



Have You Counted the Cost?

Truman Smith

What a great question! Have you counted the cost? Evidently, many have not! God's people have been singing about it for many years. A song by that title was written by A.J. Hodge in 1923. If you sing all three verses of that song, you will ask that question some five times; and just think of the many years we've repeated it in our worship before our God in an effort to impress the importance of it upon our hearts.

There is no doubt but that this song was suggested by the great lesson taught by our Lord to the multitude while on his way to Jerusalem as recorded in Luke 14:25-35. He gives two scenarios to illustrate: First, there is the man who would like to build a tower; but must first sit down and figure the cost of it to make certain that he has enough money so people would not laugh at him for starting such a great project and not have sufficient to complete it. Then there is the king who would not bring his army of 10,000 soldiers against another who has 20,000 without first sitting down to receive counseling lest, upon realizing his terrible error, he has to send an ambassage a great way off and offer conditions of peace. Have you counted

the cost?

Indeed, the cost of discipleship is great. It cost our Lord a life of persecutions, trials, temptations (Heb. 2:18; 4:15), shame, humiliation, and contradiction of sinners (Isa. 53; Heb. 12:3). It cost Jesus his home in heaven for a life of a servant on earth (Phil. 2:7) and the death of the cross (John 18:28-30)! Though his was a one-time sacrificial death (Heb. 9:28), yet he died for our salvation (John 3:16). He died for our redemption from iniquity (Tit. 2:14). He gave his life for us because he loved us (Rom. 5:6-8).

He died for our justification (Rom. 5:9). And he died to establish his church (Eph. 5:25). Have you counted what it cost Jesus?

My dear brother or sister, we must count the cost. In reality, if a choice is to be made between houses, lands, family, and friends for serving Christ, we must pay the price (Matt. 19:29)! No would-be follower of Jesus should “put

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The Bible Doctrine of Hell (5)

Mike Willis

Immortality of the Soul

Bible doctrine is a seamless garment. When one looses one thread of that garment, it ultimately unravels the whole garment. Such is true with reference to the doctrine of conditional immortality, as espoused by brother Fudge. Fudge's denial of the eternal punishment of hell stems from his denial of the immortality of the soul. Let me define immortality of the soul. I do not mean to imply that man's soul has "essential immortality" in the same sense as God is immortal (1 Tim. 6:16). Only God exists from eternity to eternity (Ps. 90:1-2). Man's soul has a beginning and comes into existence through the creation of God. Whatever man's existence is, it is dependent upon God and does not autonomously exist. The soul of man is not immortal in the sense of the eastern religions which teach reincarnation, that man's soul exists before it enters a body (of whatever sort it may be) and continues through a cycle of incarnations. Rather, what the Bible describes as the nature of man's soul is that it does not cease to exist when the physical body dies, but continues to have conscious existence in the intermediate time between death and the resurrection. At the resurrection that soul is reunited with the resurrected body for eternal existence in heaven or hell.



Brother Fudge acknowledges that, fundamental to his concept, is the rejection of the idea that man has an immortal soul. He wrote,

The writers of the Bible never speak of the "immortality of the soul." Rather, Paul says that only God has inherent immortality (1 Tim. 6:16) and that in the resurrection he will give bodily immortality to those who are saved (Rom. 2:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:53-54). . . . The pagan theory of the immortality of the soul says that every human being has an invisible, immaterial part called the *psyche* or "soul," which can never die but will live forever. The traditionalists notion of everlasting torture in hell springs directly from that nonbiblical teaching (*Two Views of Hell* 185).

Thomas Gray wrote, "Annihilationism is thus virtually a corollary of conditional immortality, for if immortality were inherent, then it follows that annihilation will not be a satisfactory explanation of hell" ("Destroyed For Ever: An Examination of the Debates Concerning Annihilation and Condi- see "Hell" on p. 217

The Necessity of Controversy

Stan Cox

The following words were written by Alexander Campbell in 1830. They are as relevant today as they were then:

If there was no error in principle or practice, then controversy, which is only another name for opposition to error, real or supposed, would be unnecessary. If it were lawful, or if it were benevolent, to make a truce with error, then opposition to it would be both unjust and unkind. If error were innocent and harmless, then we might permit it to find its own quietus, or to immortalize itself. But so long as it is confessed that error is more or less injurious to the welfare of society, individually and collectively considered, then no man can be considered benevolent who does not set his face against it. In proportion as a person is intelligent and benevolent, he will be controversial, if error exists around him. Hence the Prince of Peace never sheathed the sword of the Spirit while he lived. He drew it on the banks of the Jordan and threw the scabbard away.

Recently I heard a sermon preached by brother Brian Price at the Woodmont congregation in Fort Worth, Texas. His lesson was entitled “The Politically Incorrect Gospel.” In his sermon, he noted that no matter what is preached, someone will potentially be offended.

To illustrate his point, he turned to Genesis 1:1. He read the first four words, “In the beginning, God . . .” and stopped. He noted that he had just offended the athiest, who denies that God exists. He read one more word, “created,” and noted that he had offended the evolutionist. He also noted, correctly, that a simple reading and affirmation of the Genesis account now offends some brethren as well.

Imagine living in an age where, if we defend the simple creation account against those who advocate the earth evolved over billions of years, we offend our brethren and are castigated for exposing the error.

Imagine living in an age where, if we defend Jesus’ plain teaching concerning divorce and remarriage (cf. Matt. 19:9) against those who teach error, we offend brethren and are castigated for our efforts.

Imagine living in a time where, if we admonish brethren who are dressing immorally, drinking socially, gambling, and generally lowering their moral standards to where they are nearly identical to the world, we offend

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brethren, and are castigated for upholding the sanctity of our calling.

Imagine living in a time where, if we mark the false teacher, convict the gainsayer, expose the errorist, we offend brethren and are castigated for “contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Imagine living in a time which is characteristic of the warnings given by the Apostle, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Imagine that, if we fulfill Paul’s command for action in that scenario, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (v. 2), we offend brethren and we are castigated for our efforts to rebuke and exhort.

Actually, it is not necessary to imagine such a time, as we are in such a state today. In response to such apathy and

tolerance of sin we must continue to preach and defend the truth against error and sin.

Christians who do so will offend others. Exposing sin is what got our Savior killed. “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:19-21).

Brethren will castigate us for characterizing any Christian as an evil doer or false teacher. However, time and again such were named in the New Testament. Those who are walking unworthily deserve censure. “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”

To do less would be to do too little. As in any age, we must preach the truth in love, regardless of whom we may offend.

Right Through the Middle

J. Wiley Adams

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13).

We all have a set of problems of one kind or another. But the Christian is given through Christ the strength to overcome. We cannot do it alone, however. But through Christ we will be given strength for the day, and indeed for the hour and the moment. What a reservoir of power is on tap for the faithful saint of God! *We can do all things through our Lord.*

Some problems may seem overwhelming and even insurmountable. But this verse is such a solace and comfort to God’s faithful people. The question may be raised as to how one begins to handle life’s problems? These may be in the form of sickness, financial reversals, or family problems. You name it. If there is an answer just how and where can it be found?

There used to be a song which I remember from childhood and it was in song form, an old southern spiritual. The sentiment of the song was that things may be so high we can’t get over them and so low we can’t get under them and even so wide that we cannot get around them. You have to go in at the door. Plow straight the middle! We must grit our teeth and lower our head and barge straight ahead and through the middle. Hand-wringing will get us nowhere. We must face up to the problems at hand and wade in.

No one said it would be easy but the solution is there. It will take faith and a lot of it but the strength is promised from the Lord. Some problems are long-range and will involve time. But remember that he who cares for the lowly sparrow is with us.

Take heart, my brother!

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Worshiping in Spirit and Truth

The most difficult task assigned the Christian, in the present state, is that of duly restraining the flesh. The wants of the spirit are few; the wants of the flesh countless . . . their gratification is mostly attended with highly intoxicating present pleasure . . . How hard, under these circumstances, is the task of fleshly denial. But this denial the gospel imposes as a most solemn duty . . . Whatever ministers superfluously to the flesh, as flesh, helps Satan; while, on the contrary, whatever ministers to the spirit, enlightening and strengthening it, helps Christ . . . a religion of the flesh tends rather to ruin man than to save him. Such a religion by ministering directly to the flesh greatly strengthens it. Of this increased strength. Satan avails himself to subjugate still further the spirit (Moses E. Lard, *Lard's Quarterly*, October 1867).

