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The Promises of God

Lewis Willis

Some form of the word *promise* appears in the Old Testament 42 times, and in the New Testament 72 times. The word translated *promise* means “speech, speaking; announcement.” In Biblical usage, *promise* contains the elements of covenant, contract and pledge, with blessings in store to the beneficiary. In a sense a *promise* is a prophecy, the fulfillment of which is properly expected (*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* IV:872).

There are man-made promises and God-made promises in the Bible. Some are temporal, and others are spiritual promises. The promises of God are sacred, while the promises of men are subject to human frailties. God made many promises to the nation of Israel. At the close of Joshua’s life he said “not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” (Josh. 23:14).

God’s Promises Today

1. To be a Father to us.

If Christians will separate themselves from the sins of the world, he will be their Father, and they will be his children. Paul said “Having therefore *these promises*, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 6:17-7:1).

2. *Life in Christ.* Paul said he was an apostle “by the will of God, according to the *promise of life* which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:1).

3. *A Crown of Life.* A man is blessed who endures temptation “for when he is tried, he shall receive *the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised* to them that love him” (Jas. 1:12).

4. *Rest for the Soul.* The Hebrew writer said, “Let us therefore fear, lest, *a promise being left us of entering into his rest*, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

There are man-made promises and God-made promises in the Bible. The promises of God are sacred, while the promises of men are subject to human frailties.

see “Promises” on p. 344

Psalm 64: A Saint Faces Slander

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Mike Willis

The writer of the 64th psalm had been driven to the throne of God for relief from slanderous words spoken against him. The psalm is instructive in showing us how slander injures another and how victims of slander are to defend themselves.

David was the victim of wicked men in Saul's court who spoke lies against him. This is seen from the incident when David cut off a portion of Saul's robe at Ein-ge-di. After revealing himself to Saul, David approached Saul saying, "Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?" (1 Sam. 24:9). David was the victim of slanderers whose aim was to see David's reputation and David himself destroyed. The lies drove David to the throne of God with his complaint (Ps. 64:1). He asked God to protect him from fear of his enemy.

David faced Goliath in battle. He fought with the bear and the lion. He was no coward. Nevertheless, he asked God to deliver him from the "fear of the enemy" (Ps. 64:1). Men who are slanderers are to be feared.

What Slanderous Words Do To Another

1. *Slanderous words are weapons used to destroy another.* David described these words as swords and arrows. He said that his enemies "whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: that they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not" (Ps. 64:3-4). Men who would never think of taking a gun against their enemy are willing to attack those whom they consider to be their enemy with slanderous words.

2. *Slanderous words are used as snares against one's enemies.* "They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?" (Ps. 64:5). Just as hunters lay traps for animals, men plot the destruction of their enemies using carefully planted words. The intentional nature of the sin is exposed in the plotting and planning of the attack.

3. *Slanderers search out one's iniquities to use them against him.* "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep" (Ps. 64:6). Men who wish to destroy another or his influence will search out every thing in one's past to find some piece of dirt that he might use to destroy the man. Whether or not the sin has been repented of and confessed to God and man makes

see "Psalm 64" on p. 345

Even Barnabas Was Carried Away

Connie W. Adams

We are first introduced to Barnabas when this man of Cyprus sold a piece of property in Jerusalem to help relieve needy brethren (Acts 4:36-37). We next meet him in Acts 9:26-28 when he stood up for Paul in Jerusalem when the disciples were afraid of him because of his history of persecuting the church. The church at Jerusalem sent him to Antioch where he rejoiced to see the grace of God at work there “and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added to the Lord” (Acts 11:22-24). Then this good man went to Tarsus to find Saul and bring him back to Antioch that together they might work to build up the church at that place.

The name Barnabas meant son of exhortation or encouragement. His other name, Joseph, was related to the notion of prophecy and there is a hint of eloquence in the term. His demeanor reflects a character given to standing up for those who were misunderstood and giving them a chance to succeed. Not only did he show that quality toward Paul, but also toward his cousin, John Mark. When the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas forth on their first preaching journey, they took Mark with them (Acts 13:5). For some reason, Mark left them after they arrived in Asia Minor and returned to Antioch. After the Jerusalem meeting attended by Barnabas and Paul, they returned to Antioch “teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also” (Acts 15:35).

