

TRUTH

Why Do People Give Up?

Abraham Smith

In today's times, many good efforts have been started and then abandoned. Churches have initiated efforts to save the lost, but they stopped. People have given up on themselves. Students have given up on their education. Husbands and wives have given up on their marriages. Children of God have given up on doing the will of God. Children of God have given up the faith.

Elijah was tempted to give up (1 Kings 19); Paul, too (2 Cor. 1:8-11). Why do people give up? Here are some reasons:

1. We forget how important a certain thing was or is. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves of how important our cause is. Jesus remembered this (John 12:27).

2. We have not conditioned our hearts to face difficult challenges. Ezra prepared his heart (Ezra 7:10). Anything that is worth having often cannot be achieved without a great price. We must begin our task with the realization that there will be some difficulties ahead. And we should expect them! "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12).

3. We do not attempt to succeed with all our might (2 Chron. 31:21;

Jer. 48:10; Col. 3:23; Eccl. 9:10). Sometimes goals cannot be achieved without us giving all we can give. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Eccl. 9:10). "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33).

4. We do not lay aside every weight and every sin. We can not carry on with extra weight and sin (Heb. 12:1, 2). Our sins destroy our faith, which "is the victory that has overcome the world" (1 John 5:4).

5. We focus too much on our failures or shortcomings. We must forget the past and press on with the future. Paul said, "Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14). If we do not forget the past, we will be discouraged.

6. We do not learn from our own mistakes or the mistakes of others (1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Jude 5). As a result, we experience the same result of failure, and then become discouraged and quit. Paul reminded the Corinthians that they must learn from the failures of those in

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

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The Chronology of the Bible

(4)

Mike Willis

Looking For Years In Genesis 1

In looking at the chronology of the Bible, we have followed the text of Scripture back to Genesis 1. Even giving the most generous interpretation of the genealogies/chronologies of Genesis 5 and 11, there is general agreement that the time from Adam to today is a relatively short period of time. The natural reading of the text approximates 6000 years; a generous insertion of years in the chronology would still leave the world very young (in the tens of thousands of years old). The only other place in the Bible to find the long eons of time necessary for the old earth point of view is Genesis 1. This view states that there are long ages between the creation of the world in Genesis 1:1 and the creation of Adam in Genesis 1:26. A variety of interpretations of Genesis 1 have been introduced in support of this view. These interpretations are not arising from those who are studying the text of Scripture to allow the natural meaning of the text to be elucidated. Rather, these interpretations are arising from those who have allowed scientific pronouncements that the earth is very old to cause them to look for alternative interpretations of the creation account. Such men wish to make Scripture harmonize with the latest scientific pronouncements, in my opinion. Let us look at these alternative interpretations.



The Gap Theory

Genesis 1:1-2 reads as follows: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Some scholars have proposed that there is a long period of time between the time when the universe was initially created and God began to act to make the creation a cosmos. The natural reading of the text does not leave one the impression that there is a long period of time between verses 1 and 2. Scholars generally reject this interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2 on exegetical grounds.

Keil commented about those who wish to find a gap between vv. 1 and 2 as follows, "This suffices to prove that the theosophic speculation of those who make a gap between the two verses, and fill it with a wild horde of evil spirits and their demonical works, is an arbitrary interpolation" (*Genesis* 49).

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The Price of Principle

Connie W. Adams

Balaam had it right when he answered the servants of Balak, King of Moab, with these words, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more” (Num. 22:18). He had the principle right. Too bad that he sought to find a way to curse God’s people and benefit from his error. Jude said that some were as those who “ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 11). Balaam sought to persuade God to allow him to curse God’s people. If only he had lived by the sound principle he first stated. Sadly, some have abandoned noble principles for foolish reasons. Consider these:

1. Political advantage. Politicians have often run for office on high sounding principles, only to abandon them when the price is right. Samuel’s sons did that very thing. “And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment” (1 Sam. 8:3). Amos said this was one of the sins of his day. “For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right” (Amos 5:12). It is easy to compromise when continued access to power is on the line. Trade-offs begin but end in the loss of integrity and the abandonment of principle.

2. Financial advantage. The rush to secure one’s house financially has led many to take short-cuts in business or in service. Amos said Israel was guilty of “making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit” (Amos 8:5). An employer who does not give to those who work for him a fair and just wage, or a worker who juggles the books to his own advantage, or gives inferior service for his wages has traded principle for financial advantage. The preacher who waters down the message for fear of those who control the treasury of the church, or for fear of losing face with powerful people who can curtail his influence is no better. There are some jobs which are inconsistent with the life, influence, and duty of a Christian. How much is principle worth?

3. Friendship advantage. The value of true friends is beyond estimation. “A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). What is more comforting than to enjoy the warmth of a close friendship, to be able to share your innermost thoughts and dreams with a trusted friend? How wonderful to be able to speak confidently with a friend who understands your every mood and with whom there is no fear of betrayal. Nor is it necessary to guard your words closely. Friends love, trust, protect, and understand. Yet, sadly, principle often comes between friends. This has occurred over and over in the

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history of the Lord's people. It is always heart-wrenching. Unless you subscribe to the humanistic notion that truth either cannot be determined at all, or that it is really of no consequence, then when two friends end up on opposite sides of an issue, estrangements replace relaxed confidence and doubts replace trust. The ultimate rupture of friendship is to say, "I really don't trust you anymore." To sell your soul for friendship in the place of principle is the ultimate betrayal of the Lord. When we become convinced of the certainty of a given fact, and of a course of action which is demanded, others, including best friends, may not be so convinced. Of course, we should always be sure the principle is sound. But do friends come before truth?

4. Family advantage. This becomes a strong test of commitment to principle. Blood is a strong bond. Shared family memories create a powerful bond. The desire to keep peace and to place blame on one who rocks the boat is a strong force. But here is a good place to hear what Jesus, our Lord, said. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:34-37). These words are clear. I believe we all understand them intellectually. But do we appreciate emotionally the price exacted by this principle? When the gospel came into the world, it was indeed, good news. It was welcomed by all who labored and were heavy laden (Matt. 11:28-30). But it was not welcomed by the majority. They saw nothing "good" about it. It changed lives and disrupted a culture. "They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot" (1 Pet. 4:4). Families which before had gone together to the idol's temple were suddenly divided. Ceremonies and traditions of long standing were abandoned by some, while vigorously defended by others. A sword had come where there was peace in sin and error. The newfound friends in the Lord were rumored to be the offscouring of the world. Whatever they said or did was distorted, taken out of context and turned against them.

We have lived through several examples of this. When I was eleven years old, my family left the Christian Church. It was a matter of principle with them. They became convinced that error was both being taught and practiced in worship, work, and organization. It was not a light, frivolous decision. Lifelong friends did not understand. Family members were alienated and embittered. There was a heavy social price to pay. For a long time family gatherings were painful and conversation was guarded. But truth was truth and right was right, and I am deeply indebted to my parents for having the courage of their convictions. My grandfather lived to be 98 and was a deacon the greater part of his life

in the Christian Church. He died a dedicated member of that body.

When the institutional division came and brethren had to choose their course and along with it, those to whom they could justly extend the right hand of fellowship, there was a price to pay. Was there ever a price to pay! Some who did not live through that time have decided belatedly that the whole thing was unnecessary and that, had the more conservative ones been sweeter and kinder, division could have been averted. They are sadly misinformed. There were years of writing to clarify the issues, there were public debates between strong and able men on both sides of the controversy. As a young preacher, I read everything I could get my hands on trying to learn the truth and decide what my own course of action should be. I did not think I could afford to stick my head in the sand and adopt a "foe on the papers" attitude, as some are doing these days regarding matters of great moment affecting the fellowship of Christians.

I saw my best friend become a stranger. I was called an "anti" and a few worse things, by relatives and longtime friends. I became unwelcome in the congregation where I had spent my adolescent and teenage years. I was a witness to court battles over property rights for church buildings. By the way, the brethren who opposed the sponsoring churches and church support of private institutions did not instigate these court battles. They were subpoenaed to appear and were often forbidden by secular courts to continue using the very buildings many of them had sacrificed to build. Family reunions turned tense when family members who were known to be "antis" appeared. Families were upset when loved ones came to visit but did not worship together on the Lord's day. There were tears and injured feelings.

And now there are issues involving fellowship with those who have been dear friends, who either teach error on matters of morals or else wish to grant asylum to those who do. Some think it of no importance. Some think we can cover it all with a false use of Romans 14. Some dismiss it on the grounds of perceived inconsistencies. This has extended to the issue of creation itself and the days of Genesis 1. Soon we are going to have to deal with the issue of everlasting punishment. I wonder if we can plug into Romans 14 and treat it indifferently. Again, some have decided the best mind-set is to be above the battle — just tend to our own work and just don't read about it. Meanwhile, the same ones who take the last option, grow in their bitterness and malice toward those who argue for principle. This time the epithet used to discredit is "watchdog" or "keepers of brotherhood orthodoxy."

It is a time of testing. All of us need to make sure we are standing on sound principles of truth firmly rooted in the teaching of the word of God. Will there be a price to pay? Absolutely! Will you be identified in the minds of

Is It Scriptural to Pray to Jesus?

Donnie V. Rader

For many years brethren have argued over whether or not it is scriptural to pray to Jesus. This writer believes that the Bible teaches that it is not scriptural to pray to Jesus.

1. Prayer is to God, the Father. Passages that speak of prayer state that it is addressed to the Father. Jesus said, “. . . pray to your Father . . . ‘Our Father in heaven’” (Matt. 6:6, 9; Luke 11:2). He also taught his disciples to pray to the Father (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24). Our prayers are directed to God (Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 3:9; Rom. 14:6-9; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

2. Where is the passage that teaches we are to pray to Jesus? It is not an issue of whether he can be worshiped. He can. It is not a question of whether we can sing unto Jesus. We can (Col 3:16). It is not a question of whether Jesus is God. He is. It is a question of whether we are authorized to pray to Jesus.