Many people have a difficult time believing that any religious experience or practice is anything but acceptable to God. If they “feel edified” from their experience, many insist that God must be pleased. As Lard also said, “An elaborate and showy religion is precisely the religion in which flesh rejoices. Give the flesh forms, give it ceremonies, give it pageant — these are its delight. But these are not the characteristics of Christianity. They are its corruption.” It is just such fleshly appeals that draw crowds to church performances (I do not call them worshiping assemblies). Thus we see announcements by churches of their musical programs that rival Radio City Music Hall in color and sound. A whole industry of so-called “gospel music” flourishes as pseudo-religious performers make money satisfying pseudo-worshippers all in the name of religious devotion. The ecstatic excesses attributed to the Holy Spirit in some churches are more akin to pagan expressions of darkness than the simple, humble, expressions of Christians guided by the word.

Jesus speaks of “true worshipers” (John 4:23) and

**Satan doesn't care what we
worship, so long as we
don't worship God.**

then describes their conduct, “they that worship in spirit and truth” (4:24). While “truth” in this verse is most often made to mean according to the Scriptures (certainly a valid need), it seems better to interpret it as “sincerity.” In Philippians 1:18 Paul speaks of preaching “in pretense and in truth.” Truth is opposed to pretense. If our actions are done to please us rather than God, we are not worshiping “in truth,” but in pretense. To worship “in spirit” involves the inner man. Thus when we worship we must sincerely involve our innermost being in praise and adoration to God. We can only do this when we forget our desires and comply with God’s desires. We cannot worship acceptably without God’s guidance in both what we do and how we do it. Thus we must “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart unto God” (Col. 3:16).

Just as Israel was often drawn away from worshipping God to the idols around them, Christians are not immune to the appeals of the flesh and the pagan practices of the denominational world. The biggest temptation seems to be in the area of singing. Too often songs are selected because they have a snappy beat involving much interplay of the four parts without any consideration of the words. Consequently, in putting the flesh before the spirit, brethren sing songs without knowing what they mean. Other songs are sung that teach falsehood. Brethren seem oblivious of what they are singing. Paul told the Colossians that singing was teaching. It is just as wicked to sing false teaching as it is to preach it. Why do brethren sing such songs? I am concerned that it is because of the fleshly appeal and how pleasing the song is to them rather than what the song says and means. It is a matter of thoughtlessness rather than a desire to teach what is wrong.

Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28, 29).

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Sermon on the Mount (6)

Jim McDonald

“Blessed Are the Peacemakers”

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God” (Matt. 5:9). Christians are peaceable people. They cannot follow their Master and be otherwise! Isaiah wrote of “Immanuel” who, among other things would be called “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 7:14; 9:6). Peter quotes from Psalms 34:12 when he wrote, “He that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile; and let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it” (1 Pet. 3:10). Paul commands, “So then, let us follow after things which make for peace and things whereby we may edify one another” (Rom. 14:19).

Jesus is called “Prince of peace.” Paradoxically enough he said, “Think not that I came to send peace on the earth, but a sword. For I came 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 those of his own household” (Matt. 10:34-36). He did not mean that he intended that men be in opposition to each other; he knew that given the free-moral agency of man, that some (most) would rebel against him which would put them in opposition to those who follow Christ. Because Jesus said he came not to “send peace on the earth but a sword,” we understand that God’s wish that we seek peace must not be “peace at any price.”

In Jeremiah’s day there were those who cried “peace, peace when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14). We cannot seek a compromising peace and we must remember it is not always possible for us to be at peace. The Holy Spirit knew this and so he caused Paul to write: “If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Paul wrote of some that “the way of peace they have not known” (Rom. 3:17). With such, the only path to peace is through compromise and sin. In such a case, the faithful Christian really has no choice. He stands for truth and righteousness and lets the “chips fall where they may.”

When Paul wrote, “Let us follow after things which make for peace” (Rom. 14:19), he had given direction

in that context that, in matters of indifference, men were to live peaceably with other men. Some could eat meats, others could not. The ones who could not eat were not to judge those who could; those who could eat were not to set at naught those who could not (Rom. 14:3). We are also told that to be “spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6). But Jesus did not simply say, “Blessed are they that follow after peace.” He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Consider at least two ways in which we are to be peacemakers. First, man must make peace with God. “He who makes himself a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God. The friendship of the world is enmity with God” (Jas. 4:4). We make peace with God by appropriating to ourselves the “peace offering” we find in Christ. Christ is “our peace.” Through his sacrifice he made possible our peace with God. Still, we must act. We must believe and obey his terms for peace. “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God our Father the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). This is an obedient faith, not faith only (Jas. 2:24).

Secondly, man must seek to bring about peace with others who are estranged from each other. He seeks to be a peacemaker when he preaches the gospel of peace, preaching “peace through Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36). There can be no greater “peacemaking” than to teach a lost soul how he may be at peace with God! Those who are “peacemakers” are called “sons of God.” Such are “sons of God” because they are acting as their Heavenly Father who actively sought to reconcile man to himself through the death of his Son.

May we ardently desire that we shall be sons of God because as he made the sacrifice which allows for peace, we tell others about this available peace and praise his goodness in providing it!

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“For I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me (Job 19:23-27).

As far as I have been able to determine, by genealogical records from various sources, my CAVENDER and TATUM (my paternal grandmother’s family name) ancestors came from England to the new country of the United States of America in the late 1700s, a few years after “The Revolution” and “Independence” in 1776. Coming by way of Virginia and North Carolina, a number of them settled in Cannon, Rutherford, Marshall, Davidson, Maury, Lewis, and Hickman counties, in what became Tennessee in 1796. My more immediate branch of the families settled in Lewis and Hickman counties, Howenwald and Centerville being the county seats.

My Cavender great-grandparents settled in the Fourth Civil District, the southeastern area of Hickman county, owning land in the hills and valleys, between two creeks which became known as Tatum and Jones Creeks. Between these two larger creeks, there is a smaller one which divided the rugged hill farm my great-grandfather owned. The name of this smaller creek is “Cavender’s Branch.” Its flow is generally from north to south, about two miles in distance, the headwaters of the creek being fed by springs and by excesses of rainwater further north. Cavender’s Branch terminates in Lick Creek, which flows into the Duck River, which flows into the Tennessee River, which flows into the Ohio River, which flows into the Mississippi River, which terminates into the Gulf of Mexico.

On Cavender’s Branch there is a beautiful waterfall,

about thirty feet in height from the creek bed below to the creek bed above, where the flowing water coming downward fairly swiftly roars over the solid rock precipice to the hollowed-out “swimming hole” below. Here the children played, swam, bathed, and created memories of childhood. Here my great-grandparents and their family, my grandparents and their children, and many neighbors up and down the creeks, lived, loved, worked, worshiped, read the Bible, and died. Here my father was born, July 19, 1884, the youngest of seven children, four boys and three girls. Here his mother, my grandmother, Rebecca Jane (Tatum) Cavender, died in September 1887, when Jesse T., my dad, was three years old. He never remembered his mother. My grandfather, Edward Arter Cavender, never remarried, kept his seven children together, “raised” them on that poor hill farm on the west side of Cavender’s Branch above the waterfall, in a four room, two-storied log wood framed house with no in-door plumbing, with water from a spring which flows into “the branch” below. He died at age 83, in May 1927, six months after I was born. His body was buried in Mount Pleasant Methodist Church Cemetery, about two miles to the south of where he lived his entire life, near Primm Springs, Tennessee, above Lick Creek, side by side with his beloved wife. On her worn, almost illegible, marble tombstone the words are engraved: “A loving wife, A mother dear, Lies buried here.” A large brown stone was put at the head of his grave. A tombstone was never erected. Several years ago my two brothers, one sister, and I bought a nice marble tombstone, engraved with their names, and dates of births and deaths, and put it at their graves. My grandmother’s old, worn tombstone is by the side of the new one.

If one stands at the waterfall, looking south on Cavender’s Branch, to the right and toward the west, there is a hill. Up this hillside seventy-five yards or so, into the woods, and through the trees, briars, brambles, and un-

derbrush, you will come to “Cavender’s Cemetery.” No one has been buried there for many years. My Cavender great-grandparents are buried there. There are twenty or so large stones and rocks, used as grave markers for the unknowns buried there, but only five tombstones. No tombstones mark the graves of my great-grandparents. Only God knows exactly where they are buried in that plot. Five graves with tombstones are members of the family, all buried there in the late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth. Several years ago when I last was there, I took blackboard chalk and a porous cloth bag filled with white flour, dusted those old tombstones, attempting to “bring out” and to make legible the engravings on the stones. It worked. I could read and copy names, dates, and inscriptions of faith, hope, and love.

