days, fleshly circumcision, holy days, trips to Jerusalem, and endless ceremonies. To all of this they had added cumbersome human traditions. Then there was the tremendously heavy burden of sin. Their animal offerings could not take away their sins and give them clean consciences (Heb. 9:11-14; 10:1-4). Jesus offered rest from all such heavy burdens.

The Master explained, “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” He demands no unreasonable thing of us. Indeed, as the apostle John put it, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his command-

continued bottom of next page

Let's Consider Together

Greg Litmer

The most important lesson that we are to teach our children is that God comes first; not school, not recreation, and not a job.

God has gone to great lengths in his Word to assure the proper rearing of children. The first thing to be noted is that God views children as a great blessing to their parents. In Psalm 127:3-5, we read, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are the children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

The second thing to mention is that children are to be loved. In Paul's letter to Titus, in chapter 2:4, we find that the older women were to teach the young women "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."

Children are to be provided for. 1 Timothy 5:8, informs us, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Children are to be corrected when necessary. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." And in Proverbs 13:24, we find, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

ments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Christ's yoke is borne in love. It is not forced upon us. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). His yoke is easy by way of comparison. The way of transgressors is hard (Prov. 13:15). The burden of sin is terrible. The service which Jesus demands brings rest to the soul and joy to the heart.

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In each step of their development, children are to be instructed, taught in the ways of the Lord. In Deuteronomy 11:18-20, we read, "Therefore shall ye lay up these words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." In the New Testament the Apostle Paul made the very same point when he instructed the Ephesians in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Instructing our children in the ways of the Lord involves many things. They must be taught about God, prayerfully brought to a belief in him. They must be taught of the wonderful things of his creation and the way that he blesses us every day of our lives. Children must be taught to worship God and to live the moral life that he has decreed to be right and proper. Children must be taught to be good citizens and to be in subjection to the government under which they live, and they must be taught to work.

Parents have the responsibility given to them by God, and they owe it to their children, to teach them to work. Young people need to be taught that work is not a punishment, but that man was created to work. Indeed, work is essential to the happiness of man, it is part of the way that God created us. In Genesis 2:15, before any sin had been committed, we find, "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." In a wonderful and perfect state God gave man work to do.

The great man of wisdom, Solomon, had a lot to say about work and the vital place it plays in the happiness and fulfillment of man. In Proverbs 10:4-5, we find, "He

becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son." Proverbs 13:4, says, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." In the same chapter, verse 11 tells us, "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread." Solomon wrote, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccl. 11:6).

In the New Testament, the principle remains the same. Paul instructed us in Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands that thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, makes the point so clearly in this way, "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." Finally, let us read 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 where Paul wrote, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

The point is well taken. Part of teaching our children the way of the Lord is to teach them the need to work. It is a good thing for your people to be given tasks to perform in the home while they are little. In this way the foundation is laid. A parent who never requires any work of his children while they are growing up in the home has not done those children any favors. In fact, he may have taken a step in raising a lazy child who will grow up to be a lazy adult.

As the child grows and reaches the age where he can legally obtain a job, it is a good thing for them to do so. They learn responsibility, the value of a dollar, and the pride of doing a job well. It certainly makes you proud as a parent to see your child go out and get his first job and the parents are usually as thrilled as the child when he gets that first pay check. Haven't we all smiled as well when we had to explain to our child who FICA was and why they took all of that money?

However, brethren, in all of this there is something that we need to give careful consideration too. The most important lesson that we are to teach our children is that God comes first; not school, not recreation, and not a job.

I have been preaching now for over 22 years and have tried to be as observant as I could be during that time. It has been my observation that when children were allowed to take a job that caused them to miss services on a regular basis, nothing good ever came out of it. The teenage years are often the time when a child is struggling with some major issues, and where God fits into their life is one of them. I truly believe, parents, that we need to help them understand that of all there is in this world to enjoy and appreciate, God is the only One who gives it all meaning. What good are the things that money can buy without God? What good is the satisfaction that comes from doing a job if that job has required God to take a back seat? Being at services, being with Christians, studying God's Word and just plain being in the godly environment, is more important than any secular job. I personally believe that that is true for adults, and I know that it is true for young people.

I know from experience that a child can find a job that does not require him to miss services. I know as well from experience that many employers are actually happy to give a young person the time off on Wednesday evenings and Sundays to attend services. Many of them are pleased to have young people who attend worship services working for them because those kind of children usually have a certain moral standard they live by. I also know from experience that an employer who will not do that is not worth working for in the first place.

There are so many fine young people in the Lord's church! It is my prayer that they will grow to be the finest examples of godly adults possible. Even as young people, I pray that they will be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). It is tough to make the right decision as we raise these precious gifts from God. But there is one thing that I absolutely know for certain — if we teach our children that God comes first above all else and that nothing can take his place, it will turn out O.K.

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Reflections

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Forgive Me This Wrong

Johnie Edwards

**It is wrong for a church not to pay a man for preaching
and it is wrong for the preacher not to take pay for preaching.**

Do you recall something the apostle Paul apologized for? In writing the Corinthians, Paul penned, “For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong” (2 Cor. 12:13).

1. *Our Preacher Takes No Pay.* I heard a man say recently, “Our preacher will not take any pay for preaching, for he thinks it’s not right.” My friend, it’s not good for churches, for a preacher not to take pay! The Bible teaches that Paul took wages from churches. “I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service” (2 Cor. 11:8). When men teach that it is wrong for a preacher to be paid a stipulated wage, they are binding where God has not bound! The word “wage” in this passage is the same word used in Roman 6:23, where it is said, “For the wages of sin is death.” Are the wages of sin fixed?

2. *Preachers Should Live of the Gospel.* Those who think it wrong to pay preachers ought to read 1 Corinthians 9:14, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” This has no reference to the fact that a preacher should live by the teachings of the gospel, but that he can be supported by such work.

3. *Laborers Are Worthy of Their Reward.* As Paul writes about supporting elders, “. . . who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:18). He wrote, “For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:18). Surely the farmer would not object to feeding his ox corn that he works to tread out. Neither should churches refuse to pay for the labor done in the Lord’s vineyard!

4. *Non-Paying Churches Are Inferior.* Paul told the

Corinthian Church that they “. . . were *inferior* to other churches” (2 Cor. 12:13) because he had not taken wages from them while preaching the gospel. I know some churches that will put all of their funds into a meeting-house and not have enough money left to support a preacher, but will let other churches support their preacher. A failure to pay their preacher makes them, Paul said, *inferior!* You don’t want to be a member of an inferior church, do you? Then, get to supporting your own preacher. I have been in meetings with churches whose attendance runs 75 or more and their preacher is getting outside support. One religious body operates on the premise that every ten families can support a full-time preacher. What’s our problem? Somebody is simply not giving as they should (1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:35; Luke 6:38).

5. *Forgive Me This Wrong.* Paul asked the Corinthian Church to “forgive me this wrong” (2 Cor. 12:13). It is wrong for a church not to pay a man for preaching and it is wrong for the preacher not to take pay for preaching. Why is it wrong? First, the Holy Spirit said it was wrong. A failure for the preacher to take pay from a church for preaching makes for a lazy, indifferent church. They have no motive to give.