3. If we can pray to Jesus, why not pray to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is Deity just like the Son is (cf. Acts 5:1ff). If we can pray to Jesus, why couldn't we pray to the Holy Spirit? One of the arguments made to justify praying to Jesus is that he is God (Deity) just as the Father is, thus prayer to him is scriptural. The same could be said of the Holy Spirit. He is Deity. Are we to conclude that we should pray to the Holy Spirit?

4. If we pray to Jesus directly, what part (role) does the Father have in that prayer? When we pray to the Father, Jesus serves as our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). Who is the mediator when we pray to the Son? Remember, that the Bible says that there is only one mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

5. There is a difference in singing to Jesus and praying to Jesus. Paul said that we sing to the Lord (Jesus, Acts 2:36), but we pray to God, the Father.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* with grace in your hearts *to the Lord*. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God the Father* through Him (Col. 3:16-17, emphasis mine DVR).

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* and making melody in your heart *to the Lord*, *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:19, 20, emphasis mine DVR).

Arguments Made To Justify Praying To Jesus

1. John 14:14. Jesus said, “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” The argument is that the NIV and NASV both translated this, “ask me.” The minority text contains the word for “me.” However, the majority text (*Textus Receptus*, the text on which the KJV and NKJV are based) does not have it. The translators of the KJV, NKJV, ASV, and the RSV reject it.

In John chapters 13-17 Jesus gives instructions to his apostles. In this same context (the discussion with the apostles) he speaks of asking the Father in his (Jesus') name (see John 15:16, 26; 16:15, 23-24).

The text in question (John 14:14) simply affirms that Jesus will grant something in answer to prayer. For Jesus to do something or grant something in answer to prayer does not in any way suggest that he is the one addressed!

2. Acts 7:59. Stephen said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” This is an extraordinary experience — a heavenly vision (vv. 55-56). If we were to be in the same situation and saw the Lord, then we could possibly talk directly to him. This passage does not set a pattern for our worship or praying today.

3. Revelation 22:20. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” This too was an extraordinary experience — a heavenly vision (Rev. 4:1-2). If this authorizes us to pray to Jesus, would John's request to the angel authorize us to pray to them (Rev. 10:8-9)?

4. Acts 9:13-17. Ananias prayed to the Lord. This was a vision (vv. 10-12). Not only did Ananias talk to the Lord, but the Lord talked to him! This does not prove that we can pray to Jesus anymore than John talking to the twenty-four

elders (Rev. 7:13-14) or the angel (Rev. 10:8-9) proves that we can pray to them.

5. Acts 1:24-25. The apostles prayed to the Lord asking which disciple should be chosen as an apostle. While Jesus is Lord, the Father is also referred to as Lord (Acts 4:24-30). Why couldn't that be true here? Could not God (the Father) be the one that chose Matthias? He chose Paul (Acts 22:14).

The one who is addressed in prayer here was the one who knows the hearts of all. It is true that Jesus knew the hearts of men (Luke 6:8; John 2:24-25; 6:64). It more likely refers to the Father (Acts 15:8 — the only other time the word for “knower of the hearts” Kubo [Sakae Kubo] is used). There is nothing in this passage to indicate that this must be a prayer to Jesus.

6. Acts 22:17-21. Paul prayed to the Lord. This is an extraordinary experience — a trance (v. 17). He not only spoke to the Lord, he saw the Lord (v. 18).

7. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9. Paul prayed to the Lord three times about his thorn in the flesh. The argument is that “Lord” must refer to Christ for the Lord replied speaking of “my grace” and “my strength” (or power) which is identified as the power of Christ (v. 9). It is perfectly reasonable to conclude that in verses 8-9 the Father promises the power of Christ. In the next chapter (13:7) he said, “Now I pray to God.” Keep in mind that the Lord answered this prayer directly in words! Thus, this case says nothing about whether we can pray to Jesus.

8. 1 John 5:13-15. If we ask anything according to his will (the Son of God), he hears us. The context of the whole book is that God hears us (cf. 1 John 1:5-9; 3:21-22). The context of this chapter deals with the Father giving life through Jesus (v. 11) and the Father giving life as prayers are offered (v. 16, cf. ASV). It would be hard to establish that this is a prayer to Jesus.

9. 1 Corinthians 16:22. “Maranatha” (KJV) or “O Lord, come!” (NKJV) is a prayer to Jesus. Not all scholars agree that this is the meaning. The word is a Greek transliteration of an expression in Aramaic. “Maran” means “our Lord” and “atha” means “to come.” The question among commentators is whether it means (1) he has come in his incarnation, (2) he has come in his spiritual presence, (3) he comes or is at hand, (4) he will come some day, or (5) he is urged to come.

Young's Analytical Concordance calls this “an emphatic assertion . . . meaning ‘Our Lord has come’ (or ‘will come’).” It cannot be established that this is a prayer to Jesus.

Further Study

For a more detailed study of this question see the exchange between Hoyt Houchen and H.E. Phillips in the February, July, August, and November (1981) issues of *Searching the Scriptures*. See also: “May We Pray To Jesus?” by Gary Workman (*The Restorer*, May 1981, Vol. 1, No. 6).

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Yes, It Is Scriptural to Pray to Jesus

Weldon Warnock

Brother Donnie Rader has in this issue an article prompted by my article on “Praying to Jesus” that appeared in Truth Magazine, March 7, 2002. Brother Willis asked if we would write a couple of exchanges on this subject, to which we agreed. There is nothing personal about these exchanges, only interest in what the Bible teaches on the matter. Donnie and I have been friends for many years and we will continue to be.

Consequences

In my opinion brother Rader's position is an extreme one which we will endeavor to show by the Scriptures as we proceed. Think for a minute the consequences of his position:

- Jesus is king of his kingdom and we are citizens, but the citizens cannot talk to their king.
- Jesus is the head of the body, the church, and we are the members, but the members cannot talk to their head.
- Jesus is the bridegroom and we are the bride, but the bride cannot talk to her husband.
- Jesus is our shepherd and we are his sheep, but the sheep cannot talk to their shepherd.
- Jesus is our counselor, but we cannot talk to our counselor.
- Jesus is our physician and we are his patients, but the patients cannot talk to their own physician.
- Jesus is our friend, but we cannot talk to our friend.
- Jesus is our brother, but we cannot talk to our brother.
- Jesus is our redeemer who loves us and gave himself for us, but we cannot express to him our gratitude. We can tell the Father and let the Son overhear it.

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- Jesus is our Lord and God (John 20:28), but we cannot talk to our Lord and God.

More could be given but we don't want to belabor the point. It is just strange that we cannot tell our Savior how much we love him and appreciate his supreme sacrifice on our behalf. I remember hearing a brother preach an eloquent and moving sermon wherein he said that if he were at the crucifixion he would have loved to have been able to climb up to Jesus, caress him, and tell him how much he loved him. This same preacher did not believe in praying to Jesus. Why could he have told Jesus then how much he loved him, but not now? You answer that one.

Rebuttal

Let us now take up brother Rader's points in the order which he has them listed.

1. He reasons that since we are to pray to God, this eliminates Jesus. He quotes several passages. This is like those who quote passages on faith and say these eliminate baptism. I admit that we are to pray to God the Father, but this does not preclude the Son, anymore than Jesus saying we are to worship the Father (John 4:23) precludes the Son. Such passages as John 14:14, Acts 7:59-60, and 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 clearly show we can pray to Jesus. Of course, we are to pray in the name (authority) of Jesus.

2. Where is the passage, he asks, that teaches we may pray to Jesus? Well, to be redundant there are John 14:14 (NASB, NIV), Acts 7:59-60, and 2 Corinthians 12:7-9. Even brother Rader admits that Stephen prayed to Jesus.

3. He reasons that if we can pray to Jesus, why not the Holy Spirit, who is also Deity? Let me ask a couple of questions. If we can sing to Jesus, why can't we sing to the Holy Spirit? If we can worship Jesus, why can't we worship the Holy Spirit?

4. He wants to know what part the Father would have in a prayer if we pray to Jesus directly? I suppose the same role that Jesus has when we pray to the Father. Donnie's position, at best, just has Jesus over-hearing all our prayers. We can never thank Jesus personally, for all that he has done for us. Yet, we thank Jesus, as well as petition him, all the time in our songs. We can sing a prayer to Jesus, but be sure and not *talk* in prayer to him. I might also ask: When we sing to the Father, what part (role) does Jesus have in that song? Or, when we sing to Jesus what part (role) does the Father have in that song?

5. Donnie states that Paul says we sing to Jesus, but pray to God, the Father. He quotes Ephesians 5:19-20 and Colossians 3:16-17. Brother Radar should have looked at these passages more closely. Paul wrote that we sing to the Lord (*kurios*) in Ephesians 5:19, but that we sing

to God (*theos*, translated Lord in the KJV in Colossians 3:16). Compare the New American Standard Bible. So we are exhorted to sing to Jesus in Ephesians and sing to God in Colossians. Admittedly, Paul says to give thanks to God in the name of Jesus and by Jesus. This I believe, but other texts show that Jesus hears prayers also. We are to offer praise to God by Jesus (Heb. 13:15), but this does not eliminate giving praise to Jesus. We praise both the Father and the Son.

Examining His Rebuttal of Proponents

Brother Rader introduces nine points that he asserts are used by brethren to try to justify praying to Jesus. We will examine, briefly, each one of them.