On one of those stones these words are engraved: “FOR I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH,” as Job had said nearly four thousand years before. During my lifetime I have seen that statement of a believer’s faith on many tombstones. more so on older peoples’ markers of earlier generations than in the more recent past and at the present. Job wanted his words, this inscription, written in a book (scroll), and also “graven with an iron pen and lead in a rock” that it might continue to bear witness “forever” of his faith. The ancients did it that way, i.e., engraved letters in the rock, covered them with thin metal, poured the hot lead into the indentions, and a memorial, a tombstone for the dead, was created. One could hope that whenever brother Job “died, being old and full of days” (42:17), and wherever his body was buried, his desire was observed by those who mourned him, and there was written upon his tombstone the words: “For I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

We learn many lessons from our brother Job. Job knew, and we should know, that worms will feed upon, eat, and destroy our bodies, “my skin” and “my reins” (inside the body, organs, veins, etc.). Mother earth has this way of devouring her own. Our bodies are formed from “the dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7). Father Abraham buried the body of his beloved Sarah “out of my sight” (Gen. 23:4, 8, 13, 19), so as not to see the dissolution of the body and the work of the worms. Myriads of these little creatures, God’s warriors and armies of destruction below ground after death, as the bugs, locusts, caterpillars, and rodents are above ground and before death, begin and complete their work and nothing is left. The worms attack the outer wall, the skin, and then the flesh, the muscles, the organs, and soon all traces of earthly bodies have vanished. Even, with more time, the bones of the body disintegrate and blend into the bosom of its mother, the earth. Were you to go to Cavender’s Cemetery above Cavender’s Branch and begin to dig, you would find nothing but earth and roots of plants, and worms. No traces would be found of metal caskets and vaults, for folks back then buried their dead in wooden boxes. No vaults in the old days, those modern

items of death not yet being invented — and poor folks like my ancestors could not have afforded them anyway! The deformed, emaciated, crippled, repulsive bodies of the poor, sick, and afflicted find common ground in the cemetery with the beautiful, handsome, strong, healthy, rich, and pampered. Death, the grave, and the worms make “commoners” of all of us, regardless of our differences and distinctions in life. Yet in our flesh we shall see our Redeemer. Our bodies will be raised from death (1 Cor. 15:50-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Acts 17:30-32; 4:2; 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:6-8, 23; John 5:28-29, etc.)

Job knew that he had a “REDEEMER,” a “gaal, goel,” a kinsman, a redeemer who will “demand back” and extricate (see Girdlestone’s, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* 117-126, for an excellent discussion). Jacob first used the word in Scripture (Gen. 48:16). “God . . . the Angel” who had accompanied him all his life and into Mesopotamia, back to Canaan, and into Egypt, had “redeemed” Jacob from all evil, i.e., cared for him and took his part, extricated him. God was the “Redeemer” of Israel, delivering them from Egypt (Exod. 6:6; 15:3). The near kinsman, “the goel,” redeemed the vows, pledges, and debts of the poor in his family (Exod. 25, 27). Boaz was “the goel,” the redeemer for Naomi and Ruth (Book of Ruth). The “gaal” avenged the blood of the slain (Num. 35; Deut. 19:6, 12; Josh. 20:3, 5, 9; 2 Sam. 14:11). God is the “gaal,” the avenger, the kinsman, to the poor and the helpless (Prov. 23:10-11).

Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, is our “goel,” our Redeemer, who stood in our place and gave his innocent life as a ransom, redemptive price, for our sinful souls and lives (Isa. 59:20; Matt. 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Luke 1:74; Rom. 7:24, etc.). He is our “kinsman,” himself also man, who “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:5-6). He entered once for all into the most holy place, heaven itself, with his blood, having obtained (or found) eternal redemption for us all (Heb. 9:12). Truly, he is our Redeemer, our “goel.”

Job believed that “yet in my flesh I shall see God.” Our body is our little plot of earth, our little farm and house, in which our spirit dwells and sojourns through its brief span in this present world. Death comes and takes it from us. We are naked, a spirit without its house, for a little while (2 Cor. 5:1-11). Jesus, our “goel,” led captivity captive and overcame the devil and death (Eph. 4:8-10; Heb. 2:14-15). He will raise our little plot from the grave and give us a new one like unto his own, which will not die, will not grow old or decay, and which will live forever (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:50-58). Being raised from death, having a new body, we will stand on the edge of the grave which held us for awhile, we shall mock and taunt death and the grave, saying, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (vv. 54-55).

Job knew that our “gaal,” our Redeemer, liveth. He died on the cross, but he is alive forevermore (Rev. 1:17-18).

Achan For Some Treasure?

When the Israelites were about to conquer Jericho, God instructed them through Joshua saying, “And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord” (Josh. 6:18-19).

With God’s help, Israel was successful in its conquest of Jericho. However, the text goes on to say that “the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel” (Josh. 7:1). When Achan was questioned about his sin he responded saying, “When I saw among the spoils

a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it” (Josh. 7:21).

By his own admission it is obvious that Achan was overcome with the sin of covetousness. In other words, he had a greedy desire to have something that did not rightfully belong to him. In this case, he coveted a Babylonian garment, a wedge of gold, and some silver. We might say Achan was “achin’ for some treasure” and his covetousness got the better of him.

Although it is seldom admitted to, covetousness is a common sin in our society, and as would logically follow, a common sin among members of the body of Christ. Just

He is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:23-27). He “ever liveth to make intercession for us” (Heb. 7:24-28). We do not think or say that “he used to live,” or that “he did live,” or that “he may live,” but we say that “he lives,” past, present, and future, and that “we serve a living Saviour” who is our Redeemer.

Job knew that our “goel” would stand upon the earth at the latter day. When the time was due, he did so (Rom. 5:6-8; Gal. 4:4-7). He came into his world, Immanuel, “God with us” (John 1:11-12; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23; 1 Tim. 3:16). In this last day, this last dispensation of time. He possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, angels and principalities and powers are subject to him, and he has the keys of hades and death (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 3:20-21, Eph. 1:19-23; Rev. 1:18; 20:11-15).

Our REDEEMER, our “gaal,” is “MY REDEEMER,” so Job said. He was Job’s and he is mine. He is a personal savior of individuals, one by one, as each person hears, believes, and obeys his holy word. He can and does save only those who come to him in full assurance of faith (Heb.

10:19-25). He is the only “goel” that each person has. Those who reject him will be eternally lost, separated from God, due to guilt of sins (John 8:24, 21). Those who believe in him and therefore serve him from their hearts, will receive everlasting life in heaven, an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, as engravings and inscriptions on marble tombstones eventually will do (Tit. 1:2; 1 John 2:25; 1 Pet. 1:3-5). On your grave marker, and mine, if we have such an object of identity in death, would it be absolutely true of you and me that “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”?

If we want that truth on our tombstones, it must be in our hearts while we live in our little earthly farm and house in this life.

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as Achan wasn't thinking properly when he succumbed to covetousness, it is obvious that the Christian who is covetous has forgotten a few things. When covetousness gets the better of us we forget:

1. This world is not our home. The apostle Peter writes, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11). Christians are sojourners and pilgrims on the earth, who are merely passing through. We ought to recognize that this world is not our permanent home, and should, "desire a better, that is, a heavenly country" (Heb. 11:16). A traveler on his way would not be wise to stop and attempt to amass great wealth that he will not be able to take with him as he continues on his travels. Such would be a fruitless waste of time. When we allow covetousness to enter into our lives we are making the same foolish error. We have forgotten that this world is not our permanent dwelling place.

2. There is far greater treasure in heaven. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Money and possessions perish, but heaven is eternal. Covetousness deceives us into thinking that perishable, material things are truly worth something. But in the final analysis even the greatest earthly treasures are nothing in comparison to heaven. The treasures of heaven are unable to even be compared with earthly things. As the Scripture says, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

3. We should be giving to the Lord. As Christians we are commanded to give back to the Lord of our material things as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). Paul writes,

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). The covetous Christian will do one of two things. He will either grudgingly give far less than he is able, or he will give next to nothing and reason that he will be able to give a lot more later on once he has accumulated enough wealth. Neither option will please the Lord who has given us all that we have (Jas. 1:17). Our covetousness would have us believe that it is someone else's responsibility to fund the Lord's work.