“And some days after” Paul suggested that they go again and visit the brethren whom they had helped on their first journey. Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them again. Paul opposed the plan because of Mark’s return on the last trip before the work was done. They disagreed sharply over this. “And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed . . .” (Acts 15:39-40). It is evident that the encouragement Barnabas gave Mark was of great benefit. Paul later wrote to Timothy and said, “Take Mark and bring him with you: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” (2 Tim. 4:11). Then it was Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark. If there was ever a Barnabas party and a Paul party formed over this disagreement in judgment, there is no indication of it in the New Testament. It is a good thing they did not have the Internet back then, for the news would have spread by the next morning around the Mediterranean and brethren would have been choosing up sides. There

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was no element of the truth of the gospel involved in this difference of judgment. Both men continued in the Lord's work and it did not suffer.

But there was an occasion when Barnabas was clearly wrong and the New Testament points that out. During the work of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, Peter came and spent some time working with them. This was an integrated congregation. There were Jews and Gentiles in it. Peter, a Jew, was getting along famously with his Gentile brethren until certain influential Jewish brethren came up from Jerusalem. Then he "withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that *even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy*" (Gal. 2:12-13). Peter had preached that "the promise is unto you and to your children and to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). At the house of Cornelius, Peter had said, "But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). Peter's preaching was right. But at Antioch, on that occasion, his practice did not keep up with his preaching. He yielded to prejudice and pressure. He was wrong. For that reason Paul said, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11).

But "even Barnabas" was carried away in this hypocritical conduct. Special note is made of that, for it was out of character for a man who stood up for Paul and for Mark, and who was ready and willing to go to Antioch in the first place and "encourage them much" in their work for the Lord. How that sudden aloofness must have stung those Gentile brethren. Even Barnabas!

What About Us?

It is easy for us to read all this and wonder how "even Barnabas" could do such a thing. What was he thinking? Was he temporarily swayed by the strong influence of Peter? He was pretty persuasive, was he not? Or was he concerned about his standing with the brethren in Jerusalem should these aggressive Jewish brethren go back home and raise doubts about him? The Holy Spirit does not attempt to satisfy our curiosity. What Peter did was wrong. It was hypocritical. What Barnabas did was wrong. It too was hypocritical. Paul was right in rebuking this conduct. He was right in doing so "before them all." It was public knowledge and the consequences were far reaching.

If "even Barnabas," this good man known for helping and encouraging others, could be "carried away" then the rest of us ought to pay attention. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Peter said, "Beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3:17). The antidote to that is in the next verse "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Preaching and practice must march in cadence. Many of our problems have come about because one has not kept up with the other. If "even Barnabas" could be "carried away" then "even" _____ can do likewise. When we do, let's pray there will be a Paul around to rebuke us and get us back on track.

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Thinking About the Family

Greg Litmer

What is the foundational unit of society as designed and created by God? The answer to that question is the family. In Genesis 2 we read some of the specifics of the creation account given in chapter 1. Included in Genesis 2 is the beginning of the family with Eve being created as a suitable companion for Adam and the two of them being brought together and joined together by God. They were given the charge to “be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Gen. 1:28). In this we see the formation of the basic unit of society.

It has always been true that the welfare of man on earth has risen and fallen with the recognition of the importance of that basic family unit. I say that because the emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs of every individual begin to be met in that family relationship as God designed it. It is in the home that the most important truths must be instilled. It is in the home that respect and love for God as the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler must be formulated. It is in the home that the principles of right and wrong, respect for authority, ethical standards, and personal responsibility must be taught. This truth is found in both the Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy 6:6-7, tells us, “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Ephesians 6:4 puts it so simply, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Anytime, and to the same degree, that the most important truths of life fail to be taught in the home, society as a whole will suffer. Sadly enough, any of the bad things that

happen in society seem to make their way into the church sooner or later. No thinking Christian can deny that the general breakdown of the family unit in our society has begun to manifest itself more frequently within the body of Christ. We are seeing more unhappy families, more unruly children with no interest in spiritual things, more abuse of different kinds, more worldliness, more divorce. We, whose responsibility it is to shine forth as lights in the world (Matt. 5:16), are in many instances allowing the world to exercise the greater influence.