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“How Beautiful Are the Feet”

(Romans 10:15)

Tom M. Roberts

God did not entrust the gospel to angels, to supernatural beings, to higher life forms without foibles and feet of clay. Indeed, he entrusted the gospel to men. As an objective fact, this is rather astounding. The message of salvation is in feeble human hands!

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.”

Previous articles by this writer appearing under the broad heading of “*Attitudes Toward Preaching*” have identified problematic areas which hinder the spread of the gospel. When men who preach have bad attitudes, those mind-sets invariably interfere with the free dissemination of truth. The “*earthen vessels*” (2 Cor. 4:7) which carry the precious message of the cross can certainly detract from its message. Whether accidental or intentional, human weaknesses mask the beauty of the story of Jesus. It should be the goal of every minister of the gospel to “hide behind the cross of Christ” and “evangel” (proclaim) Jesus and not himself.

In the rhetoric which often surrounds the work of gospel preaching, we sometimes lose sight of the significance of what we do. God did not entrust the gospel to angels, to supernatural beings, to higher life forms without foibles and feet of clay. Indeed, he entrusted the gospel to men. As an objective fact, this is rather astounding. The message of salvation is in feeble human hands! While realizing that the truth of the gospel is an inspired message and that God’s promise assures us that “*my words shall by no means pass away*” (Matt. 24:35), we yet must realize that the “go”

of the gospel is man’s responsibility. This knowledge is at once both humbling and gratifying.

The “Gift” of Preaching

Among the gifts which Jesus gave when he ascended on high (Eph. 4:7-11) was that of “*evangelists, pastors and teachers*.” The companion gifts of “*apostles and prophets*” were singular works of the first century, restricted to those of that “*office*” (Acts 1:20) and their fulfilled work continues with us today in the body of revealed truth (2 Tim. 3:16-17). However, the work of evangelism (whether by evangelists, pastors or teachers) continues in every age. Paul’s instruction to Timothy to “*do the work of an evangelist*” (2 Tim. 4:5) includes this advice: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2:2). This implies the need for “faithful men” in succeeding generations beyond that of the apostles to evangelize.

The evangelist (Gk: *euangelistes*) is “*lit, a messenger of good (eu, well, angelos, a messenger), denotes a preacher of the gospel, Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11 which makes clear the distinctiveness of the function in the churches, 2 Tim. 4:5*” (Vine 44). Though some have attempted to make an arbitrary distinction between “preaching” and “teaching” (gospel

and doctrine) as the means of “committing these to faithful men,” the Bible makes no distinction between the functions of preaching and teaching. Jewish leaders threatened the apostles and “commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:18). Unmoved by these threats, the apostles continue to “preach” the doctrine of Christ and “teach” the good news to the lost.

Every generation needs men committed to telling the story of the cross to those lost in sin. It is a singular honor to preach “publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). No greater need exists, no greater challenge is before us, no greater fulfillment awaits than that of being a simple preacher of the gospel. Only those who fail to appreciate the honor of the work insist on adding titles of prestige and hierarchy: reverend, doctor, Ph. D. Let us never be ashamed of being simply a preacher. If one is a preacher of the gospel, the reflective honor of the Master is sufficient to the laborer.

The Work of Preaching Ordained by God

The text of this article (quoted at the start) is Romans 10:15: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel, who publish glad tidings of good things.” It should be understood that Paul was recalling a passage from Isaiah 52:7-8 which prophesied the work of evangelism and is so applied in Romans 10. The “watchman” that publishes the good tidings, the “voice” that proclaims salvation is the evangelist of the gospel. “For ‘whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (vv. 13-14). The gospel of Christ is a “sent” message (v. 15), having its origin with God and commissioned to the world. To fulfill its purpose the “sent” message must reach those to whom it is sent, the lost. But “*How shall they hear without a*

preacher?” “*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (v. 17). Clearly, both Isaiah and Paul (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) taught that God expected those who preach to be “watchmen” and “evangelists” in warning that souls are in danger and how they may be saved. The criticism that some have raised about *Watchman Magazine* being an abuse of terminology restricted to the prophetic office is unjustified. Romans 10 and Isaiah 52 specifically include evangelists as among those who are watchmen.

“How Beautiful Are the Feet . . .”

There is little mystery in the use of “feet” as the beautiful part of those servants who preach. While feet are not considered body parts of physical beauty, feet are the instruments of travel and it is God’s intent that evangelists “go” with the message. This does not necessitate a circuit riding, non-located preacher as some have mistakenly insisted. The ancient “town crier” who “cried out” the news wanted to reach as many people as possible whether in one locality or in many. Paul traveled on three journeys which covered many miles and many cities, but he also remained in Ephesus for over three years. In each instance, whether located or on the move, he evangelized.

Please note that God chose lowly feet as the proper analogy for evangelists. He did not select the brain (human wisdom), hands (ingenuity), tongue (oratory), or physical beauty, but feet. Surely, the message is clear. The man must not obscure the message! Herein lies the difference between human and divine wisdom. The gospel elevates God through Christ; philosophy elevates the philosopher. The Holy Spirit tells us of the cross as central to salvation and the messenger is incidental. Though Paul’s life is described in bold relief as an apostle chosen out of due season, Paul himself realized that he must “count all things loss” for Christ.

“Indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Phil. 3:7-8). Paul was willing to be a “foot” soldier for Jesus Christ.

The Feet of the Evangelist Are Beautiful Because:

They bring light into darkness.

Let us not lose sight of how desperately those in darkness need the Light. “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. . . . if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7). “Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the word, holding fast the word of life” (Phil. 2:14-16). Jesus is the true Light, as Isaiah spoke: “The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned” (as quoted in Matt. 4:16). As our feet are used to spread the gospel, darkness is expelled and Light shines in dark places, illuminating hearts with its heavenly message.

They utilize the “dynamite” of the gospel.

Paul said: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation . . .” (Rom. 1:16). Whether seen as dynamite or a dynamo, the gospel contains the power needed to overthrow Satan. Apart from the gospel, men are impotent and ineffective. The uselessness of the philosophers in Athens to understand their lostness or what to do about it was brought out by Paul when he preached to them of the resurrected Savior (Acts 17). They worshiped multitudes of idols but none of them, individually or collectively, could describe sin, its cause or its cure. In Paul’s own case, he knew that he was in Corinth “in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech

and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:3-5). The message he preached was "not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). How weak we are; how strong is the gospel. Trusting in our own power, we are doomed to failure. But when we use the gospel, Satan suffers sure defeat.

They bring unity to a divided world. The condition of mankind apart from Christ and outside the one body is division, hatred and enmity. In the first century, men were separated from God by sin and from one another by racial hatred. Segregation of Jew and Gentile was strictly enforced and no mediation on earth could alter either sin's separation from God or racial apartness. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:13-18). As we preach the gospel, men and women come into the unity of the "*one body*" (Eph. 4:4-5). No other relationship on earth can create and maintain the fellowship between God and people of all tribes, tongues and nations as can the gospel of Christ which we preach. It is in this fashion that we become "*peacemakers*" (Matt. 5:9).