4. No covetous person will enter heaven. The apostle Paul writes, "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5). Surely there are many sins which will keep a person out of heaven. But do we understand that covetousness is one of them? In our society covetousness is somewhat of a "respectable sin" in that it is practiced openly and hardly ever frowned upon. It is easy to forget that those who are covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Conclusion

Covetousness cost Achan his life (Josh. 7:25). It can just as easily cost you your soul. The next time you find yourself "Achan for some treasure" remember to "let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For he himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).

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Genesis 3:15: Merely, the “seed” of woman. This nearly 4000 years before Christ. This was the first reference to his coming.

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Numbers 24:17: “. . . there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. . .” Some of the first characteristics of him are here revealed, about 1500 years B.C.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19: He was to be a prophet, from among Israel, like unto Moses, and to be God’s spokesman. This, too, about 1500 years B.C.

2 Samuel 7:12-17: He was to be of the seed of David. This was about 1000 B.C. In our references, from Abraham, to Jacob, to David.

Psalms 2:7: “. . . the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Some things that were to happen to him are here told. This, also, would be about 1000 years B.C.

Isaiah 2:2-4: Some of the characteristics of his kingdom, as well as himself, are set forth, about 750 years B.C.

Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give thee a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.” How he is to be brought into this world is explained. More facts from about 750

years B.C.

Isaiah 53:1-12: Many more details of his experiences in this life; and where, when, and how he should die are presented. The purpose of his death is detailed. This, also, about 750 Years B.C.

Daniel 2:36-45: Daniel gives more details and characteristics of his kingdom, when it is to be established and the fact that it was to be eternal. Daniel gave this information about 600 years B.C.

Micah 5:2: Micah repeats some of the prophecies of Isaiah (4:1-3) and then identifies the birthplace of God’s Son as Bethlehem of Judea. Just more facts concerning him.

Zechariah 6:13: “He shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Bringing things closer Zechariah pictures him as building the temple (the church) and how his priesthood and kingship were combined in him.

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Matthew 1:21: “The angel said to Joseph concerning Mary, ‘She shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.’” As the time approaches, his name and purpose is given.

Luke 1:30-33 adds to this by identifying him as the Son of David, and again showing his kingdom to be eternal.

Matthew 16:18-19: “Jesus, himself, relates the church and kingdom as he promises to build the same.

Mark 9:1: “. . . There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.” Though a promise and prophecy, this statement may be seen as a test of his claim to divine

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power and wisdom.

Indeed, these statements are progressive; and we have not come close to using all such statements found in the Old Testament. This is God revealing, bit by bit, the necessary information concerning his Son and his system. It is like Isaiah said, "Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10). The logic and God's approach to this stands as a great testimonial to his wisdom and as an unanswerable argument for the absolute accuracy of

his word.

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Renew Promptly

Older Christians, Arise

The future of the church is not just in the hands of the young, but in the hands of the older and how they indoctrinate the younger. We must always remember, God doesn't have a retirement plan, and the church is not a rest home.

Being, or looking, young has become an obsession with many in our country today. We see many companies spending millions of dollars on advertisements to attract the young, or to sell some product to make the older look younger. A wrinkle is like some dreaded disease. Folks will do everything from putting mud on their face to having surgery for a younger look. It is an understatement to say old age is losing respect. Respect for old age has reached such a low in the Netherlands that the Dutch parliament gave final approval to a new euthanasia law. This type mind set is very dangerous, because it supports the thought that the older are useless.

When seeking a place of worship many will ask, "How many young people do you have?" or "What do you do for the young people?" Often we hear a statement such as, "I am worried about that congregation because they have a lot of older Christians." We must agree, young people are important to a congregation, but the number of young folks, or their activities, should not be the only criteria for choosing a place of worship. I become concerned when I hear of a congregation that has no older Christians.

This "young" mind set is detrimental to many older folk's thinking. Older Christians face the danger of becoming discouraged and think age and physical weakness have disqualified them from the Lord's service. I have heard more than one older Christian, talking about the work of the church, say something like, "Well, I'm just go-

ing to turn it over to the young folks." "The future of the church is in the hands of the young anyway."

Truth is, the future of the church is not just in the hands of the young, but in the hands of the older and how they indoctrinate the younger. We must always remember, God doesn't have a retirement plan, and the church is not a rest home. Jesus said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). So, older Christians stand up and be what God would have you to be. God has always had older folks in his plans, and he still does. No, you won't always be able to do as you did when you were younger, but there are still some things you can do. God expects you to bear fruit in your old age.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;* (emphasis, dh) they shall be fat and flourishing; To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him (Ps. 92:12-15).

The prayer of every older Christians should be, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray headed, *O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come*" (emphasis, dh,

Ps. 71:17-18). “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth” (Ps. 71:9).

As we read God’s plan, we can easily see the godly home and family is at the very root of the word being passed from generation to generation. The godly home is at the very root of a godly community, nation, and most importantly, a faithful church. This is where the older Christian can make a huge difference. When Paul wrote to Titus in the second chapter of his letter, he was not talking about all the teaching of the older Christian being done only in the church.

The bold preaching of the gospel must be supported in the home. Too often, parents and grandparents complain, in the presence of the children, and each other, about the length of the sermon, or the calling of names in defense of the gospel against error. Likewise, the Bible classes must be supported in the home. The older must be seen reading and studying their Bibles and preparing for class. The older must be heard praying for the work of the church, the members, its leadership, and the evangelist. All of the family should feel comfortable talking about God. Bible things and people should be a part of many conversations in the home. A trip to grandma’s house should be more than milk and cookies.

Too many churches of Christ have been in existence for many years without scriptural leadership. Parents and grandparents must begin teaching their young men to prepare for the eldership. The young ladies, likewise, must be taught to be elder’s wives. We realize not all young men and women will grow up and become elders or elder’s wives, but teaching them to live in such a manner is still very profitable. This must be done while they are young, and it must be done in the home.

The older are to teach the younger, “. . . that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,

righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12). It is past time that some grandparents step in and “meddle” in some affairs of their children and grandchildren.

Some grandmothers and grandfathers need to tell their children and grandchildren to stop going out of the house naked. The teaching of dressing modestly must be supported in the home. Children are to respect their parents, even after they are married. So, when you see your children and grandchildren dressing immodestly, speak up. When you see them going to “R” rated movies, speak up. When you hear them speaking in a manner unbecoming to a Christian, speak up. When you see them going to places a Christian has no business going, speak up. Teach them righteous living.

Too often, our young Christians are marrying those outside the body of Christ. Teach your children and grandchildren to become a Christian and to marry a Christian. What could be more important than sharing their life with someone of like precious faith?

The young women are to be taught “to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit. 2:5). Being “just” a housewife has become distasteful to many in our culture today. Our young must be taught it is an honorable thing to be a keeper at home. The older must have the backbone to speak up and tell the younger women to stay home and take care of the young children while there is time to shape their minds in the ways of the Lord. What better future can one give his children?

Too often we hear of some that blame the church for their children’s lack of Bible knowledge. Parents and grandparents should be ashamed to make such statements while allowing their children to attend Bible class week in and week out, never having studied their lesson, and many times

not having their own lesson. The older Christian can have a great impact on the young by helping them with their lessons and teaching them the importance of taking responsibility for themselves.

Goebel Music, in his book, *Behold the Pattern*, quoted Rubell Shelly saying, “Mine was the last generation that would tolerate indoctrination. . . Mine was the last generation that would tolerate indoctrination and sit through things we know were mockeries of the reality we were giving lip service to and tolerate it. My kids won’t. . . One of these days there will be grandchildren. They won’t stay with a tired institution that calls itself the church.”

Brethren, the only reason our children and grandchildren won’t be indoctrinated is because we have stopped putting forth the effort. We hear some older Christians say they are really concerned about the direction the church is going today. Yet, while still able, they have stopped teaching because they have done it for so many years. Many times the novice is allowed to teach a Bible class because he is the only one who is willing. There has never been a time for the older to quit, as long as they are able, and today is no different.

It has been said, “We are always only one generation away from apostasy.” But, on the other hand, it has also been said, “We are only one generation from being a faithful, taught people.” Let us be that generation. “Older Christians, Arise.”

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Toothless Hounds

Hounds that have no teeth cannot “bite.” Nevertheless, they can “gum” you and they can still bark! The gums of toothless hounds are not generally lethal (though I once heard of a hound that gummed a ’possum to death).

False teachers in and out of the body of Christ are “toothless hounds.” They make a lot of noise and they sometimes nip at the heels of proclaimers of truth, forgetting that they have no teeth. They are about as useful as the prophets whom the Holy Spirit says are “dumb dogs, they cannot bark” (Isai.56:10, RSV).