1. John 14:14. Brother Rader doesn't do much with this text. Basically, he says he takes the King James Version, based on the Textus Receptus. The Textus Receptus (Latin, meaning received text) was a translation by Erasmus into the Greek in A.D. 1551, and then revised two or three times by the time the KJV was translated in 1611. At that time there were very few manuscripts that had been found. Today, there are about 5,358 manuscripts and fragments. Wonder if Donnie accepts 1 John 5:7 of the KJV and the NKJV that appears in no known Greek manuscript? It got there as the result of a wager. Then there is Easter (Acts 12:4) as well as other problems.

As to the authenticity of the word "me" in John 14:14 consult the commentaries of B.F. Westcott, Hendriksen, Lenski, and Dan King on this passage. They claim that "me" is in the more ancient, credible, and reliable manuscripts. So Donnie calls the Textus Receptus, based on a handful of manuscripts, the majority text and refers to the current 5,358 manuscripts and fragments as the minority text. This is the first time I have ever seen eleven or twelve manuscripts be considered as the majority and 5,358 being the minority.

2. Acts 7:59. Here Stephen prays to Jesus, which is admitted by Donnie. But we can't do what Stephen did because Donnie says because his was a different situation, namely he saw Jesus in a vision. If the same thing happened to us we could possibly, just possibly, Donnie said, pray to Jesus. This is odd. We can pray to God the Father without seeing him, but we can't pray to Jesus unless we see him. Supernatural works surrounded conversions (Acts 2; 8; 9; 10; 16). Following Donnie's rationale, we could say that we can't be saved like those in Acts because there were no miracles accompanying our conversion. However, if we had the same situation as then, possibly, just possibly we could be saved like they were.

3. Revelation 22:20. Brother Rader explains the import of this passage away by saying it was a vision. He never

explains how such circumstances alter the case for us. Were the prayers real or imaginary in visions or trances? Ray Summers states that John bows his head with his audience to whisper the reverent prayer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Lenski calls this a “word of prayer.” Donnie suggests that since John spoke to Jesus, and also spoke to angels, would that authorize us praying to angels? Well, since Stephen spoke to Jesus, Paul spoke to Jesus, and John spoke to Jesus, and John also spoke to angels, would that have authorized Stephen, Paul, and John to pray to angels?

4. Acts 9:13-17. Whether this was a prayer of Ananias to Jesus, I will let you, the reader, decide. The passage says that Ananias talked to Jesus the Lord. Seemingly, it was a prayer, hence Donnie’s conclusion about us being able to pray to the elders and the angels? We pray to deity, not angelic beings, or men. He puts Ananias in the same “fix” he tries to put many of us in today.

5. Acts 1:24-25. Here the apostles pray to the Lord for help in choosing a successor to Judas Iscariot. Donnie wants to make the Lord here God the Father. It possibly could be, but keep in mind that it was Jesus who chose and ordained the twelve apostles (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13), and why would it be any different here? Brother Rader says that God chose Paul as an apostle (Acts 22:14), so he must have chosen Matthias. But Acts 26:16 states that Jesus made Paul an apostle. So, both had a hand in it. Paul claimed he was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (1 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1). It was God who gave Jesus the original twelve apostles (John 17:6, 9,12).

6. Acts 22:17-21. Compare my remarks on point 4 on Acts 9:13-17 that deals with Ananias in a similar situation.

7. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9. Donnie wants to make this prayer to God the Father. He has already said that Jesus is Lord (Acts 2:36), but he switches to God here. What is there in this text that forces us to interpret Lord as God? Also, Donnie states that this is not an example for us to follow because the Lord answers directly. Then we can’t pray to God, either, because God (if the Lord be God here) answered Paul directly. This sounds rather convoluted to me.

8. 1 John 5:13-15. The nearest antecedent of “him” in verse 14 is the Son of God in verse 13. Hence, we ask the Son in our petitions, and also the Father (1 John 3:21-22). As we worship both the Father and the Son, sing to both God and Christ, we also may pray to both. However, I suppose it is possible that God is the one meant in the broad context.

9. 1 Corinthians 16:22. I have no comment on what

brother Rader wrote on this verse. You might want to do further study on the interpretation and application.

Conclusion

Brother Rader didn’t say anything about whether we can sing songs that teach we may pray to Jesus, like “I Must Tell Jesus,” “Tell It to Jesus,” etc. Some brethren are “blacklisting” certain songs that are sung directly to Jesus. I appreciate brother Rader’s good attitude and I invite you to give both our articles an open-minded reading.

Some Thoughts On Brother Warnock’s Article

Donnie V. Rader

I agree with brother Warnock that there is nothing personal in our disagreement about this question. He is certainly correct in saying that we have been friends for some time and will continue to do so.

The intent of my article was to present another view of the question than the one presented by brother Warnock. I wanted to provide an objective study of the question, therefore, I didn’t directly respond to brother Warnock nor mention him in my article. Some of the arguments I tried to answer were not even introduced by brother Warnock. I merely wanted to offer an alternate view.

Consequences

Brother Warnock offers a number of things he thinks are consequences of the position I hold. The kind of points brother Warnock raises in his list of ten consequences is that Jesus is the king, head, bridegroom, shepherd, and so on, but we can’t talk to him. All ten make the same point. Let’s try that reasoning on praying to the Holy Spirit. (1) The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 1:5), but we can’t talk to God. (2) The Holy Spirit gives life (Rom. 8:2), but we can’t thank him for the life he gives. (3) The Holy Spirit justifies (1 Cor. 6:11), but we can’t talk to him to thank him for it. (4) The Holy Spirit revealed the will of God (Eph. 3:3-5), but we can’t thank him for the revelation. (5) The Holy Spirit chose the very words used by the apostles as they wrote (1 Cor. 2:9-13), but we can’t thank him for the words he chose. (6) We are born of the Spirit (John 3:3, 5), but we can’t thank him for the new birth. (7) We are saved by the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5), but we can’t talk to him to thank him for our salvation. (8) The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf (Rom. 8:26), but we can’t thank him for his work or tell him of our needs. (9) The Holy Spirit dwells in us (Rom. 8:9-11), but we can talk to him. (10) We are to be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18), but we can’t talk to him.

Now, either brother Warnock's ten consequences prove nothing about whether we can pray to Jesus or it proves that we can pray to the Holy Spirit.

The only thing brother Warnock said about praying to the Holy Spirit was this: "If we can sing to Jesus, why can't we sing to the Holy Spirit? If we can worship Jesus, why can't we worship the Holy Spirit?" That really didn't answer the question, but sounds like he's saying we can pray to the Holy Spirit.

No one has argued that we can never communicate or express thanks to Jesus. I pointed out in my article that we are authorized to *sing* to Jesus, but not to pray to him (consider the sixth paragraph on my article).

Is Praying to Jesus Eliminated?

The first point of my article was that passages that speak of prayer state that it is addressed to the Father (Matt. 6:6, 9; Luke 11:2; John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 3:9; Rom. 14:6-9; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17). In the absence of a passage that tells us to pray to Jesus, we conclude that we are only authorized to pray to the Father. Brother Warnock says, "This is like those who quote passages on faith and say these eliminate baptism." No, it is like citing passages that authorize singing (when there is an absence of passages that authorize instrumental music) and saying that eliminates mechanical instruments of music in worship.

I wonder if the passages that speak of praying to the Father (or, as brother Warnock believes praying to the Father and to Jesus) eliminate praying to the Holy Spirit.

John 14:14

The argument made from this verse is perhaps the strongest to be made in favor of the position brother Warnock is defending. Thus, I will spend my limited space to discuss it and let my comments in the first article stand on the rest of the arguments.

The question over this text is one of textual criticism. Some ancient manuscripts include the word for "me." As A.T. Robertson said, "The use of me (NT:3165) (me) here is supported by ʾAleph, B, 33, Vulgate, Syriac, and Peshitta" (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*). However, there are many other manuscripts that omit it. The question is whether we should rely on a few manuscripts because they are older or on the majority of the manuscripts. Neither of us are qualified to debate that in detail. Brother Warnock said,

So Donnie calls the Textus Receptus, based on a handful of manuscripts, the majority text and refers to the current 5,358 manuscripts and fragments as the minority text. This is the first time I have ever seen eleven or twelve

manuscripts be considered as the majority and 5,358 being the minority.

He has me saying more than my article actually said. Read again my comments there. I think brother Warnock has it backwards on the Majority and Minority text. The *Textus Receptus* (and Majority text) is based upon the majority of the over 5,000 manuscripts (Wilber Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* 16; consider also *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, edited by Zane C. Hodges and Authur L. Farstad). It is the text used for the KJV and NKJV. The Westcott-Hort (and Nestle's text) is based upon the older manuscripts which are fewer in number. Consider the following quote from the preface to the NKJV:

The manuscript preferences cited in many contemporary translations of the New Testament are due to recent reliance on a relatively few manuscripts discovered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dependence on these manuscripts, especially two, the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, is due to the greater age of these documents. However, in spite of the age of the materials, some scholars have shown reasons to doubt the faithfulness of these manuscripts to the original text, since they often disagree with one another and show other signs of unreliability. The Greek text obtained by using this minority of sources and related papyri is known as the Alexandrian Text.

On the other hand, the great majority of existing manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are later, and none is earlier than the fifth century, most of their readings are verified by ancient papyri, ancient versions, and quotations in the writings of the early church fathers. This large body of manuscripts is the source of the Greek text underlying the King James Bible. It is the Greek text used by Greek-speaking churches for many centuries, presently known as the Textus Receptus, or Received Text, of the New Testament.

What does all this prove? It simply shows that my statement, ("The minority text contains the word for 'me.' However, the majority text [*Textus Receptus*, the text on which the KJV and NKJV are based] does not have it") is correct.

I certainly don't accept all the translation problems that the KJV or the NKJV have any more than brother Warnock would accept all the problems of the NASV and NIV (which he cited) or the Greek text based on manuscripts that omit Mark 16:9-20 and other verses.