They proclaim salvation. Paul spoke of the "*law of sin and death*" which could not be overcome by "*the law*" (of Moses). Only by the "*law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" can sin and death be overthrown (Rom. 8:1ff). This "*law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" is none other than the gospel. All men have "*sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23). The wages of sin is death (6:23). But the message of the cross is that of mercy, grace, atonement and reconciliation. "*Spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found. Jesus saves! Jesus saves!*" We must never forget the centrality of our work to forgiveness of sins.

It seems that in the heat of controversy, we often forget the purpose of preaching. When some try to bend the law of God to include in our fellowship the guilty fornicator who remarries, opposition breaks out (as it should). But often, lost in the shuffle is the soul that is living in adultery. That

person seems to be insignificant as compared with our battle, which takes on a life of its own. Because of the error that some teach, the guilty are given false hope. Fellowship is extended by some and denied by others. In the ensuing confusion, the sinner is unable to comprehend the clear message of Jesus (Matt. 5; 19) and preaching is defeated. The salvation that might be theirs is obscured by the babel of conflicting voices. Surely, God intends truth to be spoken in a unified voice (John 17:20-21). The feet of preachers are beautiful only when they walk in the right direction, deliver a single message and encourage faithfulness to God.

There is no room for jealousy and infighting among those who preach the gospel. It is possible for us to forget that the world is still lost and to spend our time carping and criticizing the efforts of fellow preachers. We can see how wrong the apostles were when they argued among themselves as to who should be "the greatest." By now (nearly 2000 years later) we should have learned that "*he who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven will be the servant of all*" (Mark 9:34). There is room in the kingdom of God for different styles of preaching, different methods that fit different size "feet." I am afraid that our problem is not with big feet but with big heads: egotism.

If error is being taught, this should be exposed, even (perhaps especially) among preachers. It is not a sign of jealousy to question one who teaches false doctrine. Denominational preachers are not gospel preachers and should be marked as the false teachers they are. But gospel preachers who become a minion of Satan through espousing error should not be allowed to parade under false pretenses. One is a gospel preacher because he preaches the gospel. When he begins to teach error, he ceases to be a gospel preacher. Our generation has its share of those who fly the false banner of being a gospel preacher when they preach anything but the truth. When exposed, they claim "misrepresentation," "jealousy," "lack of integrity," or make a personal attack on those who expose them. But let us not be misled by such charges. It is not wrong or sinful to expose imposters, compromisers, or pseudo-preachers. Such betray the gospel message and the Master who gave it. Such men are not worthy of wearing the name of "evangelist."

The Honor of Being An Evangelist

While issuing a disclaimer against human pride, let me speak of the honor of being a preacher. The office (work) of evangelist is a singular and esteemed place. True, his glory is reflective of the high and holy message that is preached and not inherent within the person himself. But a gospel preacher is a person of importance. His work is significant. He is God's messenger to the lost with the words of salvation. He can affect the eternal destiny of those who hear him speak. His words can point to heaven and lead one away from the punishment of hell. As a compan-

ion to other preachers, he is in the company of those who are in the forefront of the battle against the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). He is a friend and upholder to other workers in the kingdom, those who are elders, teachers and faithful Christians.

A gospel preacher has a “*ministry*” (2 Tim. 4:2, 5) though he is not God’s only minister. There are works peculiar to his ministry that are not true of others in the church. He should give himself wholly to his ministry (1 Tim. 4:15). God has decreed that “*the laborer is worthy of his hire*” (Luke 10:7) and that those who “*preach the gospel should live of it*” (1 Cor. 9:14) Though some will abuse this support from the church, no man has ever become wealthy by preaching. He must be willing to preach even when financial support is absent, otherwise he is a hireling (John 10:12-13) and not worthy of his calling.

The ministry of preaching, by its essence, revolves around the word of God. Paul’s instruction to Timothy (2 letters) and Titus are the “job description” of a preacher. He is to be at home in the Scriptures, read them, meditate on them, then teach them. “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:13). His obligation for what he preaches is to God and not to the church. “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). While some brethren think they can dictate what a preacher is to preach because they pay his salary, they need to learn that they can decide whether or not to support a man but they have no right to determine his message. This is already laid out by the Holy Spirit and the hireling can be told what to preach but not a gospel preacher. (This relationship between the supporting church and the supported preacher can be abused in both directions. A church might try to control what is preached. A preacher might take advantage of brethren’s funds. But abuses do not negate the proper role of either churches or preachers. A proper balance exists when brethren are willing to support a man to preach the gospel and he is faithful to the Lord.)

A preacher must speak the gospel with authority, not asking permission for his message. “These things command and teach” (1 Tim. 4:11). There is no conflict between an eldership and a gospel preacher. Peter was at the same time an elder, an apostle, and a preacher. Thus, an eldership does not dictate the preacher’s message any more than the whole church. A good relationship between an eldership and a preacher exists when those who “*shepherd the flock*” (Acts 20:28) have the same interests in the spiritual welfare of the members as does the evangelist. A preacher does not violate the authority of elders when he speaks authoritatively about the gospel. In fact, the work of preachers and elders complement and support the work of one another. Peter was able to be both a preacher and an elder because of the close affinity of the

work of each, not in spite of it.

A preacher must be committed to his work because there are times that try one’s soul. Preachers have enemies within the church as well as without. Some people see the preacher as fair game for an outlet of their sour disposition. Others resent the truth and will try to destroy those who teach it. Some will mistreat the family of the preacher, knowing it will hurt the preacher. The ill treatment towards prophets recorded in the Scriptures is still afforded preachers. Not many have been killed (as Stephen was) but “dirty tricks” are not limited to politics in our time. Preachers have been fired without notice, hounded personally, derided even while in the pulpit and humiliated without mercy. However uncalled for this kind of treatment is, a preacher must be prepared to deal with it. Thankfully, such malcontents are in the minority and good people more than make up for the bad times, but persecution is a fact of life and must be considered as one of the tests for his spirit.

During the difficult times, a preacher might question, “What am I doing here?” When money is scarce, when your family is under attack, when truth is “out of season,” and when a brother is making life torturous, a preacher might think of secular work as a welcome relief. But let me tell you what keeps a preacher in the work.

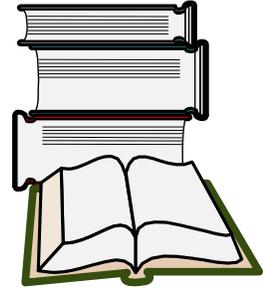
A preacher continues in his work of ministry because he has made a commitment to God that is not true only when the going is easy. A preacher continues because of his love for truth — for the satisfaction that comes when the opportunity to preach is presented — for the joy of seeing lost souls obey the gospel — for the gratification of watching a babe in Christ develop into maturity — for the association with fellow Christians in the local church and in other areas where he has opportunity to preach — for a handshake and an occasional appreciation expressed by the brethren — for the sheer joy of preaching — for the spiritual life that is required — for the time it permits to study the Scriptures — for being part of a ministry that permits me to be a fellow-worker with Paul, Peter, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and thousands of unnamed preachers known only to God — for the opportunity to “*contend*” for the faith (Jude 3) against those who abuse it — for the honor of being yoked together with Christ in a fight against Satan. There are thousands of little reasons why one would be a preacher, daily reminders of a ministry that is a life-long calling.