There *was* a time when Baptist preachers would try to defend their doctrine that “baptism is not essential to salvation.” Now it is different. So many of those men had their “religious” teeth extracted by fearless gospel preachers of the past, that they decided it isn’t in their best interest to debate the issue. They finally discovered that you can’t successfully “gum” an opponent; it takes teeth to effectively bite! Immersion is essential to salvation from sin (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21-22).

There *used to be* a time when Methodist preachers tried to defend their doctrine of “sprinkling and pouring for baptism.” They too, suffered from multiple extractions, and decided to stop contending with gospel “dentists.” Regarding the issue of “sprinkling and pouring for baptism,” Methodist preachers don’t have a single tooth left in their mouths, nor do they have a pair of britches big enough to put on, or a leg strong enough to stand on. The word “baptism” that is used in most English translations should be rendered immersion, submersion, dipping, or by a synonymous term (Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-4).

In the *distant past* Pentecostal leaders tried to defend the practice of women preaching. After long painful hours in the dental chair, they also decided that having their teeth pulled was too painful, so they have virtually ceased defending their practices! They still practice what they *used to* defend, but they generally no longer defend what they *still* practice! In other words they “bark but they can’t bite!” They are toothless hounds. Women have no authority to preach the gospel or to have authority over men in religion (1 Tim. 2:11-12; Acts 21:9).

In the *past* a few so-called “gospel preachers” attempted to defend using the local congregation’s funds to support recreation and entertainment projects. Most of them decided that defending a position for which there is no authority is like a “toothless hound” attempting to whip a well endowed wildcat! It just won’t work. God’s congregations are to provide for the preaching of the gospel, benevolence to saints, worship and edification; not recreation and entertainment (1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 6:1-6; 20:7).

All false teachers make noise. They bark but they cannot “bite,” for they have no teeth. They are “toothless hounds.” Truth has bite! It has the power to save and nothing can destroy it (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).

Life in the Son

by Robert Shank

Refutaion of “once saved, always saved” doctrine. In a study of all pertinent New Testament Scriptures, the author demonstrates that the supposed proof passages have been misconstrued by advocates of the doctrine of eternal (unconditional) security. #10342

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Shawn Smith

Atheism Alive And Well

Here in Florence, the local newspaper, the *Times-Daily* (owned by the *New York Times*), runs a fairly healthy amount of letters to the editors. While many of the letters concern local social and political news, a goodly amount are written on religious matters. All too frequently, many of these letters are written by atheists. They are quite vocal in their “belief” and ridicule the Bible incessantly. Fortunately, many brethren write back to respond and many do so quite adequately. Nonetheless, I am personally amazed at the number of self-espoused atheists even in this general area.

Atheism is indeed alive and well. We see its influence in our school systems, especially concerning the content in the textbooks. Atheism is not a shy doctrine. It has been “out of the closet” for quite some time. Not only is it awake, it is making a lot of noise. While the details as of this writing are still being assessed, the decision of the California court to rule that the phrase “under God” in the pledge of allegiance is unconstitutional is disturbing and is the latest in the efforts of atheists to rid our country of God altogether.

I quote from the official publication of the opinion of the ninth circuit court of appeals in San Francisco, California written by Judge Alfred T. Goodwin and submitted June 26, 2002:

Michael Newdow appeals a judgment dismissing his challenge to the constitutionality of the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Newdow argues that the addition of these words by a 1954 federal statute to the previous version of the Pledge of Allegiance (which made no reference to God) and the daily recitation in the classroom of the Pledge of Allegiance, with the added words included, by his daughter’s public school teacher are violations of the Establishment Clause of the First Amend-

ment to the United States Constitution (the Establishment Clause states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” U.S. Const. Amend. I, a provision that “the Fourteenth Amendment makes applicable with full force to the States and their school districts,” *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577, 580 [1992]).

Newdow is an atheist whose daughter attends public elementary school in the Elk Grove Unified School District in California. Newdow does not allege that his daughter’s teacher or school district requires his daughter to participate in reciting the Pledge. Rather, he claims that his daughter is injured when she is compelled to “watch and listen as her state-employed teacher in her state-run school leads her classmates in a ritual proclaiming that there is a God, and that our’s [sic] is “one nation under God.”

Well, we can see where this is going. Newdow, a Sacramento doctor who holds a law degree and represented himself, sued the school district and Congress, among others, in an effort to restore the pledge to its pre-1954 version. He said, “Congress never intended to force people to worship a religion that they don’t believe in” when they added the words “under God” to the pledge.

Most likely, this opinion will be submitted to the Supreme Court on appeal. While the public backlash from this has been very vocal (Congress and the President disagree with the ruling also), I personally am not very optimistic. Our country has been heading this direction for a long time. Eventually, the late Madalyn Murray O’Hair’s desire to remove “IN GOD WE TRUST” from United States currency may be fulfilled.

What do we do? How shall we react? It used to be you heard preachers deal with atheism quite a bit. Maybe we

have let up on this matter for too long. The apostles and New Testament evangelists had to deal with a godless society, too. The difference is that the Greek and Roman world they lived in served false gods and worshiped idols. Paul called the Athenians “superstitious” or “very religious” (Acts 17:22). They went the opposite direction. They didn’t want to offend any gods so they worshiped them all, even erecting an altar with the inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (v. 23), just in case they left one out. Paul said they worshiped God in ignorance.

We are dealing with a different challenge. We live among people who deny God entirely, and more and more young people are being raised atheists, not because of ignorance, but because of education and example from others. No, we don’t live under a repressive government like China where religious expression is forbidden, but we are having to deal with an American population increasingly manifesting a humanistic approach to life. You know its been several years now where discussing religion and God is “politically incorrect.” It is discouraged, if not already company policy, in business to “talk Bible.” Neighbors no longer study their Bibles together or hardly talk to one another period! The philosophy of the day is “You have your opinion and I have mine. Let’s just agree to disagree and leave one another alone.” As a result, children reared in such an environment will naturally grow up uncomfortable with the Bible, indifferent to religion in general, and develop a cold, materialistic, post-modernistic outlook on life.

How do we counteract this new attitude? How do we teach people such as this? Well, we are going to have to get back to some basics such as the inerrancy of Scripture, evidences, creation, and the nature of man. The last thing we need is preachers who do not take the creation account in Genesis chapters one and two as literal! Not surprisingly, however, those who hold evolutionary theories regarding the days of creation in Genesis one are products of atheistic and evolutionary teachers and college professors. Some of them have found sanctuary among all the so-called “Christian” universities and more recently at Florida College. I pray they have been flushed out! The bottom line is we are going to have to do our homework and hone our mental skills on these subjects in order to answer those we desire to convert (1 Pet. 3:15). These subjects will serve us well, too, as we will deal more and more with Muslims. Remember, they do not worship the true and living God, either! Indeed, atheism is alive and well!

Consider the following in connection with the preceding editorial.

From a speech by William Jennings Bryan in Chicago, May 4, 1911.

Is the Bible the work of man, or is it an inspired book? Is it the product of human wisdom, or did its authors speak

as they were commanded by the Lord?

Atheists and materialists declare that it is merely the work of man, that it was written under the limitations that apply to human wisdom. Taking this position, they must necessarily contend that unless man has degenerated in ability and declined in wisdom, he can now produce a book equal to the Bible.

Judged by human standards, man is far better prepared to write a Bible now than he was when our Bible was written. The characters whose words and deeds are recorded, were members of a single race; they lived among the hills of Palestine in a territory scarcely larger than one of our counties. They did not have printing presses; they lacked the learning of the schools; they had no great libraries to consult, no telegraph wires to bring them the news from the ends of the earth, and no newspaper to spread before them each morning the doings of the day before. Science had not unlocked nature’s door and revealed the secrets of rocks below and stars above.

From what scantily supplied storehouse of knowledge they had to draw, compared with the unlimited wealth of information at man’s command today! And yet these Bible characters grapple with every problem that confronts mankind, from the creation of the world to eternal life beyond the tomb. They have given us a diagram of man’s existence from the cradle to the grave, and they have set up sign posts at every dangerous point along the way. We turn back to the Bible for the Ten Commandments, which form the foundation for our statute law, and for the Sermon on the Mount, which lays down the rules for our spiritual growth. The Bible gives us the story of the birth, the words, the works, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension of Him whose coming was foretold in prophecy, whose arrival was announced by the angel voices, singing Peace and Goodwill—the story of Him who is the growing figure of all time, whom the world is accepting as Savior and as the perfect example.