Brother Warnock listed four instances that pleroded mison, Fausset, and Brown say on John 14:14, "Observe here, that while they are supposed to ask what they want, not of Him, but of the Father in His name, Jesus says it is He Himself that will 'do it' for them." At best, that just proves

Consolidation — Cure or Curse?

P.J. Casebolt

Solomon said, “Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth” (Eccl. 11:2). Farmers learned a long time ago that it is better to diversify than it is to consolidate. That is, unless you have some kind of government subsidy to back up your efforts.

There may be times when consolidation may have, or appear to have, desirable short-term effects, but often as not, consolidation can be a curse. Let us consider some of the latter kind.

Civil and Social

Time and space forbid that we even begin to list all of the times when the “bigger is better” concept has been more of a curse than a blessing. Government agencies have been consolidated into bureaucracies which are cumbersome, inefficient, and uncontrollable. Nations have learned that the centralization of too much authority and power can make that nation more vulnerable in times of war or economic maneuvering.

Jesse Stuart, that famed and respected Kentucky educator, was contemporary with my father in the Greenup County school system of the early 1930s. Jesse was one of

the early proponents of consolidation and later served as principal of such a high school in Portsmouth, Ohio. Yet, Jesse also recognized some of the liabilities of consolidation. Look at our school system today.

Consolidation has become county-wide in many places, counties cast lots for federal dollars, certain standards of size and curriculum must be met, children are bused from before daylight until after dark, parents do not know what companions or influences their children are subjected to, and yet the quality of education pertaining to math, science, and even the basic “3Rs” of bygone years has declined and deteriorated. Most educators agree on the problem, but disagree on the cure. The popular philosophy is “pull down . . . and build greater” buildings (cf. Luke 12:18). One of the results is smaller (and better) private schools, and the increased interest in home-schooling.

Religion

When the Lord chose a special people, he chose a nation consisting of “the fewest of all people” (Deut. 7:6, 7). He had these people numbered in order to effect an orderly transition during their wilderness wanderings and into the land of Canaan, and for purposes beyond that. But when

that we both can cite scholars that agree with us.

My whole point on John 14:14 is that the inclusion of “me” is questionable to say the least. The scholars of the KJV, NKJV, ASV, and RSV saw fit to reject it.

Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16

I have a little trouble following brother Warnock’s point on these verse. He points out that Colossians 3:16 uses the word *theos* (word for God) and is translated “God” in the NASV. He concludes, “So we are exhorted to sing to Jesus in Ephesians and sing to God in Colossians.” What does that prove? If we toss Colossians 3:16 out, we still have Ephesians 5:19. My point in citing the two passages was

to show that there is a difference in singing to Jesus and praying to Jesus. The point in question was not whether we could sing to Jesus, but whether we could pray to Jesus. Both passages are followed by a statement of giving thanks to God, the Father.

Conclusion

I too urge all to read with an open mind. This is not a issue that should divide the brethren.

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David had Israel numbered for a different reason, David sinned and Israel lost 70,000 of whatever their number was (1 Chron. 21). Once Israel had sinned by demanding an earthly king and placing their confidence in those kings and in the geographical city of Jerusalem, they were destined to lose both their king and their city (Ezek. 21:25-27; Hos. 13:11; Matt. 24). To this day, the Jews have their hopes consolidated in earthly Jerusalem and cannot see the heavenly Jerusalem nor the Messiah on his throne.

Denominational churches and systems have long practiced consolidation. In the early apostasy, authority was consolidated in various metropolitan bishops and finally in Rome and Constantinople. Later religious systems established headquarters in Salt Lake City, Boston, Brooklyn, Cleveland (Tennessee), or in Anderson (Indiana). Totalitarian systems of human origin may find comfort in consolidation, but the divine organization of the Lord's church has seen efforts toward consolidation as a curse, not a cure.

The Lord's church, when fully organized, had elders/bishops overseeing their own local flocks (congregations), and there were no "sponsoring" elders overseeing projects on behalf of the whole brotherhood, or any portion thereof (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:2). In the last half of the nineteenth century, apostasy began in an effort to consolidate evangelism under a human missionary society. Not only was this system a failure in that some church buildings were closed because the "society" could not (or would not) provide preachers (e.g., Morgan and Noble Counties in Ohio), but the progress of the gospel was hindered by division. Other attempts at consolidation were seen in

benevolence and edification.

In the twentieth century, remember the "Million for Manhattan" project which was designed to make New York City the center for foreign evangelism with an office/housing complex overlooking Central Park? This attempt fizzled into a building of doubtful architectural design for the Manhattan congregation, but the race for consolidation was on. I wonder if brethren thought of this aborted effort when the World Trade Center was bombed? And truly world trade was not only dealt a decisive blow by this terrorist attack, but the echoes of this trade center consolidation are yet reverberating throughout the world.

In the early 1950s, an eldership in Abilene, Texas decided to consolidate radio and television preaching in that city and in the 5th and Highland congregation itself. At least, they were to have the oversight of that consolidated effort, even if it were a separate human missionary society established to preach the gospel via radio and television (and indirectly, via pulpits). Some of us still remember and see the disastrous effects of this and similar attempts at consolidation in the Lord's church, and that which is not visible will yet come to light in the judgment.

Divine Consolidation

In God's divine scheme of redemption, he planned to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him" (Eph. 1:10). Christ decided to consolidate (reconcile) both Jew and Gentile "unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16). God also decided to "make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Heb. 8:8). The same gospel was preached to both Jews and Samaritans in the first century (Acts 2:38; 8:5, 12), and whether or not the present-day descendants of those tribes want to be in the same body/church, it still pleases God for such to be so.

And contrary to ancient and modern demands that Christ set up an earthly kingdom with headquarters in Jerusalem, Samaria, or some other consolidated locality, Christ has seen fit to establish a kingdom "not of this world" (John 18:36) and locate both the king and his throne in heaven (Heb. 8:1, 2).

When God decides to consolidate something, I'm in favor of it, for I know that it will be for good. If man can accomplish consolidation with some good results and no evil consequences, let him do so. But from past experience, I'm still going to ask if such human efforts toward consolidation are a cure, or a curse.

72211 Grey Rd. Vinton, Ohio 45686

Restoration Roots: The Scottish Origins of the American Restoration Movement

by Lynn McMillon

Students of the Restoration Movement will profit from this study of the movement's earliest roots. Paper. #17109

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What Would Jesus Do Today?

Phil T. Arnold

If the culmination of God's Old Testament promises for the sending of his Son into this world to seek and save the Lord were fulfilled today in Oklahoma City, would Jesus' ministry have been different? Well, of course there would have been differences in terms of technology and lifestyle. Chances are he would ride in a car rather than walk or ride a donkey. He would be able to use the telephone and perhaps would even be interviewed on the 6:00 p.m. news for turning the city upside down and challenging the religious leaders of our community. But I'm not talking about such incidentals in terms of transportation, communication, and technological advances. I'm asking us to think about his mission and methods.

Would not his mission be the same today? Jesus did not come to relieve the physical and social burdens men faced. He did not come to remove disease, hunger, poverty, and other such social inequities. Jesus came "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). While he was often moved to compassion by the pain and suffering that he saw, and even at times acted to assist its victims, he never changed his mission. He always kept saving souls his priority. He did not even lead a political movement to abolish slavery with all of its abuses. No, if Jesus were to be born in Oklahoma City in the twenty-first century, his mission would still be the same. The greatest mission ever! Seeking and saving the lost!

Would not his methods be the same today? Jesus did not attempt to make his appeals to man through his acts of charity or through social events or through entertainment and recreation. In fact, when he became aware that such provoked some to follow him, he confronted them with the blunt message of who he truly was and what he truly offered. "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which

I shall give for the life of the world . . . From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (John 6:26-27, 51, 66).

Unlike these false disciples, Peter and the other disciples knew that what Jesus had to offer was words. "Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'" (John 6:67-68). Jesus knew that it was his teaching that was necessary to make true followers. He said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:44-45). If Jesus entered the world today, he would not use the methods some are proclaiming as the only hope for the church to be relevant and successful in the twenty-first century. He would simply be interested in finding faithful men that he could teach and train and commission to go out and make disciples of all nations just as he did nearly 2,000 years ago (see Matt. 28:18-20).

The mission and methods of men change from generation to generation but the mission of those who would follow Christ has been settled by his unchangeable word, and seeking to follow Jesus such followers adopt his methods rather than those lauded by man. If Jesus were to come today, it would only be the incidentals that would change for he does not. He would not attempt to adapt himself to the times by a change in his mission or methods. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The power he gave unto his followers to accomplish this is the gospel (Rom. 1:16). Let us ever fix our eyes upon Jesus, our perfect example (Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 2:21), and be assured of our salvation and of all those who will hear his gospel. "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:1:6).

From Evangelizer, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Graham Crusade vs. Original Gospel of Christ

Ron Halbrook



Billy Graham's preaching began in the 1940s and continued via radio, TV, and city-wide crusades. His work was perpetuated by the formation of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 1950. In 1996 the B.G.E.A. board named Billy's son Franklin as successor, and other preachers are used by the Association. Bible truths taught include the inspiration of the Bible, the record of

Bible miracles as historical, and the deity of Christ. But, sad to say, the message brought by this ministry contradicts the original gospel of Christ in several ways.

The Graham crusade teaches that men are born sinners. The original gospel teaches God himself is the father of our spirits — we enter the world innocent and free from sin (Heb. 12:9). As Adam and Eve chose to sin, we come to an age of responsibility and choose to sin. When we sin, we become sinners, “alienated and enemies . . . by wicked works,” not by birth or inheritance (Col. 1:21). The Bible says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father” (Ezek. 18:20).