How sad to remember the words of a young man at college who, unable to select a major for his education or to find an occupation that suited him, finally said, “Well, if I can’t do anything else, I guess I can always preach.” What woeful ignorance! That young man, as well as too many others, think of preaching as a cushy, three-hour a week job that brings prestige simply by being in a pulpit. One might ask Stephen what he thought about the prestige of

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The Danville church of Christ is pleased to announce that Scott Vifquain has joined Steve Wolfgang in teaching these classes. Scott is one of the earliest products of these classes (1976), and has preached the last 20 years in Versailles, Campbellsville, and other places in Kentucky. He is well qualified to teach in this program.

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preaching and how cushy the bed of rocks it brought to him.

"How beautiful are the feet" as it relates to preachers is an apt description. It has a singular honor attached to it, but only among those who are willing to sacrifice a life of self and become a "fool for God." There will be little honor in this life for those willing to wear out their shoes and blister their feet as they go, preaching the word. If that is too great a sacrifice, you would not make a faithful preacher anyway.

The next time you look in a mirror and arrange your hair, etc., trying to enhance what little physical beauty you have,

sit down and look at your feet. No one brags on these "less comely" parts of the body (1 Cor. 12:21-24). But God chose this exact analogy to describe gospel preaching in order to eliminate human pride and philosophy from the consideration of those who would preach (1 Cor. 28-29).

The next time you think of preachers and preaching, think of feet. It will do us all good to remember what God thinks of when he thinks about the work of preaching.

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Dress, Appearance, Impression

Larry Ray Hafley

Your dress does give an impression of you. It may not always be fair or right, but it does say something about you. Joseph thought so. Jordan thinks so. God says so.

In a cover article in *Time Magazine* (June 22, 1998), the following snippet concerning Michael Jordan appeared:

The 15 seconds it takes for him to go from the elevator to the bus is the only time in (his fans') lives that they would see him. Jordan wants those 15 seconds to be dignified. Because he knows forever those will be the 15 seconds that they saw Michael Jordan. (Columnist Bob Greene *on how Jordan dons a suit and tie for the brief walk through the hotel lobby out to the bus taking him to a game.*)

For good or ill, how you dress, your appearance, makes an impression on other people. Michael Jordan knows it. So does Dennis Rodman, his "sideshow-freak" teammate. Why else do you suppose Rodman dresses as he does? He knows it makes an impression. He does not care. Jordan knows it makes an impression. He cares. Do you?

No, we are not suggesting that you need to "make a fashion statement" in order to impress people. However, we do need to realize that the way we dress says a lot about us. Again, if you doubt it, compare Michael Jordan and Dennis Rodman!

When Joseph was summoned out of the prison where he was held and was taken into the presence of the great Pharaoh (or king) of Egypt, the Bible says, "When he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh" (Gen. 41:14). Joseph realized that prison garb is not the proper attire in which to meet the king! Is there a lesson in there for us?

There is no dress code for scriptural worship. Indeed, some have served the Lord in scant attire, dirty clothes, and nakedness brought on by deprivation, poverty, and persecution (2 Cor. 11:27; Heb. 11:37; Jas. 2:2). Those unfortunate and unavoidable conditions are no excuse for

us to see how grungy and unkempt we can be when we serve the Lord.

Women know how to dress when they want to express virtue or incite lust (Gen. 38:14, 15; Prov. 7:10; Est. 1:11; 1 Pet. 3:1-4). Men know how to dress to lay bricks, hunt deer, or meet the bank president when applying for a loan. Do we know how to dress to exemplify modesty, dignity, and integrity as we serve God? Apparently some do not, for there has been a gradual lessening of standards of dress in our society. Schools and business offices have been overtaken by slovenliness if not outright sloppy indecency. Some churches are not far behind. Crude "T" shirts, shorts, ragged, purposely torn jeans, and immodestly slit dresses are the rage in some houses of worship. Why are the voices of modesty and appropriate behavior not raised in holy protest against all such descents into depraved dress (Phil. 4:5; Tit. 2:12)? Probably those voices are not heard because such clothing is the product of homes where such despicable dress has never been challenged or questioned.

Your dress does give an impression of you. It may not always be fair or right, but it does say something about you. Joseph thought so. Jordan thinks so. God says so (Phil. 1:27; 1 Tim. 2:9; 4:12; Tit. 2:4, 5, 7; 1 Pet. 3:1-4).

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The Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals

by William J. Bennett

\$20.00

Watchmen in Zion

Joe R. Price

As the apostles preached the gospel to the whole creation, they acted as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, warning of sin and announcing the way of salvation.

Is it scriptural to describe Christians as watchmen? That is, may we apply the principle of being watchmen, as God did to the prophets of Israel, to the work of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ in these last days (Rom. 15:4; Heb. 1:1-2)? Some maintain it is wrong to apply the term and principle of “watchmen” to brethren today. They conclude that since the term “watchmen” was applied to the OT prophets we do not have the authority to use the concept it conveys when describing the work of preaching the gospel of Christ. Some have assumed that the OT prophets were given a position of national oversight in their prophetic work, and since there is no brotherhood-wide organization of the Lord’s church, we cannot use the term “watchmen” as we discuss and apply NT truth to the work of evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11). It is concluded that those who would “contend for the faith” must not be described as watchmen (Jude 3; cf. Ezek. 3:17; 33:7-9). In this article, we will see from the Bible that the concept of the watchmen’s work continues to have legitimate application to evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the kingdom of Christ, just as it did when fleshly Israel was the people of God.

Watchmen in the Old Testament

The Old Testament was written for our learning and it helps make us wise unto salvation in Christ (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:15). From its pages we are given examples which admonish us to avoid sin and to live faithfully with our God (1 Cor. 10:1-12). The admonition to hear and obey the word of God was given to Israel by the prophets. God likened the work of Israel’s prophets to that of watchmen, stationed upon the wall of a city, watching and warning of approaching danger. Israel was brought to judgment for her sin because she failed to heed the word of God which these watchmen spoke (cf. Jer. 6:16-19; 7:21-27). Both the Assyrian and the Babylonian captivities served as divine judgments against a disobedient and rebellious people who rejected the warnings of truth spoken to them by God’s watchmen.

A watchman was positioned upon the wall of a city to see the surrounding terrain and report what he saw (2 Sam. 18:24). His report could be an assessment of what he saw, or a warning based upon what he saw (2 Sam. 18:25-27; 2 Kings 9:17-20). The Lord used this common practice to teach spiritual truths to Israel and the nations:

1. In Isaiah 21:6, he used this figure to announce the fall of Babylon and Edom (“Go, set a watchman, Let him declare what he sees,” cf. Isa. 21:6-9; 11-12).

2. God described his prophets to Israel and Judah as watchmen who had been sent to warn them of the dangers of their sin: “Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen’” (Jer. 6:17).

3. Ezekiel is a specific illustration of a prophet given a word from God which he was to speak to Israel: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me” (Ezek. 3:17).

4. When the prophets (who should have been warning Israel of her sin) refused to issue God’s warnings, he described these watchmen as “blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber” (Isa. 56:10).