It has always been true that the welfare of man on earth has risen and fallen with the recognition of the importance of that basic family unit.

What can be done? There is only one answer to the problems so many of us face in our families today. We must follow the blueprint of the architect of the family, God. He designed it. He created it. If any one would learn how to be a better husband, provider, father, and companion, let that person turn to God’s word. All

of the principles and precepts needed to function in every relationship we sustain within the family are there. Is it the desire of a woman to learn to be a godly wife, a mother, a best friend to her spouse? Then let her study God’s word and find every answer that she needs within its pages. So a son or daughter wants to be the very best son or daughter they can be, the very best person they can be? Such will not happen by following the example of the world. It will happen by learning and clinging to God’s Word. David wrote in Psalm 119:9, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

Too many of us today are looking in the wrong places and to the wrong sources for the answers we need to have happy families.

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Waiting for the Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Dan King

In the opening chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the writer encourages these brethren to "wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 7). All of us understand this notion of "waiting." Often we must wait in line at the check-out counter to buy groceries. We wait in line to buy tickets at the movies. We wait at the doctor's office to be called in to our appointment (which was usually a half-hour to an hour earlier than when we are called!).

Sometimes when we wait it is not a problem of patience or understanding. The line is short, or the check-out person is efficient, or everyone in line has just a few things, etc. Whatever the case may be, we are not forced to wait long.

But then at other times we have to wait for a long time. Then we grow impatient, we get nervous and "antsy." I have seen people lay the merchandise down and walk out of the store. Sometimes they even get nasty. I have also seen impatient people in the doctor's office leave and tell the nurse at the desk that they would never be back!

Waiting takes patience. Yet, if we are busy while we wait, then the time goes by quickly and we do not notice. Some restaurants have games for the kids on the placemats; others have little game-boards right on the table. Pediatricians' offices sometimes have a huge assortment of toys to entertain the children while they wait. Most outer offices have magazines aplenty for us to read while we wait.

Paul recognizes this idea in the text of the Christian's wait. Idle waiting leads to impatience and frustration, and sometimes causes people to quit altogether. Here are the things that the apostle lists as *important for us to do while*

we wait on Jesus:

1. Be enriched in utterance. In v. 5 he writes: ". . . that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge." As children of God, we have been enriched in utterance in several ways. First, our language ought to be more pure and enriching to those around us. Christians should never use profanity or vulgarity, cursing or swearing, for it is not appropriate to our calling: "Now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). Second, our speech should be happy and pleasant to those about us. We are saved from our sins! We have heaven as our hope! God loves us and is caring for us! Certainly we should talk like people for whom these things are true. None of us likes to be around people who are morose and unpleasant, negative and critical, why would we think others would want to be around us if we are this way? Our speech should be a blessing to those who hear us: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6).

2. Be enriched in knowledge. Paul also states that we ought to be "enriched in him, in . . . all knowledge" (v. 5). While we await the return of our Lord, we need to be growing in knowledge. Peter wrote: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever" (2 Pet. 3:18). This is, in itself, a life-long enterprise which, sad to say, some of us have never yet begun. The key to our desire for growth is an appreciation of the word "enriched" used in this phrase. We are "enriched" by our gain in knowledge. We are "enriched" by our growth in spiritual wisdom. Some people are enriched by an inheritance of wealth; others

are enriched by working hard and saving; still others are enriched by successful business enterprises. But we are never more enriched than when we grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ! The problem is, however, that the riches of Christ are unsearchable (Eph. 3:8) to the untrained eye, and completely hidden from the fleshly man (Col. 2:2-3). Yet they are the only true riches (Matt. 6:19-20)!

3. *Live blamelessly.* Paul continues in v. 8: “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What a tremendous challenge! To attempt to live before God blameless in Christ! Now, admittedly, we are all going to have need of God’s “confirmation” described in the first part of the verse. At times we will err and commit sin, and thus have need of the cleansing blood of the Savior to complete the work. Yet we should see it as a “race set before us” which we run “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). Or, as Paul put it elsewhere: “Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded . . .” (Phil. 3:12-15).