The Graham crusade teaches God forgives our sins on the condition of faith only. The original gospel teaches our sins are forgiven through Christ's death on the conditions of hearing the gospel, believing in Christ, repenting of our sins, confessing Christ as God's Son, and being immersed in water by his command.

First, we must *hear* the gospel. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Hearing leads to *faith* in Christ. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting

life” (John 3:16). Then, we *repent* of our sins. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Next, we *confess* Christ as God's Son. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Last is *immersion* in water. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). “They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (Acts 8:38).

Jesus summarized it in the Great Commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). Notice the order: faith, baptism, then salvation, *not* faith, salvation, then baptism.

The Graham crusade embraces the ecumenical concept of many faiths, denominations, baptisms, and ways of salvation pretending to be united in some mystical sense. The original gospel of Christ teaches there is only one right way in religion. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (Eph. 4:4-6). Christ taught his followers to be truly united in faith and practice by embracing the original message of truth (John 8:32; 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10).

The Graham crusade accepts human names of identity (Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc.). The original gospel of Christ teaches men to wear the name of Christ only, without adding human names. “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). “The churches of Christ salute you” (Rom. 16:16). We are to wear the name of the one crucified for us without human names (1 Cor. 1:12-13).

The Graham crusade uses and recognizes religious hierarchies with their special robes, chief seats, and

elevated titles (Rev., Dr., Father, etc.). Jesus taught his followers are all equals without the titles and trappings of the hierarchy. “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matt. 23:1-12).

The Graham crusade teaches the kingdom of God is an earthly kingdom of 1,000 years duration, soon to appear. The kingdom of God was prophesied to appear during the time of the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44). In that very time, Jesus proclaimed, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). He explained the way of salvation from sin as a spiritual reign, promising, “I will build my church . . . the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:18-19). The efforts of those who would “make him a king” in an earthly sense were rebuffed, and Pilate was told, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 6:15; 18:36). The church of Christ as established in Acts 2 is the kingdom of God on the earth today.

The 1,000 years mentioned in Revelation 20:1-4 has no reference to an earthly kingdom, but is figurative language for the perfect victory of Christ and “the souls of them” who were martyred by Rome for their faith. Many predictions of a 1,000 year kingdom on earth and of the end of time have been made by Graham crusades for many years. We were told communist Russia would play a major role in these end-time events.

No more is said about Russia now, but the emphasis on supposed end-time events continues. All of these efforts to identify end-time signs have failed because Jesus said there will be no such signs: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. 24:36).

The Graham crusade’s carnival atmosphere cheapens and corrupts the gospel. The original gospel message was preached on the merits of its claims to truth without entertainment, applause, selling novelties, asking hearers for donations, special effects, emotional testimonials, and celebrity appearances. The Apostles of Christ preached simple, direct “words of truth and soberness” (Acts 26:25). When Paul “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled” (Acts 24:25). “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel needs no gimmicks.

We are warned not to accept any change in the original gospel (Gal. 1:8-9). Let us search the Scriptures with a determination to find and obey the gospel of Christ in its original purity, simplicity, and power.

(Postscript: This article, slightly adapted, appeared as a paid advertisement in *The* [Louisville, KY] *Courier-Jour-*

nal, June 23, 2001 on page A-2 and in *The Pioneer News* [Shepherdsville, KY], June 20 and 25, 2001 on page 2. A Billy Graham Crusade was held in Louisville June 21-24, 2001 with a total attendance of over 191,000. Andy Alexander and I work together as evangelists with the Hebron Lane Church of Christ in Shepherdsville and Tom Brown, Laymon Byers, and John Smith serve as elders. Knowing the Crusade would have saturation media coverage, we discussed before the Crusade began what could be done to open a window for the truth to be heard. The elders decided to run this article. It was expensive but also effective.

The Courier-Journal is the largest newspaper in the state and is read statewide and beyond Kentucky. Not only was the article widely distributed by members of the Hebron Lane church, but also other congregations and individuals copied and distributed the article, resulting in many discussions and studies. We received numerous letters, phone calls, and e-mail messages, some commending us and some condemning us. Tracts and other Bible study materials were sent out in follow-up efforts.

A man on the “Prayer Team of the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade” wrote that we should follow Billy’s example of never “degrading anybody,” then proceeded to degrade us as “nitwits,” “idlers,” “evil, vile advocates of darkness,” “devilish,” and preaching a message which came “out of the garbage dump.” Whew, we were fortunate this man believed in never degrading anybody!

Various responses came from denominational people, members of the Christian Church, and institutional brethren. One brother wrote, “I appreciate the elders there for being willing to put the article in the paper.” Another letter said, “It is my prayer that your article will fall on some good and honest hearts and that they will give you, or other brethren, the opportunity to teach them the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Yes, many such opportunities occurred in our area and beyond.

The South End church of Christ in Louisville recently ran an article entitled “The Church of Christ” in the *Courier-Journal*. Aaron Erhardt, evangelist at South End, contrasted the church of the New Testament with modern denominations. Brother Erhardt and the South End brethren are having reactions similar to what we had. They are also conducting a very effective call-in radio program.

The world is full of sin and error. Let us use every avenue available to press the battle for truth. Though Jesus said only few will be saved, we must work while it is day to find the few before it is too late.)

3505 Horse Run Ct., Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165

A Daily Plea For Authority

Aaron Erhardt

Bible Talk is a radio program that airs five days a week in Louisville, Kentucky. This program gives the listening audience an opportunity to participate by asking their Bible questions.

Bible Talk continually stresses the need for Bible authority. We plead daily for our listeners to recognize the extreme need for book, chapter, and verse. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

It seems that every issue discussed on the program can be attributed to authority. Whereas we believe strongly in authority, our listeners see no need for it!

Mechanical Instruments

The New Testament does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments in worship to God. We are told only to sing and make melody in our heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). However, when we tell our audience that God wants us to sing, not play instruments, they often become upset and knowingly put their preferences above the word of God. Why? They see no need for authority!

Women Preachers

The New Testament does not authorize women to usurp authority over the man (1 Tim. 2:12-14). We are told that women are to keep silent during the public worship service (1 Cor. 14:34). However, when we tell our audience that God wants men to preach, not women, they often become

upset and knowingly put their preferences above the word of God. Why? They see no need for authority!

Man-made Denominations

The New Testament does not authorize denominational churches. We are told that there is only one body (Eph. 4:4). Jesus and his apostles appealed for all believers to be united, not divided (John 17:20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10-12). However, when we tell our audience that God wants us to be in the one true church, not man-made denominations, they often become upset and knowingly put their preferences above the word of God. Why? They see no need for authority!

Sprinkling For Baptism

The New Testament does not authorize sprinkling for baptism. We are told that baptism is to be a total immersion, or burial, in water (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). However, when we tell our audience that God wants individuals to be immersed in water, not sprinkled with water, they often become upset and knowingly put their preferences above the word of God. Why? They see no need for authority!

Clergy/Laity Distinction

The New Testament does not authorize having a clergy/laity distinction. In fact, the clergy/laity distinction is clearly forbidden in Scripture (Matt. 23:1-12). We are told that all members are one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). However, when we tell our audience that God does not want one person exalting himself above another, they often become upset and knowingly put their preferences above the word of God. Why? They see no need for authority!

As long as people continue shunning the need for authority, many will continue in error, outside the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). *Bible Talk* will continue our daily plea for our listeners to recognize the extreme need for book, chapter, and verse. There is truly no substitute for Bible authority!

From Bible Talk Newsletter, South End Church of Christ, Louisville, Kentucky

What Is The Christian Life?

Edited by Lewis Willis

A study of the 12 lessons in this workbook will give a good understanding of what is involved in

being a Christian. #80252

\$4.99

The Father's House

Olen Holderby

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

I do not believe, as many appear to believe, that this prepared place is a reference to heaven; rather, I believe it is a reference to the church. I have never been able to figure out just what there was about heaven that needed to be prepared for me or anyone else. So, I look for a place which Jesus was going to prepare when he went away. We already know that Jesus did exactly that in establishing the church ten days after he went away. We also know that in the church are "many mansions" (room for all).

One with whom I discussed these verses argued that Jesus was talking about "a way." However, Jesus did not address the subject of "way" in these three verses though he did discuss the "way" in verses 4-6. In verse 4 Jesus said to his apostles, "The way ye know"; they already knew the way. In verse 5 Thomas says, "We know not whether thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Can we see that Thomas was thinking about where the Lord was going also and is puzzled about the way to heaven? But, in verse 6, Jesus answers with a plain "I am the way." Thus, I view this prepared place as the church, the Father's house.

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). In this verse, the "house of God" (the Father's house) is said to be the church. There can be no doubt here, the church is the Father's house! In Ephesians 2:19, Paul told the Ephesians, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Acts 2 furnishes us a very plain picture of how men become a part of this church, the household of God, the Father's house, and how they can occupy the "mansion" prepared by Jesus.

Leaving and Returning to the Father's House

Luke 15:11-32. We do not take the space to quote all these verses; the reader is urged to read them carefully before considering this part of our article.

The context of these verses show that Jesus had a crowd of publicans and sinners before him, and the scribes and Pharisees criticize the Lord. Jesus speaks three parables to them, all three about things lost: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The verses of our text are familiar and are often used to study the prodigal son and/or his brother. However, I wish to give some emphasis to the father and his house.

If you leave the Father's house, he will let you go although he will be deeply hurt (see v. 24). The Father will not go with you; he will not follow you. If you leave the Father's house, you will not find the happiness which you seek. The young man tried (vv. 13-14), but to no avail. O yes, you will enjoy yourself for a season, just as this young man did. Then what? Neither will you find the freedom you desire if you leave the Father's house. Where is the prodigal son now: a hungry servant and feeding swine (v. 15). If you leave the Father's house, you very likely will lose all self-respect. How much self-respect did the prodigal have when he grew so hungry he would have filled his belly with swine's food? (v. 16). If you leave the Father's house you will be alone; sin will have come between you and the Father (Isa. 59:2).