Watchmen on the Walls of Zion

God’s prophets also used the term “watchman” when speaking of those who, in the Messiah’s kingdom, would call people to salvation using the word of the gospel:

1. Isaiah 52:7-8: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims sal-

vation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord brings back Zion." In this context of redemption who can fail to see the predicted work within the Messiah's kingdom (his church) of preaching and teaching the gospel to those lost in sin? Yet, we are being told there are no such watchmen in Zion today. Furthermore, those who teach that we need to be watchmen today are accused of trying to oversee and control the brotherhood!

2. Isaiah 62:1, 6: "For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. . . . I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night." This passage is prophetic of "*the Jerusalem that now is,*" the church of Christ (Gal. 4:25; Heb. 12:22-23). God says that he has set watchmen upon the walls of Zion in our day. Why should we insist there are not watchmen in the kingdom of Christ, when the Holy Spirit predicted the Messiah would set watchmen upon her walls to proclaim salvation and to warn souls of sin?

Just as the prophets predicted, Christ has indeed set watchmen in his church. We are not violating scriptural principles or passages to use that term in describing their work. It is scripturally right for us to use the term "watchman" when speaking of those who labor in preaching and teaching the gospel. Indeed, the NT establishes both the need of every saint to be "watchful" and the work of those to whom Christ has given particular responsibility as "watchmen."

Be Watchful In All Things

"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). The principle of spiritual alertness or watchfulness on the part of every Christian is a prominent theme of the gospel of Christ (Matt. 24:42-43; 26:41; Luke 12:35-40; 21:34-36; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 3:2-3). We have the moral responsibility to be watchful for our own souls and the souls of others (Matt. 26:41; 1 Pet. 5:8; Acts 20:31; Eph. 6:18). The real question is, has Christ given any particular "watching" responsibilities to brethren? Who are the watchmen in Zion spoken of by God's prophet in Isaiah 52:7-8 and 62:6?

Watchmen in Zion

1. *Apostles and prophets of Christ:* These inspired men, through their work of revealing and confirming the gospel, engaged in the God-given work of watching for the souls of men. Based upon the example of this apostolic work, Christians are entreated to "therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). As the

apostles preached the gospel to the whole creation, they acted as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, warning of sin and announcing the way of salvation. Their work as watchmen has not ceased, for as we hear and heed the apostolic teaching, we benefit from their work as watchmen. These watchmen of God continue to function through the God-given word they preached. "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Col. 1:28; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. *Evangelists:* The work of these uninspired men is to preach the inspired word of the apostles, using it to reprove, rebuke and exhort in the faith (2 Tim. 4:1-2). By instructing men and women in the words of faith and the good doctrine of Christ, these men serve Christ and help save men (1 Tim. 4:6, 16). For instance, as Paul preached he "kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). When evangelists follow this worthy example they participate in watching for the souls of men (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26). To be such a "watchman" is not an official designation of superiority or an effort to claim brotherhood oversight, control, or preeminence. It does not establish nor endorse a clergy-laity distinction among God's people. Rather, it is descriptive of the process of proclaiming God's word so that others can hear the warning from God's mouth and obey his word to be saved (cf. Isa. 52:7-8; Rom. 10:13-17). The evangelist who will dutifully stand at the watch given him by Christ will fulfill his ministry: "But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).

3. *Pastors:* The elders or overseers of individual congregations have the task of being watchmen among the people of God. "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account" (Heb. 13:17). Their work as watchmen in Zion is accomplished as they "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). The task of elders is tremendous and vital to the safety of God's people. When these watchmen are silent, souls will be devoured by sin and error (read Acts 20:29-30). "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). Shall we discard the God-given description of "watchmen" when teaching elders of their work and responsibility (cf. Isa. 62:6)? Was the apostle mistaken when he told the elders of the church at Ephesus to "watch" for the safety of the flock? Of course not!

4. *Teachers:* Those who teach the word of God are equipping their students with God's saving word (Acts 8:4,

A Christian's Proper Attitude Toward Government

Recent events in Washington have led to an increase in political discussion among the brethren. Like everyone else, I have watched the “Washington Mess” with disgust. As the impeachment drama unfolded, I began to examine the Scriptures concerning what our attitude should be toward government in general, and toward President Clinton in particular.

Any student of history recognizes that the government of Rome in the first century was at least as corrupt and morally bankrupt as any government we have seen in modern times. I point this out, not to excuse President Clinton's behavior, but in order to examine the attitude of Jesus and his apostles toward a corrupt civil government.

cf. Matt. 28:20). Teachers of the gospel must communicate God's warnings against sin and its disastrous effects (cf. 2 Tim. 2:24-26). Gospel teachers will equip others with a knowledge of God's word so that they may be saved from sin (Rom. 1:15-16; John 8:31-32; 2 Tim. 2:2). Without the saving word of the gospel, souls remain lost in sin. One is indeed being a watchman for the souls of others when he teaches the truth to others (cf. Acts 18:26).

5. *Every disciple*: In a sense, every Christian can be a watchman. Each and every Christian must be aware of the spiritual dangers that exist around them (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 2:11). None of us should hold his peace where spiritual dangers exist. Instead, he should speak out (from a love of God, of men and of truth) to warn and save the souls of others (Jude 22-23; Gal. 6:1-2; Jas. 5:19-20). We must be watchful in prayer “with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Eph. 6:18). Would we not warn someone if we saw that he was about to plunge off the side of a cliff? Should we not much rather warn those who will, if they continue on their present course of sin and error, plunge headlong into eternal death? How is such a work against the word and will of God?! Jesus exhorts us, “And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” (Mark 13:37)

A Call For Watchmen

The biblical call for watchmen will not establish a “broth-

erhood watchman society.” Being watchful Christians who sound God's warning of approaching danger will not establish a creedal approach to determining one's faithfulness to the Lord. The word of truth establishes that (1 John 1:1-7; 2:3-6). God's watchmen will not violate the autonomy of local churches, but they will understand that the need for truth reaches to every soul. We should all come to understand that “speaking the truth in love” is not restricted by congregational boundaries (cf. 1 Cor. 4:17).

Watchmen in Zion will sound forth warnings against sin and error wherever it is found — in an effort to turn lost souls away from certain and sure destruction to the salvation found in the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Lord (Jude 3-4, 20-23). Those who watch for the welfare of souls will mark those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine of truth, and turn away from them (Rom. 16:17; 2 Tim. 3:1-5). They will identify false teaching and when necessary, the false teachers of that error so that innocent souls will not be corrupted and lost (Rom. 16:18; Col. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:16-18).

This is a necessary, needed and commendable work. We need God-fearing, truth loving, soul-loving Christians on the walls of Zion, watching and warning to help us avoid sin and live faithfully in Christ. Thank God for the watchmen he has set upon the walls of Zion!

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I cannot find a single passage of Scripture where Jesus encouraged his followers to affect change by influencing their government. His only comment concerning our relationship to the government involved the payment of taxes and occurs in Matthew 22:21, where he says, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

We have two examples of conflict with government that, on the surface, conflict with each other. During his arrest, illegal trial, and execution Jesus refused to fight and did not allow his disciples to do so. He meekly submitted to everything they did to him, even though he must have understood better than anyone else the extent of the injustice done him. His attitude speaks volumes about the extent to which we are to submit to government, even when it is acting wrongfully.