4. *Live in fellowship.* In v. 9 Paul further admonishes the Christians at Corinth to abide in the fellowship into which they were called. Our fellowship in Christ is both with God and with one another in the body of Christ, the church: “If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship

one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6-7).

The sweet fellowship of the church is a blessing which the negligent and unfaithful miss in this world. But ultimately they miss the greatest blessing of all: fellowship with God. Perhaps they never miss it because they have not truly enjoyed it. But, just consider the fellowship which you have had with your best friend in this world, and imagine for a moment that you had never known them. You would never have missed them had you never known them, it is true, but surely you can realize that you would have missed out, knowing them now as you do! So it is with fellowship with God and the church. You may never miss it if you have never had this sweet friendship, but you have certainly missed out! Every faithful child of God will continue steadfastly in fellowship: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

5. *Remain united in Christ.* At v. 10 the apostle presents the church with a great challenge as she “waits for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is the challenge of unity within the fellowship of which he has just spoken: “Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment”. Here he makes three demands: (1) Speak the same thing; (2) No divisions; (3) Be perfected together in mind and judgment. This is no small order! Certainly it will keep us all busy as we “wait for the Lord”!

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Into What Were You Baptized?

Tom Hamilton

Paul met “certain disciples” at Ephesus in Acts 19. Paul knew that these men were “disciples” or followers of God, but he also knew that they were not Christians. Therefore, the question Paul put to them was, “Into what therefore were you baptized?” We, like Paul in this example, will not deny that others may believe in God, may have had a religious experience, or may have some attachment to God. But we must also ask the same question that Paul did. *Into what were you baptized?* Our answer to this question will determine the validity of our religious experience and our relationship to God, just as it did those many centuries ago.

Baptized Into Water

Jesus was himself baptized as an example for us to follow. In Mark 1:9, we read that “Jesus was baptized by John in (lit. ‘into’) the Jordan river.” This expression does not make much sense unless we also understand that baptism means “immersion” — Jesus was immersed into the waters of the Jordan River. That is why the next verse says, “When Jesus came up out of the water . . .” This example of Jesus set the pattern for all believers to follow. For example, in Acts 8:38 we read of the Ethiopian’s baptism “. . . and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water . . .” The fact that Paul refers to baptism as a “burial” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12) also indicates that baptism involves a complete covering over or a total submersion into water. Of course, our answer should agree with what the New Testament says that we are to be baptized into.

While other passages speak of being baptized in or by the name of Jesus, baptism into the name of Jesus carries a little different meaning. It is a figure of speech for ownership, indicating that one rightfully wears the name of his owner.

Therefore, we must not simply be baptized *by* water or *with* water, but *into* water. Have you been baptized into water?

Baptized Into Death

Paul says in Romans 6:3-4, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” In the same way that Jesus physically died, was buried, and raised from the dead, we spiritually die to sin, are buried in baptism, and are raised again. Our old sinful self has been crucified and we have made a complete break with our sinful past, therefore we should not sin anymore, but rather live a new life (Rom. 6:5-6). Notice that our spiritual resurrection *follows*, not precedes, being baptized. The correct order — death, burial, and then resurrection — must be preserved if we are to be right with God. Spiritual resurrection and renewal can only take place *after* baptism.

Have you been baptized into death and then raised to eternal life?

Baptized Into the Name

Jesus commanded his disciples in Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and disciple the nations, baptizing them in (lit. ‘into’) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you.” Acts 8:16 and 19:5 also speak of being baptized into the name of Jesus. While other passages speak of being baptized in or by the name of Jesus, baptism into the name of Jesus carries a little different meaning. It is a figure of

speech for ownership, indicating that one rightfully wears the name of his owner. Notice in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, Paul says that nobody was baptized into Paul's name and, therefore, nobody could claim to "belong" to Paul. On the other hand, if we are baptized into Jesus' name, then we belong to him. It also makes it clear that we do not belong to Jesus and cannot rightfully wear his name as our owner until we are baptized.

Have you entered into the realm of Christ's ownership, having been baptized into his name?