Now, let us briefly consider a return to the Father's house. The record says, "When he came to himself." He had to wake up and realize his lost condition. He blamed no one else! Now about what does he think? Is it not his father's house? He makes up his mind, he will return, and he will confess his wrong doing to his father and ask to be accepted only as a servant. He did this, but the father did far more than was asked. To the son who was still at home the father said, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Please read verses 7 and 10 and take note of the rejoicing in heaven over one who returns to the Father's house. The Father is always happy over one of his children who repents and returns to his house. Dear reader, do you know anyone who has left the Father's house? Could you help him return? Maybe you know someone who is about to leave

Fallible Or Infallible?

Johnie Edwards



With the Catholic Church being on the front page and on the minds of many, it is a good time to look at whether the Pope of the Catholic Church is fallible or infallible.

The Claim

The Pope claims to be infallible when he speaks in an official capacity. The word infallible means that he cannot err when he speaks from this standpoint. The Pope is as human as the rest of us. The priests of the Catholic Church are also men. No doubt, Clarine Young, nun from Carmel, Indiana was right when she said on April 22, 2002, *Today's Show*, that "the Catholic Church is a human institution." Bernie Maas said, on that same program, that, "the Catholic priest are men."

Only One Infallible Person

There has been only one perfect man who was infallible and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Scriptures declare that Christ "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). Paul wrote of the infallibility of Christ, when he said, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Did you ever read of anyone else being without sin. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Do you know anyone who is "the truth" except the Lord?

Peter Was Not Infallible

the Father's house. Observing what his loss will be, could you urge him to change his course? Remember, when he goes out, he goes out alone? Sometimes it is a long way back and many never make it!

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You know the Catholic Church claims Peter as the first pope. The Bible never teaches such, but if he was, he was fallible. Paul charged Peter with infallibility in Galatians 2:11-14. Read it and you will see that Peter "was to be blamed" and that he "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Strange doings for a pope, don't you think? He also denied the Lord three times (Matt. 26:69-75). Does this sound like Peter could sin and was just a man?

Why The Changes?

The Roman Catholic Church does not teach today what it has taught in the past. Take baptism for a sample. The Catholic Church, at one time, taught that baptism is by immersion, but now they say it is different. So, they practice sprinkling for baptism. This did not become official until 1311. If immersion was declared to be infallibly so, who had the right to change it? There are other examples. There was a time when Catholics could not eat meat on Friday. They changed this official act. Did they make a mistake in declaring such in the first place? Paul addressed this when he wrote of those who would "depart from the faith . . . commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received, with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-4).

The Infallible Word

The Word of God is the only infallible word. The Psalmist declared, "The word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Ps. 19:7). Paul told Timothy, "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Once the pen of inspiration was laid down, it has never been picked up, as Jude wrote "that ye should earnestly content for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). This means that all of God's truth has, once for all time, been revealed and there will be no later day revelations!

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“Give Up” continued from front page

Moses’ day (10:1-11). These things are written to the intent that we do not fall after the same example of unbelief and lust for evil things.

7. We do not receive any encouragement but ridicule. We must remember that we have a responsibility to compliment others when they do well (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24). Somebody needs to hear the words, “You can make it if you try!” Concerning the assembly, Christians were admonished, “encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:25).

Our duty to encourage others is not a one-time deal. “But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13). For those who have problems we should regularly inquire about how they are doing. We should offer our support, advice, and assistance where possible and permissible.

8. We do not focus on the rewards of our efforts (1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 6:10-12). The reward of a faithful life is heaven. “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary” (Gal. 6:9).

9. We have not noticed that others with fewer advantages have succeeded. Jesus stated that Nineveh had repented at the preaching of Jonah, but a greater than Jonah, himself, was there. The Hebrew writer listed many individuals who had suffered many things (chapter 11). Then he said, “You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin” (12:4). Many have made far more sacrifices with fewer advantages. Shall we with more opportunities and less challenges do less than they have done?

10. Children of God forget the words of Jesus, “But with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). We ought to agree with Paul, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). The song says, “Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble any where? We should never be discouraged; Take it to the Lord in pray’r.” Peter admonished Christians to cast all their care upon the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7). “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

11. We spend too much time trying to analyze a problem rather than doing something about it. Martin Luther King, Jr., even though he did not teach the plan of salvation as found in the Bible, made a good point saying, “One can get bogged down in the pluralities of analysis.” We need to consider our choices, but then we need to put one foot forward to accomplish our choice. We must not have the attitude of Agrippa who said, “You almost persuade me

to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28, NKJV). Nor should we be as Felix waiting for a more convenient time. We need to understand the word “now.” “Now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2)! But we can only be saved if we continue in well doing (Rom. 2:7).

12. We forget that God has commanded us to do certain things (Matt. 7:21). Whatever God commands that we do, we have no choice but to do it. And every time we consider giving up on these things, we must remember Jesus’ words, “Not my will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

13. We try too early in our labors to assess how well we are doing. We must have patience. If we focus too much on the early stages of our efforts, we may become discouraged to the point of quitting. I am reminded of the story that Jesus told about the unfruitful plant. The owner commanded that it be destroyed. But one of his workers requested that he be allowed time to work on the plant to see how it would do (Luke 13:6-9). Even so, many other things require time, such as a new worker on a job, a new preacher, and other examples the reader can supply.

14. We open our ear repetitively to those who advise us to quit (Mrs. Job; Job 2:9). We may be sure that there are many things (unscriptural) that we should never start and perhaps ought to quit. But if we judge a goal as worthy of our pursuit, then we should spend more time working to fulfill that goal rather than hearing the message, “It won’t work,” or “You should give up.” When the Lord told his disciples of the redemptive work of his death and resurrection, Peter rebuked him saying, “This shall never happen to You.” But Jesus had to tell him, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s” (Matt. 6:21-23).

15. We do not realize that “the just shall live by faith” and we should “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7; 1 John 5:4). Faith should not be blind but intelligent. This faith that comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God has been thoroughly substantiated and validated by many “infallible proofs.” Our faith must have the foundation of the word of God, but we should not have to prove everything before we take a single step. While waiting for absolute proof, we may become discouraged and quit. Abraham and others did not quit, though they died without receiving or seeing all the promises fulfilled (Heb. 11:10-16).

16. We do not realize that we are most tempted to quit good things when we are at our weakest point. We should give ourselves time to become strong. Let that weak moment pass. If you are sick, allow yourself time to get well. If you are wearied with your load, take a break and be refreshed. Then decide if you should quit (2 Cor. 1:8-11).

17. We allow our adversary the devil to make us quit. He throws obstacles in our way (1 Pet. 5:8, 9). But we must allow God to reside in our hearts. Then we can say, “Greater is He that is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). When we endeavor to do what is good, we should expect Satan to oppose us. We should remember to resist him steadfast in faith. If we resist him, he will flee from us. We should also remember that he departs for a season and will return again.

In a similar way, we may also have other adversaries. And if we quit because of them, then we must not make them our excuse because we have the power within ourselves to overcome.

18. We blame others and make excuses for not doing what we should. As long as we are inclined to blame others and make excuses, we will not be motivated to continue to do what we should.

19. We forget that we are often responsible for the difficulties that tempt us to quit. If our children give us trouble because we have set a poor example, been inattentive to their needs, or have done them wrong otherwise, we should be more patient rather than giving up on them.

Husbands (who do not love their wives as Christ loved the church) or wives (who do not submit themselves unto their own husbands as unto the Lord) will have difficult marriages and be tempted to quit. “Friends” who are backbiters, whisperers, or busy bodies in other men’s matters, will find difficulty in maintaining friendships. Elders and preachers who do not imitate the character of Jesus may find their way to be difficult (Phil. 2:3-11). All of us need to remember the words of Solomon, “The way of the unfaithful is hard” (Prov. 13:15). 1 Peter 2:20 teaches that it is the least we can do to be patient and endure harsh treatment when we sin.

20. We are not patient. We forget that God is patient with us. So must we be with others.

21. We do not get off to a good start. When we have tasted success, we are motivated to taste it again. When we get off to a good start, we develop good memories that motivate us to achieve the same success that we had at the beginning. If we do not have a good start, we may doubt whether we will ever achieve success. Those who get off to a good start do so because they do the right things at the beginning. Thus before we begin anything, whether a new job or career, friendship, having children, marriage, to be a preacher, or to be a child of God, a Christian, we must count the cost at the beginning. To have a good start with the Lord, we must put the Lord far above father and bear our cross, otherwise, we cannot be disciples of Jesus.

22. We do not realize that others are watching us and are influenced by our examples. We must all realize that it is impossible to be neutral with reference to our influence. Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters” (Luke 11:23). Thus, those whom we influence include our children, friends, relatives, coworkers, spouses, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and anyone else! When we quit what is good, then these others are influenced to do the same.

23. We do not pray for others and believe that our prayers make a difference. This can be seen in James 5:16-20 with the example of Elijah. In the process of saving a sinner’s soul from death, we must remember that “the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (v. 16). Exodus 32:11-14 records Moses’ prayer for the Israelites who sinned. The result of Moses’ prayer was “the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people” (v. 14).

24. We are unwilling to do that “one” thing that seems so insurmountable, so hard to do. There was a certain ruler who was willing to obey the commandments. But Jesus told him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property” (Matt. 19:16-24). When we fail to do that one thing that is difficult in our lives, we often give up on the rest of what God has asked us to do.

25. We are unwilling to read the Bible in its entirety as we should. Thus we become weak and are not strong to resist sin and continue in well doing (Ps. 119:9-11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:1-2).