The other example appears in Acts 4, when Peter and John defied the authorities who were trying to stop them from obeying the command to spread the gospel. What is the difference? I believe that the difference is that Jesus was in a position to which he could submit without sin (even though he would lose his life), while Peter and John could not submit without sinning. Note that Peter and John meekly submitted to the punishment for their disobedience.

Therefore the principle for us is that we must tolerate government regulation and rule until and unless government tries to force us to sin. For example, if a law says that we must stop preaching against homosexuality, we must disobey, but pay whatever penalty is assessed.

Our Attitude Toward Bill Clinton

First, we need to distinguish between Bill Clinton as a human being, and Bill Clinton, President of the United States. Because I am confident that few of us hold any personal animosity for the President, I will spend little time concerning our attitude toward him as an individual. It is sufficient to say that, as Christians, it is our obligation to pray that Mr. Clinton will come to a knowledge of the truth and be converted. Until this occurs, he stands guilty before God of all his sins, even if he were to transform himself into a model husband and model President.

It is in his second role, as President and leader of our government, that Mr. Clinton poses a somewhat new problem. I know of no other President who has engendered such strong emotions among us. Even the election of President Reagan in 1980 prompted little comment, even though he was divorced and married to woman who was also divorced. But now, we are hearing more and more comment, some of it very bitter. This is wrong.

Romans 13 clearly teaches that we must honor and respect Bill Clinton as President. Some may argue that

Romans 13 could not possibly apply to President Clinton, given his immoral character. However, in Romans 13, Paul was hardly speaking of Washington or Lincoln. Paul was speaking to Christians who lived under the thumb of the Roman Emperors; men who crucified Christians by the thousands and used their decaying bodies as torches to light public streets in Rome; and who murdered their own relatives to make safe their thrones; and who indulged themselves in every form of sexual licentiousness, including open homosexuality. There can be no credible argument that Bill Clinton (or any other public official) is so corrupt that Romans 13 should not apply to Christians today.

Can a Christian urge the ouster of President Clinton? Given our form of government, there is probably nothing wrong with an individual Christian believing and advocating any political view that isn't sinful in itself. But we need to be very careful about keeping our private political opinions away from our worship services and Bible classes.

Not since the civil war have we experienced a time when so many Bible classes, written articles, and even sermons concern themselves with the political topics of the day. Certainly, abortion, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and such like must be opposed, even though they also happen to be topics of political debate in our country. But some brethren are publicly advancing the idea that all Christians must profess and adhere to "conservative" political philosophy in order to be faithful. Nowhere does the Bible teach such a doctrine. Did Jesus go to the cross in order to make of us Republicans, Democrats, or Libertarians? It should be obvious that one need not even be an American to be a Christian.

In conclusion, as individuals, Christians have the right to be politically active if they choose. We can support, and even campaign for the party or candidate of our choice. But when the "wrong guy" wins, we should be content. We must not rail against the men who hold official power, for such is sinful. As a group, Christians are not at liberty to be politically active. Teaching our opinions about current political controversies has no place in our public worship assemblies and Bible classes and ought not be tolerated, any more than we would allow a political candidate to hustle votes from the Lord's pulpit. Our public assembly should be focused upon building each other up and converting the world to Christ, not upon politics.

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“I Will Joy” continued from front page

Chapter 1:12-2:20 presents the question as to Jehovah using such a cruel nation as Babylon to accomplish his will and punish Judah, a people less wicked than the Chaldeans, i.e., in the eyes of the Israelites.

The prophet tells them “the righteous shall live by faith” (2:4; Rom. 1:16-17). God has two ways of destroying evil. Evil is its own enemy and eventually destroys itself, it reaps what it sows (Gal. 6:7-8); and God intervenes and punishes wickedness by using nations to punish nations (Dan. 4:25). Five “woes” are then pronounced upon the wicked and the cruel avenger. Chapter 3 is an inspired hymn, describing Jehovah’s righteous judgment, with verses 17-19 affirming the convictions and thoughts of those righteous people of the ages who live by faith.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof” (Gal. 5:22-24, ASV). This “cluster” of fruit (for we do not cultivate one without the other) grows and matures as we grow older in faith and in good works. The “joy in the God of my salvation” does not come without the dedication and endurance required to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

The life of a believer, a true Christian, is one of continual progress. We should grow steadily from spiritual childhood and youth to manhood and maturity, reaching the fulness of stature of children of God in Jesus Christ. Many do not do so. As in the first century church, so today it is that “for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14, KJV). Often believers are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, going forward and backward, to and fro, criss-crossing, walking in intricate paths, and making very slow, if any, progress toward the heavenly Canaan.

Some time ago a beloved sister in Christ Jesus made confession at the conclusion of a sermon, responding to our Lord’s invitation, saying to the effect that “I wonder if I am really a Christian. I do not seem to have the strength I need to resist temptation, and I do not have the joy and peace that I ought to have,” and asked for understanding and for prayers of the saints, and forgiveness of our Father. I learned she had been a Christian about three years. And I thought later, as I reflected about this child of God,

that many in the church far longer than she, also have these same thoughts and doubts. You don’t put “old heads on young shoulders,” for they would be out of place. Let heads, hearts, shoulders and bodies be of the same age!

Younger saints ought not be discouraged when they have doubts, and when they witness others who are older in the faith demonstrating joy, peace, patience, love, kindness, strength, etc., of mature brothers and sisters who for years have studied, learned, prayed, worshiped, practiced, and fought the good fight of faith.

Rather the younger should be encouraged by the examples of those who are fathers and mothers in the family of God, and by older brothers and sisters who are diligently striving for the “crown of life that fadeth not away” (1 Tim. 5:1-2; Tit. 2:18; Jas. 1:12). Forward, onward, upward we daily travel through life, purposing to continue doing so until we behold the face of him whom we love, for then “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1-3). “For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. . . . But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:36-39).

There are obstacles to cultivating and experiencing “joy in the God of my salvation.” We have great joy in the spirit when we worship each Lord’s Day, eating the supper of Jesus Christ, remembering his body and blood, his death on the cross for our sins. It is a joy to sing from the heart beautiful psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which take our souls on a flight from earth to heaven, into the very portals of glory. It is a great joy to hear the full, unadulterated, enlightening word of God spoken and preached by good men from pure hearts. But that joy of worship may soon be diminished and dampened when they leave the assembly to go about encountering the world and its cares. We may go home to sadness, sorrow, sickness, and even death. One lady in a congregation goes home to a cursing, alcohol-drinking husband.

There are believers who cannot pray in their family life, cannot offer audible thanks for a meal, because of ungodly, opposing people in the family. “Joy in the God of my salvation” must be fought and contended for, learned and cultivated in spite of oppositions, sneers, and ill-will toward one who loves God truly, even from foes in our own households (Matt. 10:36).