Let the atheists and the materialists produce a better Bible than ours, if they can. Let them collect the best of those to be found among the graduates of universities, as many as they please, and employ every modern means of swift communication. Let them glean in the fields of geology, and zoology, and then roam at will wherever science has opened the way; let them take advantage of all the progress in art and in literature, in oratory and in history; let them use to the full every instrumentality that is employed in modern civilization; and when they have exhausted every source, let them embody the results of their best intelligence in a book and offer it to the world as a substitute for this Bible of ours. Have they the confidence that the prophets of Baal had in their god? If not, what excuse will they give? Has man fallen from his high estate, so that we cannot rightfully expect as much of him now as nineteen centuries ago? Or does the Bible come to us from a source that is higher than man — which? *Pulpit Helps*, November 1982

From the *South End Expounder*, brother Tom Moody

Alarming Trend — Put Away or Divorce?

I find it an alarming trend with preachers young and old today that, with the “simplified” English versions of the Bible, more are no longer going to their Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, lexicons, or commentaries to see what the original Greek or Hebrew had in mind. The New King James, the New American Standard Version, The New International Version, and others are being accepted at “face value” in their wording since they are so easy to read.

I will use the New King James Version (NKJV) in contrast to the King James Version (KJV) in this essay. In Luke 16:18, Matthew 19:9, and Matthew 5:32 in the NKJV the word “divorced” is used. That’s simple. Anyone can now understand that. In Luke 16:18 it shows that anyone divorced cannot remarry without committing adultery. Except the one divorced for the cause of fornication of his spouse is allowed to remarry.

Now let’s look at the “old, archaic” KJV. In Luke 16:18, Matthew 19:9, and Matthew 5:32 the words used are “putteth away and put away” with the exception of the latter part of Matthew 5:32. What does Vine’s and Thayer’s say about the meaning of the Greek word used in these verses. The New Testament Greek is what is called a “dead” lan-

guage, one that no longer changes due to the usage of the words changing in society.

Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says of “putting away” (236), definition #16. *Apoluo*, to set free, let go, is rendered to put away in reference to one who is betrothed, Matt. 1:19: a wife, 5:31, 32 (twice; in 2nd part, R.V.: A.V., “is divorced”); 19:3, 7, 8, 9 (twice); Mark 10:2, 4, 11, 12; Luke 16:18 (twice). See Dismiss. Note: In 1 Cor. 7:11,12 A. V., to send away, is translated to put away (R.V., “leave”), of the act of the husband toward the wife; in ver. 13, “leave,” of the act of the wife toward the husband.”

Apoluo: From Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (65-66), definition #4. “used of divorce, as to dismiss from the house, to repudiate: Mt. 1:19; 5:31; 19:3, 7-9; Mk. 10:2, 4, 11; Lk. 16:18.

Does “put away” mean divorce and only divorce? Where is Scripture, book, chapter, and verse, that says the innocent party must instigate the divorce, a civil legal action. Webster’s dictionary says of divorce, “1. legal dissolution of a marriage. 2. complete separation.” What is legal? Every

makes this fitting comment: “Consider all the references by Bryan to the scientific knowledge and swift means of communication available when he gave this address in 1911. How much more applicable are these very points in our day! Yet uninspired men still cannot provide an adequate substitute for the Bible, God’s word (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25).”

(Editor’s Note: This material I took from a bulletin my father put out nearly twenty years ago in Henderson, Texas. Consider all the advancements in science, technology, and

knowledge in general since 1983. Man still cannot meet the challenge that William Jennings Bryan issued nearly a century ago! Brethren, let us not grow weary in well doing.)

From the East Florence Contender, July 2002



state in the good old USA has its own laws concerning what is legal in each state, not to mention the differences between countries. How can one English word, divorce, possibly convey the original meaning of the Greek word *apoluo*?

As brother J.T. Smith in a meeting at Corinth, Mississippi September 8, 1983 said, “If a woman found her husband committing adultery and told him she could no longer live with him, to get out, or separates herself from him, then the act of putting away has taken place.” It does not matter who “races” to the court house first to have the legal divorce in the eyes of the law of the land. The putting away in the eyes of God has already taken place. I recognize the divorce must be through the laws of the land before the innocent party can remarry. Where is the book, chapter, and verse about counter suing. That is a modern recent innovation. Yet, I know of a preacher, who while in the water just prior to baptizing a woman, had the audacity to say, just before putting her under in the act of baptism, “I would feel better about this if your divorce papers stated ‘For the cause of fornication.’” How did she feel? Was she now thinking of having her sins washed away? Fact: In the states of Alabama and Texas it is not legal to put such a statement on the divorce papers. In Louisiana, as late as fifteen years ago, the second party did not have to be notified they were being divorced until the final papers were given to him or her. I know of no state where it is still legal to put “for the cause of fornication/adultery” on a divorce decree.

From the beginning being put away and divorced have been two separate actions. In Isaiah 50:1, NKJV, “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, Whom have I put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves.” Here we have God through Isaiah making a difference between being put away and divorced. It was because the nation of Judah had played the harlot they were put away

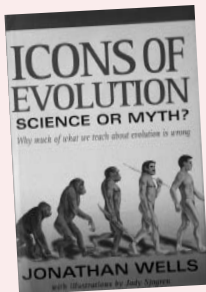
into Babylonian captivity. Also, Jeremiah 3:8 makes the difference between put away and divorce, NKJV, “Then I saw for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.” Now why did God put both away and divorce only one? As Isaiah asked, “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce?” If God had divorced Judah as he did Israel, he could not have redeemed Judah for the fulfillment of his plan of bringing the Saviour into the world. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 explains that once a man has divorced his wife, he can no longer take her back after she has been married to another, as she is defiled. God put away Israel and divorced her. She was “married” to idolatry. God could no longer take Israel back. God “put away” Judah into captivity, but did not give a certificate of divorce, and could take her back as Judah had not “remarried.”

Do you still think Luke 16:18 and Matthew 19:9 are both talking of only one action, divorce? Let’s look at Matthew 5:32, KJV, “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” Does this not show Jesus understands two separate actions are involved, just as God stated in Jeremiah 3:8?

I believe there are too many preachers, young and old, relying on the “new improved” English translations and not putting in the extra mile of study. They are coming to the wrong conclusion on this issue, and possibly others. What has happened to the old rallying cries of yesteryear, “Back to the Bible, Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent, and Speak as the oracles of God”? I believe it is brother J.D. Tant that is quoted as ending his sermons with “Brethren we are drifting.”
rjudge@juno.com

Icons of Evolution

by Jonathan Wells



“Jonathan Wells demonstrates with stunning clarity that the textbook examples Darwinists themselves chose as the pillar of their theory are false or misleading” (Dr. Michael Behe, Prof. of Biological Sciences, Lehigh University). #16797

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The Ever Changing Doctrines of Men

Paul warned the churches of Galatia, “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). It is abundantly clear that many today have not heeded this warning and are following a “*different gospel*” than that proclaimed by our Lord and his apostles. Of course, this also was a matter of prophetic warning from the Scriptures. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, (because) they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn (their) ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). In the face of such Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word! Be ready in season (and) out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. . . . But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

From the beginning in the garden, Satan twisted the Scriptures to pervert the word of God and conveyed the message to scratch itching ears leading man to sin (Gen. 3:1ff). His messengers continue his work of devouring men (2 Pet. 5:8) by continuing to proclaim a “*different gospel*.” They often appear as “*ministers of righteousness*” while they are “*deceitful workers . . . whose end will be according to their works*” (2 Cor. 11:13, 15). Whether merely deceivers or only self-deceived, they preach another gospel and stand “*accursed*.”

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. . . . We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:1, 6). We cannot believe everything we hear but must “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every

form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:21, 22). We do this by following the noble example of the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily (to find out) whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11b).

Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). The truth, and it alone, will set us free (John 8:32). We must know the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4) and obey it to be saved (Jas. 1:22; 2 Thess. 1:8). “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

While the truth of God’s word does not change (Matt. 5:18; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25), the doctrines of men are ever undergoing evolution to suite the current thinking, adapting to cultural desires or, in short, make them most appealing. We certainly should not be surprised by this for, after all, they are the doctrines of men and not of Christ. As an example consider the following two quotations:

No divorce, except for adultery, shall be regarded by the Church as lawful; and no Minister shall solemnize marriage in any case where there is a divorced wife or husband living; but this rule shall not be applied to the innocent party to a divorce for the cause of adultery.