26. We have “too many irons in the fire.” Often times we cannot do certain things while doing others. If we attempt to do so, we will be forced to give up one or both of them. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matt. 6:24). Students cannot be involved in every organization and make straight As. This even applies to our desires. “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

Sometimes, the things that we must give up in order to do what we ought to do are not bad things. They simply do not have as high a priority. Things having a higher priority must be done first or they might not ever get done. I heard of a man who once contributed many volumes of material for others to study the Bible. But he neglected his role as a spiritual leader and guide to his family, and he lost all his children.

27. We do not recognize that the best conditions for success and the opportunities to succeed will not last forever. There are many things in life that we must act upon *now*. Otherwise, we may as well give up. The children of Israel were told to go up into the land of Canaan. At first they refused. Later when they recognized their error, they decided to go up, but it was too late. Many of us keep waiting and putting off things that we know we should do. Then there comes a time when it is too late!

28. We attempt things that we do not have the ability to do. In recognizing that there are some things which we do not have the ability to do, we must realize that doing God's will is not one of them. God has provided us with the means to do whatever he asks us to do.

29. We do not realize when we are actually giving up. A synonym for *not* giving up is persistence. Persistence means doing something. If we are not doing anything toward a goal, we have quit. Sometimes people say that they have not given up. But what they mean is that they have not stopped wishing that something would occur. But the issue still remains, what are you doing to make it happen?

30. Ultimately, the reason people give up is that they have given up (or lost) faith in God and the Bible as his word. When we believe the Scriptures, its message to continue should be enough. If it is not enough, if it will not settle our minds, then we have lost faith. We need to regain it again by becoming an honest seeker of truth, thus repenting and exercising our faith in obedience.

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The Eternal Kingdom

by F.W. Mattox

A History of the Church

Good survey written by a former president of Lubbock Christian College in 1955.

Hardback — #10085 — **\$13.00**

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“Chronology” continued from page 2

Thomas Whitelaw addressed the gap theory saying, “Honest exegesis requires that ver. 1 shall be viewed as descriptive of the first of the series of Divine acts detailed in the chapter, and that ver. 2, while admitting of an interval, shall be held as coming in immediate succession — an interpretation, it may be said, which is fatal to the theory which discovers the geologic ages between the creative beginning and primeval chaos. . . . There can scarcely be a doubt, then, that the expression (that the earth was waste and void as described in v. 2, mw) portrays the condition in which the new-created earth was, not innumerable ages, but very shortly, after it was summoned into existence” (*The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis 4-5*).

Lange wrote, “Among all the interpretations of Gen. i., the most difficult as well as the most unsatisfactory is that which regards the first verse as referring to a period indefinitely remote, and all that follows as comprised in six solar days. It is barely hinted at by some of the patristic writers, but has become a favorite with certain modern commentators, as furnishing them with a method of keeping the ordinary days, and yet avoiding the geological difficulty, or seeming to avoid it, by throwing all its signs of the earth's antiquity into this chasm that intervenes between the first and second verses” (*Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis I:167*). He continues to state the motivation prompting this interpretation, “It is evidently brought in as a possible escape from the difficulties of geology, and would never have been seriously maintained had it not been for them” (167). Lange shows how the interpretation violates the principles of grammatical exegesis. He asserts that it changes the usual meaning of the *waw* conjunction and the structure of the verbs in vv. 1-2 which should be interpreted as either contemporaneous or in direct continuation (168). Giving the verb hCeyCEh (the second “was,” mw) a pluperfect sense (“the earth had become waste and void) distorts the grammar. He compares the construction in Genesis 1:1-2 to Job 1:1-2 which says, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.” He then asks, “Who would think of separating the second hCeyCEh (the second “was,” mw) here from the first, or sundering the evident continuity?” (168). One can just as reasonably insert a gap of eons between vv. 1 and 2 of Job as he can in Genesis. **Victor P. Hamilton** (*New International Commentary on the Old Testament: Genesis I:115-116*) and **Kenneth A. Mathews** (*The New American Commentary: Genesis I:139*) reject the gap theory on exegetical grounds.

More recently some have proposed that the gap should be placed between verses 2 and 3 of Genesis 1 rather than between verses 1 and 2. Verses 1-3 reads as follows:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And

the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

As was stated previously about the proposed gap between verses 1 and 2, the natural reading of the text does not give the impression that there is a long period of time between verses 2 and 3. However, the suggestion is made that during the period between verses 2 and 3, the rocks could cool and the mountains could form through natural means. Consider the following in reply to this suggestion: (a) What evidence is there that the rocks needed to cool? The fact of the matter is the Scripture does not speak about the need for rocks to cool as a result of creation. The very idea that the earth was very hot and needed a long period to cool down stems, not from the statement of Scripture, but from contemporary pronouncements of scientists who posit the “big bang” theory to explain the beginning of the universe. The God who created the world could create the world cool just as easily as he could create it hot and allow billions of years for the natural means to cool down. (b) The Bible evidence says that the world was covered with water when it was created. The statement “darkness was upon the face of the *deep*” states as much. The *deep* is used to describe the *primaeval* ocean which completely covered the world at creation (BDB 1063). (c) The suggestion has been made that mountains were forming during this time. What Bible evidence is found in verses 1-3 to suggest that this is true. The biblical evidence for the formation of mountains is found in third day of creation when God separated the dry land from the water that covered the earth (Gen. 1:9-10). Again, notice that there is not one scintilla of biblical evidence of a gap between verses 1 and 2 or between verses 2 and 3. One who asserts that there is a gap has the obligation to prove what he asserts.

Though the “gap theory” has been proposed by some brethren (e.g. Robert Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption* 25), it has not been seriously pushed by brethren. Furthermore, the gap theory (aside from its problems for exegesis) is rather harmless. If there was a long period of time between verses 1 and 2, this time provides no help to the evolutionary theory. Neither plants nor animals had yet been created, so having a long period of time between verses 1 and 2 does not explain the fossil record. Since life on earth had not yet been created, billions of years between verses 1 and 2 would not give time for evolution to occur. Furthermore, the condition of the earth as described in verses 1-2 is such that a gap is not useful for geological changes in the earth’s surface because the earth is completely covered by water. While the theory is a mistaken interpretation of Genesis 1, it is rather innocuous in its ramifications so far as I can see.

The Multiple Gap Theory

Another approach to the Genesis narrative that posits

large sections of time in the Genesis account is the view that the days of creation are twenty-four hour days but they are separated by long periods of time. This view asserts that God acts on a given twenty-four day to do what is said to occur on that day. This is followed by long ages to allow the gradual and slow development of nature to occur. For the natural earth, this means that the erosion of water forms the valleys, the thrusting of the earth creates the mountains, etc. For the living creatures this means that long periods of time allows the living animals to evolve in micro evolution to develop the various species. This is a hybrid day-gap theory for which there is not one particle of exegetical evidence in the text of Scripture.

This view believes that the six days of creation are twenty-four hour days, but separated by long spans of time. According to this interpretation, God acts in creating something and then allows long periods of time for natural evolution to occur. When evolution reaches an impasse, then God acts again in creating that which is next needed. This is sometimes called *progressive creation* but it is simply *theistic evolution* under a different name. This is a more serious departure from the Genesis text.

Creative Days

A third interpretation of Genesis 1, which has for its purpose accommodating itself to the old earth theory, posits that the days of creation are creative days. The various explanations of the creative days are as follows:

The framework hypothesis. The framework hypothesis states that the days of Genesis 1 are a rhetorical device for the recording the spiritual theme of creation. This view states that the presentation in Genesis 1 is logical, not chronological. This interpretation speaks of the creation account as allegorical, parabolical, or liturgical. The view asserts that Genesis 1 speaks of the fact of creation but not its method.

Day-age theory. This interpretation denies that the days of creation are twenty-four hour days, asserting instead that the days of creation are long eons of time. The primary argument cited from the text of Scripture to support this view is that the Genesis 1 mentions days one through three before the creation of the sun, moon, and stars. The argument affirms that the days cannot be the normal twenty-four hour day, the time necessary for the earth to rotate on its axis, receiving its light from the sun and moon since the sun and moon were not yet created. This view is a rather popular view among Evangelicals who believe in an old earth. To charge that everyone who adopts the day-age theory is an evolutionist would be unfair. No such charge is being made in this series of articles. However, one must insist that there is nothing in the text of Scripture that implies the day-age theory and that acceptance of the old earth chronology is what motivates the interpretation that the days of Genesis

1 are long ages.

Much has been written about the “days” of creation inasmuch as some scholars try to fit Genesis into the modern geological tables of the evolutionary mold. Scholars on both sides of the issue of whether the Genesis account of creation is history or myth are agreed that the effort to make the days of Genesis 1 eons of time is misguided.

On the liberal side, scholars such as Skinner (*International Critical Commentary: Genesis*), who holds that the creation narrative is legend or myth, said, “It is recognised by all recent harmonists that the definition of ‘day’ as ‘geological period’ is essential to their theory: *it is exegetically indefensible*” (5). He continued, “It is therefore shown conclusively, not only that the modern attempts at reconciliation fail, but (what is more important) that the point at issue is not one of science, but simply of *exegesis*. The facts of science are not in dispute; the only question is whether the language of Genesis will bear the construction which the harmonising scientists find it necessary to put upon it” (5). Similarly, Simpson in *The Interpreter’s Bible* said, “There can be no question but that by **Day** the author meant just what we mean — the time required for one revolution of the earth on its axis. Had he meant an aeon he would certainly, in view of his fondness for great numbers, have stated the number of millenniums each period embraced. While this might have made his account of creation less irreconcilable with modern science, it would have involved a lessening of God’s greatness, one sign of which was his power to do so much in one day” (I:471). Davidson (*The Cambridge Bible: Genesis*) wrote, “Attempts to make it (y^mm) still more flexible, to mean different aeons or stages in the known evolution of the world, and thus reconcile Genesis I with modern scientific theory, are misguided” (18).