We have great joy when we think of heaven and eternal life in the presence of our God and the redeemed of the ages. We think of how joyful will be the greetings and the reunions in heaven. We joy to think of him “whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,

receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul” (1 Pet. 1:8-9). It is unbounded joy to know that there is God, Jehovah, and he is our Father (1 Cor. 8:3, 6; Eph. 4:4-6; John 17:24-26). Like Enoch and Noah, we should walk with him and please him each day (Gen. 5:24; 6:9, 22; 7:5; Heb. 11:5, 7). “Ye must be born again . . . of water and of the spirit,” if we would claim God as our Father and enter into his kingdom (John 3:1-8; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). He says to us, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

As his children we “joy in the God of my salvation” who does his will among the inhabitants of the earth as he does in the army of heaven: “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan. 4:35). The world of unbelievers has always wanted a god but not a Sovereign, a King, a Monarch, who commands them and demands obedience. The world wants a god who is made in their image, who will do as his creatures think and command him, who agrees with them, who has no certain will, and endorses and approves of all the doings of his subjects. I rejoice that our God and Father is firm and true, dependable and trustworthy, a God “who will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” and “is a consuming fire” in punishing the lawless and opposer (Rom. 9:14-16; Heb. 2:28; 2 Thess. 1:3-12).

We have “joy in the God of my salvation” for he has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ who died for us. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). Our Father hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, through the ministry of reconciliation (the preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus to the lost) committed to the Holy Spirit guided apostles, in which God forgives our trespasses and we become new creatures (a new creation) in Christ through faith (2 Cor. 5:17-21; 1 Pet. 2:1-2). We “joy” when we see Jesus on the cross, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). We “joy” when we suffer for the sake of Jesus. “And they (the apostles, bc) departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). We “joy in the God of my salvation” when we truly consider and understand that “we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-11).

Like the innumerable blessings from our Father which we can neither know nor number, never realizing all that our God has done for us, so are the immeasurable joys which we have day by day in Jesus. In Habakkuk 3:17-19, the prophet affirms that if the fig tree bears no blossoms

nor fruit; if there are no grapes on the vines; if there are no olives and olive oil; if there is no grain in the fields; if there are no flocks and herds, no milk to drink and flesh to eat; and no cattle in the stalls and folds; yet he and those who are “righteous, justified by faith” (2:4), will never forsake and turn away from our God and Father. With Job we should hold, as a matter of deep confirmed faith and conviction, that “though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain my own ways before him” (Job 13:15), even if, as with Job, we were to lose ten children in death, all our material goods, our wife in unbelief, and our physical health (chapters 1 and 2). “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” A Christian never has any circumstances in which he should not be found rejoicing (Phil. 4:4).

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“Angel” continued from page 2

names of the ministers of the Gospel were the very same, *the angel of the church* and *the bishop*; which belonged to the ministers in the synagogues (*Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* II: 90-91).

There are obviously some things about these comments that are contrary to revealed truth about the organization of the church (similar comments appear in others who compare the officers in the synagogue with those in the church) and, to this aspect of Lightfoot’s comments, one can find response in Meyer’s *Commentary* (119) and Swete (22). Both authors take exception to the idea that the organization of the church had developed to the point that one had a bishop over the elders in such an early date as the book of Revelation was written and in this respect they are correct. The Bible identifies the *pastors*, *elders*, *overseers*, *bishops*, and *presbytery* as one and the same men. However, the idea that the church has a *rwbyc xyl#\$, the angel of the church* deserves more investigation.

The word *xyl#%* is derived from the verb *xl#%*, “to send” (*Brown, Driver, and Briggs* 1018). The word *xyl#%* appears frequently in the Mishna in the sense of “one’s agent” (see *Terumoth* 4:4; *Bikkurim* 1:5; *Kethuboth* 4:5; *Kiddushin* 2:1; *Makkoth* 2:2), “delegate” (*Yoma* 2:5), and “messenger” (*Gittin* 2:1, note 5; 3:5, note 1; 3:6, note 3; 4:1; 6:1, note 1; 6:2, note 1; 6:3, note 4 defines him as a “deputy, agent”; 5:1, note 1;). The phrase *rwbyc xyl#%* also appears in the Mishna. In *Berachoth* 5:5 the phrase is translated “the Reader for a congregation” (cf. Blackman’s note on *Rosh Hashanah* 4:7; *Taanith* 1:2).

In W. Bacher’s excellent article on “synagogue” in *Dictionary of the Bible* (James Hastings, editor), he explained the role of the *rwbyc xyl#%*:

The leader in prayer who as the representative of the congregation recited aloud the prayers in the synagogue, was called *ῥωβυς χυλ#ς*, “delegate of the whole” (*ῥωβυς* is the name of the collective body assembled in the synagogue, in opposition to the individual, *δυxy*). This leading in prayer was a voluntary function discharged by members of the congregation who were qualified for it and invited to undertake it.

In the article on “synagogue” in McClintock and Strong’s *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, the following description of the role of the *ῥωβυς χυλ#ς* is presented:

3. *The Legate of the Congregation, or the Leader of Divine Worship* (*ῥωβυς χυλ#ς = ἀγγελος ἐκκλησια/αἰ, ἀποστολος*). — To give unity and harmony to the worship, as well as to enable the congregation to take part in the responses, it was absolutely necessary to have one who should lead the worship. Hence, as soon as the legal number required for public worship had assembled (*Νῦν*), the ruler of the synagogue (*σνρρ = ποιμην*), or, in his absence, the elders (*Νῦνqz = presbu/teroi*), delegated one of the congregation to go up before the ark to conduct divine service. The function of the apostle of the ecclesia

(*ῥωβυς χυλ#ς*) was not permanently vested in any single individual ordained for this purpose, but was alternately conferred upon any lay member who was supposed to possess the qualifications necessary for offering up prayer in the name of the congregation. This is evident from the reiterated declarations both in the Mishna and the Talmud (X:75).

When I read these comments I thought of the custom in Canadian congregations of having a “chairman” over the services. He has no role similar to an elder. His only responsibility is to conduct the service in an orderly way. He will make announcements, call on men for prayer, designate who is to serve in the public worship, and dismiss the assembly. The early churches may have called such a man *ῥωβυς χυλ#ς*, variously translated “reader for the Congregation” or “messenger of the congregation” (*ἀγγελος ἐκκλησια/αἰ*). This appears to be the man so designated as the “angel” of the church in the letters to the seven churches of Asia. If this material is correct, this would simplify what has been considered an enigmatic reference in the book of Revelation.

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Sturgis, Mississippi 1998 Field Report

Greetings, from your brothers and sisters in Sturgis, Mississippi! Thank you so much for your fervent prayers and support. Let us all thank our God in heaven for his rich and wonderful blessings.

1998 has been a good year for us. The Sturgis church began publishing a newspaper article in the *Starkville Daily News*. The article runs twice a month on Sundays. I have written articles on denominationalism, false teaching, and other subjects from God’s Holy Word. There have been numerous responses from the community. When questions are asked, I always give a Bible answer. Along with the newspaper article, we still have two radio programs and a cable advertisement for Bible studies and home correspondence courses. We are doing what we can to spread the gospel in the area.

In May, we hosted a gospel meeting with brother Johnnie Douglas of Tampa, Florida. There was good attendance ev-

ery night with Christian and non-Christian visitors. Our members did a good job in supporting the meeting.