In view of the seriousness with which the Scriptures and the Church regard divorce, pastors may solemnize the marriage of a divorced person only when they are satisfied by careful counseling, that (1) the divorced person is sufficiently aware of the factors leading to the failure of the previous marriage, (2) the divorced person is sincerely preparing to make the proposed marriage truly Christian, and (3) sufficient time has elapsed between the divorce and the contemplated marriage for adequate preparation and counseling.

Did you note a *little* difference? Both are quotations from the *Methodist Discipline*. The difference being that the first

Learning From a Dog

H. Osby Weaver

As I backed out of the garage, the car lights focused on the skin-covered skeleton of a bird dog. Cowed, he moved out of the lights and farther into the corner. Thinking that he had just borrowed a night's lodging, I paid no more attention to him until the next day when I saw that he was still in the same corner. In fact, he would never have been anywhere else without help. He was so very thin and feeble from hunger and fatigue that this corner was about to become his tomb.

I made my way cautiously toward him expecting the worst, but one look into those apologetic eyes dissolved all my fears. It was clear that this animal, almost dead from starvation, was not just a common, community bum. He was high calibre, but his going had been rough. He had apparently been on the road a long time. His feet looked worn and sore. He had a mission — a point of destination which he was unable to reach without a lift, but he would die trying. His breeding was better than his appearance indicated. I fed him generously.

The next morning he was gone. "A mess of pottage" had not caused him to forfeit his birthright nor robbed him of his initiative to reach his goal. He was no parasite that thought the world owed him a living and expected an easy hand-out. A free meal had not enslaved him. He needed temporary help, yes, but the help became a means to an end and not the end itself. His graceful departure at the earliest possible moment was his way of saying "thanks" for the boost given, and it could not have been said more eloquently.

He did me a favor in stopping by. He taught me some things. I know he had a home and reaching it was upmost in his mind and only death could prevent it, but somehow, I wish he'd stayed!

I learned that anyone of us can be down on his luck at one time or another and need a lift. But it ought to be just that — a lift, and not something that robs us of our initiative and destroys our ambition. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 says: "If any will not work, neither let him eat." This, of course, takes into consideration that one is able to work and has an available job. The passage continues: "We hear that some walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

I learned that one ought to have an aim in this life that nothing but death can prevent. That aim ought to be, among other things, the desire to get home — that heavenly home, and if necessary, we will be "faithful unto death" — even if it causes our death (Rev. 2:10), that we might "have the crown of life" — the one thing worth more than anything else.

quotation is from the 1904 edition and the second is from the 1972 edition. Neither edition is the true standard for determining faith or practice for only the truth of God's word is, but at least the 1904 edition far more closely represents what God's word says in Matthew 19:9. Why the change in the two quotations? Again, because this creed (as with all other creeds is merely the product of man and the basis of a church of man, it is not confined to consistency. It can be altered, updated, rewritten, and modified through the years to adapt to social changes and current attitudes of the denomination and its members. But it did not lead to salvation in 1904 nor 1972 nor today because it is not the word of God but the doctrines of men.

The words of Jesus still ring clearly, "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matt. 15:7-9, 13-14).

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Marc W. Gibson

Just when you think you've heard it all . . .

The Annual "Blessing of Pets"

I expect to hear strange things being done in the name of religion by those given over to the doctrines and commandments of men, but even this took me by surprise. The annual "Blessing of Pets" is practiced by various religious denominations on or near October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, who is remembered for "his love for all creatures."

The following is an excerpt from the article "Blessing of Animals" by Kevin E. Mackin, who is noted as a "Franciscan of the Holy Name":

The bond between person and pet is like no other relationship, because the communication between fellow creatures is at its most basic. Eye-to-eye, a man and his dog, or a woman and her cat, are two creatures of love.

No wonder people enjoy the opportunity to take their animal companions to church for a special blessing. Church is the place where the bond of creation is celebrated.

At Franciscan churches, a friar with brown robe and white cord often welcomes each animal with a special prayer. The Blessing of Pets usually goes like this:

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. You called forth fish in the sea. Birds in the air and animals on the land. You inspired St. Francis to call all of them his brothers and sisters. We ask you to bless this pet. By the power of your love, enable it to live according to your plan. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures! Amen.

As the prayer is offered, the pet is gently sprinkled with holy water. Believe it or not, most pets receive this sacramental spritz with dignity, though I must admit I have seen some cats flatten their ears a bit as the drops of water lightly pelt them.

But the owner is happy, and who knows what spiritual benefits may result?

Usually the Blessing of pets is held outdoors. But I remember it rained one year, and all were invited inside St. Stephen's Church in Manhattan. It was quite a sight to see pairs of creatures — one human, one animal — sitting in the pews. The pastor joined right in with his beagle. Noah's Ark was never like this!

(The full article can be found at www.americancatholic.org/Features/Francis/blessing.asp)

One denomination in Florida even offered certificates for each animal blessed, and around the parish hall there was provided a "petting zoo, animal rescue, vets, vendors, and much more." While some pet owners may think this is a "duddy" idea, I wonder if anyone thought to consult God about this "blessing of pets"? I guess someone thought that since this was such an inspiring notion, God would be simply giddy about it, even though there is not a "peep" about it in the revelation of "every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). What's next? Full church membership for Fido and KittyKat? Why not? What is to stop those who have no concern about "speaking the oracles of God"? The church that belongs to Christ is not to be made into a Noah's Ark or a petting zoo. All spiritual blessings in Christ are provided for *people* who have heard and obeyed the gospel, not Elsie the cow or Morris the cat. Sadly, we can observe that when men have turned away from God, their religion has *gone to the dogs*.

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□ □ □

James

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“Counted the Cost?” continued from front page

his hand to the plow” if he is planning to look back (Luke 9:62; 2 Pet. 2:21-22). Yes, we must “sit down” and do some figuring, some thinking, and count the cost. If necessary, simply take a sheet of paper and make a list on the left side of all the things to be gained by following Christ. Put everything down that you can think of! Then on the right hand side list all of the things that you will have to give up. List everything you can think of! This is a good way to “count (consider) the cost.” Have you counted the cost?

Some of the costs to be considered will be in the form of persecution. Paul said, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). It costs to be a Christian! All sinful pleasures will have to be left behind; for a Christian must not “fashion himself according to this world” (Rom. 12:2). His love for Christ must be stronger than his love for earthly things (1 John 2:15-17). Neither must we have a love for money. Paul also said, “For *the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows*” (1 Tim. 6:10). Everything that is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16) must be put aside. Have you counted the cost?

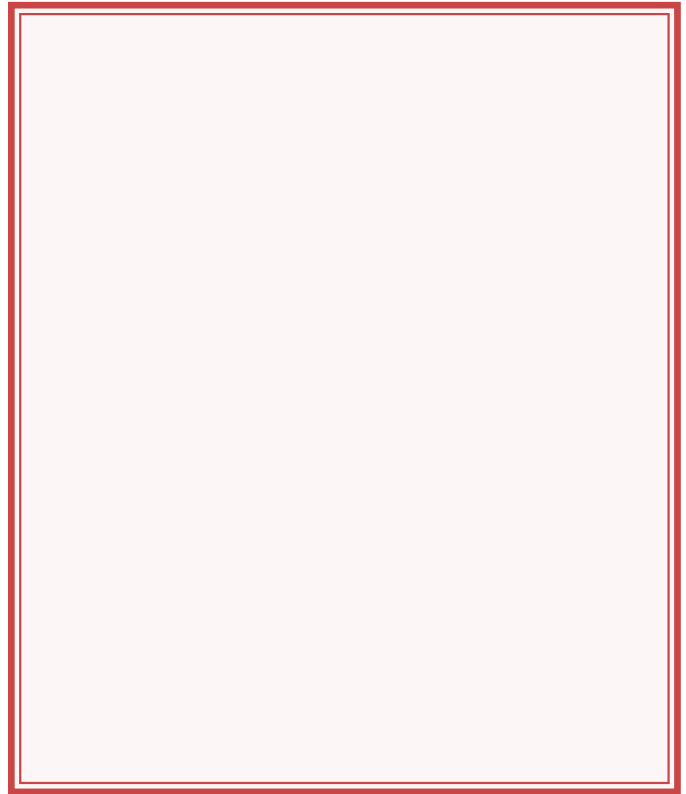
My precious friend, think of the rewards of the kingdom! For sure, records of the wicked very clearly show that it does not pay to go the ways of the world. If one neglects the great salvation in Christ, he will surely be recompensed for the reward of his transgression and disobedience (Heb. 2:2-3). Truly, vengeance will be taken against those that “know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:8-9). But, on the other hand, think of the joy of entering into everlasting life! Consider the “*inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*” (1 Pet. 1:4). Have you counted the cost?