On the conservative side, scholars say the same thing. Keil who defends the historicity of Genesis 1 says, “But if the days of creation are regulated by the recurring interchange of light and darkness, they must be regarded not as periods of time of incalculable duration, of years or thousands of years, but as simply earthly days” (I:51). Similarly Leupold (*Barnes Notes*) commented, “Nothing but the desire to secure harmony with the contentions of certain physical sciences ever could have induced men to tamper with this plainest of exegetical results” (69).

What the scholars observe coincides with the evidence in the lexicons. In their classic work, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, Brown, Driver, and Briggs gives these definitions for y^mm: (a) day as opposed to night; (b) day as a division of time (as is used in the phrase “a day’s journey”), which is defined by “evening and morning”; (c) day of the Lord, “chiefly as time of his coming in judgment”; (d) the plural form occurs with various meanings (days of his life, in the days of . . . , etc.); (e) the plural days as an indefinite period (some days, a few days), of long time (many days), or days

of old; (f) time (time of harvest); (g) today; etc. (398-401). There is no cited use of the singular form of day being used with the meaning of long eons of time.

Moses had an extensive vocabulary at his command. Here are some of the words that Moses used to describe time:

Day = y^mm

Week = Áœb aÔ

Month = ú¿deÁ

Year = ÁœnÇh

Long periods of time = d¿r — “period, age, generation” (cf. Ps. 90:1)

Eternity or long periods of time = Ô™|ÇEm — “long duration, antiquity, futurity” (cf. Gen. 9:12)

Moses also had the ability to use large figures. He could relate that Adam lived to be 930 years old and that Methuselah lived be 969 (Gen. 5:9, 27). He could relate that the number of fighting men in Israel’s army when they departed Egypt was 603,550 (Num. 2:32). Had Moses wished to express the idea that there were long eons of time represented in the period of creation, he had the vocabulary to express that idea. But to do so, he could not use y^mm. He would have to use other words to express that idea. But, he chose not to use those words, choosing instead to use the word y^mm. To be sure that there is no doubt as to the meaning of y^mm, Moses places in apposition to it the phrase “evening and morning” (Gen. 1). Simply stated, there is no lexicographical data to support the concept that the six days refer to long periods of time; there is no textual evidence to suggest that long periods of time transpired between the days of creation.

The position that the days of creation means long periods of time raises other serious questions to be answered. If “days” means long eons of time, what does “years” mean? If “day” means long eons of time, what does the appositional phrase, “it was evening and morning, day . . . ,” mean? Does “evening” mean a half eon of total darkness? Does “morning” mean a half eon of total light? Or, is the long eon of time in day three (prior to the creation of the sun, moon, and stars) a long eon of twenty-four hour days consisting of evening and morning? If so, how does one learn that? In what sense does an eon have an evening and a morning?

The idea that the days of creation represent long periods of time creates problems rather than solving them. In the creation account, plant life is created on day three and the sun, moon, and stars on day four. This poses no problem to those who understand Genesis 1 to be referring to six twenty-four hour days. However, for those who believe that the days of Genesis 1 are long eons of time, this is an enormous problem. Those who make science the authority

to guide one's interpretation of the Bible need to use their science to explain for us how plant life survived for long eons of time without sunlight? And, how did those plants which depend upon animals to pollinate and reproduce survive for the millions of years between days three and six as is demanded by this theory? The symbiotic relationships so critical for the survival of both plant and animal life demand that the days of Genesis 1 be twenty-four hour days. Those who follow the long day interpretation of the days of Genesis 1 are forced to believe in unrevealed miracles to avoid believing the plain statement that creation occurred in six days.

As one reads those who are presenting the position that the days of creation are long eons of time or twenty-four hour days separated by long eons of time, he is provoked to ask, "Why are these long periods of time necessary?" "What is going on during these long periods of time that is so critical to the beliefs of those who hold this position?" The only answer that makes any sense is this: The long periods of time are necessary to allow time for evolution of animal life, to allow the geological effects that are observed to occur (rivers eroding valleys, the fossil record, etc.), and to explain the great distances for light to travel posited by astronomy. In each of these, the motivating force is to bring the interpretation of Scripture in line with early twenty-first century pronouncements of science.

The text of Genesis 1 gives not an iota of evidence that the days of Genesis 1 refer to long eons of time or that long eons of time separated the six days of creation. There is nothing in Genesis 1 to support the old earth theory.

Furthermore, this interpretation of Genesis one contradicts other plain and unambiguous statements of Scripture about creation. Scripture emphasizes that the omnipotent power of God is demonstrated by his creation. The psalmists wrote,

For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (33:9).

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created (148:5).

The instantaneous nature of creation was viewed as proof of God's omnipotent power. Twice the Scriptures state that God created the world in six days:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exod. 20:11).

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed (Exod. 31:17).

In both of these texts, the six days of creation followed

by the day of God resting is the explanation for the week, including the day of Sabbath rest. If the creation account does not explain the division of time into weeks, there is no explanation for its beginning. The year can be explained by the rotation around the sun, the month can be explained by the new moon, and the day can be explained by the earth's rotation on its axis. But, why has the division of time into a week occurred? The only explanation posited is the days of creation!

The New Testament statements about the chronology of man are contradicted by the view that God created the material universe billions of years before he created man. In the model presented by those who believe in an old earth, the earth was created billions of years before man was created. Man was created relatively recently, a few million years ago. In contrast, Jesus said,

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the *beginning* made them male and female . . . (Matt. 19:4).

In the parallel account in Mark, Jesus said,

But *from the beginning of the creation* God made them male and female (Mark 10:6).

In what sense can these statements that God created man at the beginning be true if man's creation occurred billions of years after the beginning of creation and much nearer to today than at the beginning of creation?

The theory that Adam was created billions of years after the earth was created or that the six days of creation represent long eons of time contradicts the plain statements of Scripture. As such, this theory undermines confidence in the creation account and, by implication, the inspiration of Scripture.

Conclusion

How old is the earth? Again, the Bible does not present a specific date, but it does provide a framework that demands belief in a young earth. The contemporary theory that the earth is 4.5 billion years old is not an innocuous doctrine. It is an essential part of a system of unbelief known as naturalism or humanism. Some misguided Bible students whose aim is to harmonize the biblical account of creation with the pronouncements by scientists that the earth is billions of years old unintentionally are undermining the credibility of the Scripture by capitulating to the old earth theory. Once the authority of science is used to govern the exegesis of Scripture, the entire basis for accepting the doctrines of Scripture is undermined. At issue is no less than the inspiration of Scripture. We are reminded, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If God’s word cannot be trusted in its account of creation, how can it be trusted in its account of the atonement? If God’s account of creation must be reinterpreted to fit the latest pronouncements of geologists, astronomers, and biologists, how can one escape reinterpreting the account of the virgin birth to fit the pronouncements of medical science? The non-literal interpretation of Genesis 1 is not a discussion about how many angels can stand on the head of a pin; it is a serious threat to the inspiration of Scripture.

The “Big Bang” is not the Bible’s friend. Those who teach that the “Big Bang” theory harmonizes with Genesis 1 are myopic. There is only one aspect of the “Big Bang” theory that has any resemblance to the creation narrative

— namely that the earth had a beginning. Its time for the beginning, its explanation for the beginning, and its explanation from what happened subsequent to the beginning are all grounded in naturalism and naturalistic evolution. Bible believers who tell brethren that the “Big Bang” theory is the Bible’s friend are misguided at best and disastrous at worst. Let us be careful not to make the mistake of trying to interpret the Bible to conform to the pronouncements and theories of twenty-first century science. If the Bible is married to twenty-first century science, she will be a widow in the twenty-second century.

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Paul’s Personal Appearance

Larry Ray Hafley

It has been said that Paul was a man of short stature, bow-legged, and bald headed, with eyebrows that met together. Whether that be true or not, his enemies said, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and his speech contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10). Further, they said he was “unskilled in speech” (2 Cor. 11:6). Who can read the synopses of his speeches in Acts 13, 17, and 26, and believe that it was so? True, he did not speak “with the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” but who can study his orations and believe that his speech was “unskilled” and “contemptible”? Not me.

In secular history, an unkempt, raw-boned politician, who pronounced there as, “thar,” and who addressed the chairman of congressional committees as “Mr. Cheer-man,” was once described thusly:

“The long, ungainly figure upon which hung clothes that, while new for this trip, were evidently the work of an unskilled tailor; the large feet and clumsy hands, of which at the outset, at least, the orator seemed to be unduly conscious; the long, gaunt head, capped by a shock of hair that seemed not to have been thoroughly brushed out, made a picture which did not fit in with New York’s conception of a finished statesman” (See Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking* 34). His Secretary of War called him “the original gorilla.” Others dismissed him

as a “cunning clown” because of his penchant for clever, humorous stories. The “awkward and uncultivated” man was Abraham Lincoln, and the description of him was given when he delivered “a powerful message about the moral evils of slavery” at the Cooper Institute, February 27, 1860.

The comments above are not designed to sanction careless appearance or sloppy preaching. Though they be considered as “unlearned and ignorant,” as were Peter and John, preachers should do their best in all things that “the ministry be not blamed.” However, if an individual should lack, for whatever reason, the social skills and special graces of talented men, let us not refuse to give him a fair hearing (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18).

After all, it was “the author and finisher of our faith” who had “no form nor comeliness,” and of whom it was said that there was “no beauty that we should desire him.” He was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs . . . and we esteemed him not” (Isa. 53:2, 3). He who was rejected as being worthy of being a stone in the building of God was, after all, the chief cornerstone (Acts 4:11). Let us remember that the next time we are tempted to “tune out” a preacher who may not have the poise and polish of others.