I now have a little more help with the worship services. Our young men, ages 12-15, are now leading songs and prayers, and presiding over the Lord’s supper. We are so proud of them for their continued interest in helping out. They are growing physically as well as spiritually. We are so blessed to have them. The other adult male, brother Joe Seals, continues to be a big help also. His family is growing spiritually as well.

I am sad to report that we lost a faithful member last year. Sister Lela McCarter died after a brief illness. She had been with the Sturgis church from the beginning. She was a strong and faithful member and will be missed a great deal.

As for me, I had the opportunity to preach at the Emerson Church of Christ in Indianapolis, Indiana. I also conducted meetings with the Fourth and Grosebeck Church in Lufkin, Texas and the church in Greenville, Mississippi. Brother Abraham Smith of Meridian, Mississippi preached in my place during my absences. I also taught Bible classes when the opportunity arose. I have studied with a professor from Mississippi State University who has visited our services and listened to the radio programs. He has asked many questions and is seeking the truth. I will continue to work with him and let God’s Word do the rest. We could really use him, as well as other souls, in the work at Sturgis.

I did lose \$350.00 in financial support from the churches in Trussville, Alabama and Tahlequah, Oklahoma. They were unable to continue their financial fellowship. If you or anyone else is able to help me replace this lost amount, please call or write. I would greatly appreciate it. Continue to pray for me, the members, and the work here, that we may prosper spiritually. We will continue to do the same.

Thank you so much for allowing me to share this report with you. I will keep you posted on the growing work. Thanks to *Truth Magazine* for their time and efforts. Keep the faith!
Alexander Caldwell, 201 Lynn Lane, Apt. 36, Starkville, Mississippi 39759.



Old Books For Sale

Standard Eclectic Bible Lesson Commentary 1887
Peloubet's Select Notes on the International Lessons, two of them — one is dated 1897; the other 1914
Millennial Harbinger, Vol. 1, Old Paths Book Club
The Christian Baptist, A. Campell

All are intact and covers are good except for *The Christian Baptist* which needs to be recovered. Please advise that offers will be accepted for these items either individually or together. Mike Baggett (601) 728-7320 or e-mail: michaelbaggett@yahoo.com

Pastor Convicted in Gay Marriage Case

"Downers Grove, Ill. — A Methodist minister who officiated at the marriage of two gay men was convicted in a church trial Friday of disobedience in the first test of the denomination's ban on same-sex ceremonies.

"The jury of 13 pastors decided 10-3 that the Rev. Gregory Dell disobeyed church law when he presided over the union of the Chicago men in September.

"Immediately after the verdict, the penalty phase of the trial began. Dell could be defrocked.

"Earlier Friday, Dell, 53, had said he would continue blessing same-sex unions if allowed to remain a Methodist minister. He testified that he was being faithful to his vow to minister to all people when he blessed the union of Karl Reinhardt and Keith Eccarius" (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 27, 1999], A14).

Missing Atheist Was Possibly Slain

"Austin, Texas — A former office manager for missing atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair has been arrested of weapons charges amid indications prosecutors suspect O'Hair was murdered.

David Roland Waters, 52, was arrested Wednesday and jailed after 119 rounds of ammunition were found in a search of his apartment and car. He was convicted of murder in Illinois in 1965 and is on probation for skimming \$54,000 from the O'Hair family's atheist organizations.

"O'Hair vanished with a son and granddaughter 3 ½ years ago, along with \$500,000 in gold coins. Her disappearance gave rise to speculation that they were victims of foul play or that O'Hair, who suffered from diabetes and would be about 80 now, had gone somewhere to die privately so that Christians couldn't pray over her.

"Prosecutors have not said whether they think O'Hair was murdered and made no mention of her at Waters' court appearance Thursday" (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 26, 1999], A27).

Preachers Needed

Sardis Lake, Mississippi: The Laws Hill church of Christ located near Sardis Lake in north Mississippi is searching for a preacher. The church brings together 18 to 25 people each week. There are prospects to work with here. This would be perfect for a preacher just starting out. The preacher coming will need to bring most of his support. The church can provide \$700 to a \$1000 a month now. Your services are greatly needed. Please contact Jerry Hartley at (601) 224-6913 or Mike Baggett at (601) 728-7320, or e-mail: michaelbaggett@yahoo.com

Charleston, West Virginia: The Oakwood Road church in Charleston, West Virginia is in need of a full-time preacher. If interested, please contact Henry Williams, (304) 727-2466 or Frank Linville, (304) 346-2700 or write to Church of Christ, 873 Oakwood Road, Charleston, WV 25314.

Union City, Tennessee: Brother Eulane Walker, who has preached for the First Street church of Christ in Union City for the past nineteen years, will be retiring on July 1, 1999 because of age-related health problems. He is currently serving as one of the elders, and will remain to serve in that capacity. The congregation can supply around \$400 a week towards a man's support. Sunday morning attendance is around 17-18. There is a lot of potential for growth here. If interested, please contact Hayden King (901) 885-5898 or Eulane Walker (901) 587-2237, or write the church, First St. Church of Christ, P.O. Box 532, Union city, TN 38261.

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National Baptist Official Pleads Guilty to Evasion

"Tampa, Fla. — The former public relations director of the national black Baptist group pleaded guilty Thursday to two federal tax evasion charges six weeks after a jury acquitted her of state racketeering charges.

"Bernice Edwards faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine and agreed to pay back taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. Federal prosecutors dropped 25 other charges, including money laundering, extortion and fraud.

"The plea came just a week after the Rev. Henry Lyons. Edwards' co-defendant and former president of the National Baptist Convention USA, resigned his position and reached a plea deal with federal prosecutors" (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 26, 1999], A27.

Vatican Restates Refusal for Women as Deacons

"Vatican City — The Vatican has reiterated its refusal to allow women to serve as deacons, a role that would have allowed them to preach at Mass and help celebrate liturgical services.

“Ordination as deacons is a step below priesthood, which the Roman Catholic Church reserves solely for unmarried men.

“‘There are so many other opportunities’ for women in the church, Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos, who head the Vatican’s Congregation for the clergy, said Thursday.

“Castrillon was speaking at a news conference to present Pope John Paul II’s annual pre-Easter letter to priests world-wide” (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 26, 1999], A27).

Poor Track Record From “Shacking Up”

“A 1992 study concluded that ‘prior cohabitators’ had a 46 percent greater hazard of divorce than non-co-habitators.

“. . . Such habits of mind appear to become ingrained over time. People who experience serial cohabitations before marriage have much higher divorce rates than those who lived with only one person. Having lived through the dissolution of one or many relationships increases one’s tolerance for heartbreak and instability, and perhaps hardens people in their idiosyncrasies. Rather than proving a test run for marriage, living together instead can prove a test run for eventual loneliness.

“. . . Unsurprisingly, the National Marriage Project data show that cohabitation is most harmful for children. In 1997, 36 percent of these households included children, up from only 21 percent 10 years before. There are estimates that half of America’s children will spend some time in a cohabiting household before the age of 16, and three-quarters of these children will see their parents split up. (Only one-third of children born to married couples will endure a divorce.)

“. . . A British study found that children living with mom and her boyfriend were 33 times more likely to be abused physically and sexually than children living with both biological parents” (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 25, 1999], A22).