Surely, the Lord desires quality more than quantity. He is engaged in building and fighting! He would have followers who will stand by him until he is done. No, discipleship must not be taken in a moment of mere emotional sentimentality or rashness. You will observe that before Jesus spoke of the man building the tower and the king’s army, he said: “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27); then afterwards, he says, “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

Have you counted the cost?

From *The Voice*, Florence, Alabama, January 2003

“Hell” continued from page 2



tional Immortality,” *Themelios* 21 (Jan. 1996): 14-18).

To adequately answer brother Fudge, one must reassert the Bible doctrine of the soul of man (for a good study of this subject, one should read *Handbook on Materialism* by Roy J. Hearn). The Bible affirms that the soul continues to exist following the death of the body:

1. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” This passage speaks of man’s “outward” and “inward” part. The inward man is “renewed day by day” and will receive an “eternal” weight of glory.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. The theme of the preceding chapter is continued in this text which speaks of man’s earthly house in which he tabernacles (the body) being dissolved, but him being clothed with “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (5:1). When death occurs, man does not cease to exist, but is in that condition of being “absent from the body” and “present with the Lord” (5:8). For Fudge there is no time when a person is “absent from the body” but present with Lord.

3. *Philippians 1:21-23.* Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” Notice that at death, Paul would depart to be with Christ, not cease to exist.

4. *1 Peter 3:18-19.* Peter wrote, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” The wicked are described as “spirits in prison.” Their existence continued after the death of this body; they were not annihilated.

5. *2 Peter 2:4-9.* In this text, Peter assures us that God can preserve the righteous from destruction and keep the wicked in reserve for their eternal punishment.

6. *Luke 23:43.* Jesus said to the penitent thief on the cross, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

7. *Matthew 17:1-9.* The Transfiguration of Jesus occurred when Elijah and Moses appeared with him on the mountain. Both men had been dead for years and yet they were yet existing and living.

8. *Matthew 23:23-33.* In Jesus’ response to the Sadducees’ question about the resurrection, he stated that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, implying that those whose bodies are dead are still living.

9. *Luke 16:19-31.* The story of the rich man and Lazarus is the most extended text that speaks of man’s intermediate state. Like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, brother Fudge dismisses this text as a parable built on first century folklore (*The Fire That Consumes* 203-08). He states that the basic plot of the “parable” (203) was “well-known folklore” (204). He says, “The two-fold circumstances after death are a vehicle for the story, and they involve language familiar to Jesus’ hearers — language drawn, not from the divine revelation of the Old Testament, but from intertestamental and first-century folklore” (208). He also calls attention to the fact that the “parable” describes the condition “before the final judgment while others are still living on the earth.” However, if it is a true picture, then his doctrine on immortality is wrong! Those whose bodies have died are still alive and conscious, either suffering in torment or in peace in Abraham’s bosom.

These passages show that the Bible teaches that man’s soul does not cease to exist when the body dies. The Scriptures show that it has conscious existence between the time of the body’s death and the resurrection.

Jesus’ Death

Since brother Fudge does not believe that man’s soul survives the death of his body, this raises serious problems for him in interpreting many texts as mentioned above, but none is more serious than what it does for the death of Jesus. Fudge wrote about Jesus’ death, “What the cross shows us is a picture of total destruction and death from which God alone can deliver.” This statement was footnoted with the following comment, “In some sense consistent with his deity, Jesus was totally dependent on God to raise him from the dead (Mk. 14:36; Lk. 23:46; Heb. 5:7; 1 Pet. 2:23)” (*Two Views of Hell* 55).

Let sink in what brother Fudge has just said. When Jesus died on the cross, he died just like all men die. But brother Fudge believes that when men die, they die both body and soul; there is no spirit or soul that survives the death of the body, for he rejects as pagan the belief in the immortality of the soul. Therefore when Jesus died, there was no part of him which survived the death of the body. Where the thief on the cross joined Jesus on that day, in a place that could be properly described as paradise, is anyone’s guess (Luke 23:43). Fudge says that Jesus was totally dependent upon the Father to raise him from the dead, just as other men are. How this is to be harmonized with the following statements in John is not explained:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days *I* will raise it up (John 2:19).

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and *I have power to take it again.* This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:18).

These passages state that Jesus had power both to lay down his life and to take it up again. But, according to brother Fudge, there was no spirit to survive the death of the body, no divine spirit with power to resurrect his own body as he raised Jairus’ daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. The death of Jesus poses serious problems for brother Fudge.

The spirit in Jesus was the divine Spirit. This is reflected in the statement in Hebrews 10:4-5, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but *a body hast thou prepared me.*” The “me” who inhabited the body which the Father prepared was God the Son. What became of this Spirit at the death of Jesus on the cross? Did the Spirit of Jesus die, as he believes the human spirit dies at the point of death? If so, that spirit did not possess immortality. Yet, Paul wrote, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1 Tim. 6:16). Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ the

same yesterday, and to day, and for ever (Heb. 13:8). If Jesus ceased to exist, even for three days, he was not the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Another alternative for brother Fudge is to believe that there were two spirits in Jesus — a human spirit and a divine spirit. (If Jesus had two spirits, he is not like other men.) In that case, he could affirm that the two spirits were separated at the point of death and that only the human spirit ceased to exist. This is a position that brother Fudge is not willing to affirm. Consequently, he simply replies that this is a mystery beyond human comprehension (*Two Views of Hell* 204-06). This is a fine way to resolve a logical conclusion from one's position which he cannot answer.

What Is Motivating the Redefining of Hell

The ACUTE report on *The Nature of Hell* recognized the tie between the modern feel-goodism and the redefining of hell. It said, "There may be some truth in Fernando's assertion that the growth of conditionalist thought in recent

Preachers Needed

Las Vegas, Nevada: The Vegas Drive church in Las Vegas is looking for a part-time, experienced preacher (possible full-time in the future). They can provide some support, but additional support may be required. They are a small conservative congregation that needs a motivated individual who can help them grow in spirit and in number. If interested, please contact Tony Barajas at 702-363-5746 or TonyB@BAL.cc.

McMinnville, Tennessee: The West End Avenue church in McMinnville is seeking a full-time evangelist. They are a congregation of about 25 members. They are located about 70 miles southeast of Nashville, Tennessee. They can provide limited financial support. If interested, please contact Don Henry at 931-668-5012 or Paul Fredericks at 931-686-3222.

Vernon, Texas: The church that meets at 4800 College Drive in this small West Texas town needs an evangelist. The church was established in the late 1970s and they have their own building. They can supply about \$600 per month in support, and a number of congregations have expressed interest in supporting a preacher in this location. Previous evangelists who have worked here include Wayne Goforth, Jay Horsley, and Billy Davis. If interested, please call Verne Horsley at 940-553-4791 or e-mail: horsley@chipshot.net, Floyd Scalf at 940-553-3587 or e-mail: f11973@srcaccess.net, or Den Ransom at 940-553-1372.

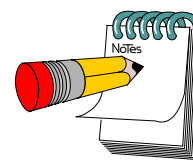
times reflects the increasingly 'feel good', self-esteem-based culture of the contemporary West" (117).

Conclusion

As we bring to a close this study of hell, we are reassured that the Bible teaches that the wicked will suffer eternal torment. The doctrine that men will be annihilated, while comforting to the wicked, is not consistent with divine revelation. One could wish that no one would be eternally lost in hell, but that would not be consistent with divine revelation and would reflect one's own weaknesses in that he has not brought his own will into harmony with God's divine revelation. No one should wish another in hell (see Rom. 9:3-5), but he should preach the fullness of the gospel, including its promise of salvation to the righteous and its threat of eternal torment to the wicked. One cannot be faithful to Christ in preaching his divine revelation while preaching anything less.

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Quips & Quotes



Supreme Court Lifts Ban on Anti-Abortion Protests

"Washington — In a victory for abortion foes, the Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that federal racketeering and extortion laws were wrongly used to try to stop blockades, harassment and violent protests outside clinics.

"The 8-1 ruling lifts a nationwide ban on protests that interfere with abortion clinic business. Abortion rights supporters said they fear the ruling will lead to a reprise of screaming matches and physical confrontations outside clinics.

"... Wednesday's ruling ends a fight that produced an unlikely alliance of abortion foes and liberal activists worried that racketeering and extortion laws could be used to trample free speech across the political spectrum" (The Indianapolis Star [February 27, 2003], A5).

Enthusiasm is infectious
— and so is the lack of it.