Baptized Into Forgiveness

Peter says in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for (lit. 'into') the forgiveness of your sins." Here we find the answer to the very simple question, How does one enter into the forgiveness of one's sins? Peter says that we enter into forgiveness through baptism. This also means that until one is baptized, one has not entered into the forgiveness of his sins. This does not mean that we are saving ourselves. Peter explains elsewhere that baptism saves us, not of our own power, but simply because we are faithfully doing what God has said in order that we may have a clear conscience (1 Pet. 3:21).

Therefore, we must be baptized in water out of obedience to God in order to receive the forgiveness of our sins. Have you been baptized into the forgiveness of your sins?

Baptized Into the Body of Christ

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." Paul pictures the church — the group of all the saved — as a body with its many members. But how does one get into Christ's body? While people will give many different answers to this question, there is only one Bible answer — baptized into the body! One does not enter into Christ's body and then afterwards get baptized. Also, this means that one is outside of Christ's body until baptized to enter into it.

Therefore, to be a member of Christ's body, we must be baptized. Have you been baptized into the body?

Baptized Into Christ

Finally, the Bible tells us not once, but twice, that we are baptized into Christ. We have already quoted Romans 6:3-4 when noting the expression "baptized into death." Note also Galatians 3:27,

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." How do we get into Christ? Again, while many give conflicting answers, there is only one biblical answer. If you want to agree with what the Bible says on the subject, you must agree that one can enter into Christ only by being baptized into Christ. This also means that one is not in Christ until one enters into Christ through baptism. It also means that one does not get into Christ and then get baptized afterwards, as many teach.

If you believe that you are now in Christ, how did you get into him? At what point did you go from being outside of Christ to being in Christ? Have you been baptized into Christ?

Conclusion

These are not, of course, six different baptisms that the Bible is talking about. The Bible is simply telling us the six things that we are baptized into when we are properly baptized out of obedience to God.

When we are immersed into the waters of baptism, we bury our dead previous life of sin, enter under Christ's ownership, receive the forgiveness of our sins, become members of the body of Christ, and enjoy all of the blessings of God that are to be had by those who are in Christ, having entered into him by baptism.

From In Christ, Muncie, Indiana

The Lord's Supper — Its Frequency

Johnie Edwards

The frequency of observing the Lord's Supper has been a troubling question for many. There are those who observe the Lord's supper once a year, every six months, quarterly, monthly, every other month and some weekly.

There is an interesting statement in the 1890 edition of *The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches* by Edward T. Hiscox concerning the frequency of eating the Lord's supper:

As to the time, place and frequency of the ordinances, no Scriptural directions are given. They are left optional with the churches. They are usually observed on Sundays, but not necessarily. As to come to observe it the Supper, our churches have very generally on the first Sunday of each month (20).

There Are Scriptural Directions

The Lord has not left us without scriptural authority for partaking of the Lord's supper.

1. *The Lord himself instituted the Lord's supper.* "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:26-28).

The Lord's supper is of the Lord, not of men. Therefore men have no right to decide anything about the elements or the frequency of the Lord's supper.

2. *Two items are to be used in the Lord's supper.* Paul told the Corinthians, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16). How many elements did you count in this passage? Only two are mentioned! The bread is a memorial of the body of Christ and the cup, the fruit of the

vine, is a memorial of the shed blood of our Lord.

3. *Individuals eat the Lord's supper in the assembly.* *The Standard Manual of the Baptist Church* says, "Since the Supper is distinctively a church ordinance, it is to be observed by churches only, and not by individuals . . ." (20). I don't remember reading any thing about the Lord's supper being a church ordinance, do you? Surely the individual eats the Lord's supper; a fact many overlook. Paul penned, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:28-29). It seems that the brethren who believe that when one person partakes of the communion at an evening service, every member must also partake with them, miss that eating the Lord's supper has some individuality to it. When an individual communes on Sunday morning, he has done what the Lord commanded be done. If not, why not?

4. *The Bible teaches that the Lord's supper is to be observed every first day of the week.* By apostolic example we learn, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7). But someone is ready to say, "Well, it doesn't say the first day of every week. And didn't Paul say, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come?" (1 Cor. 11:26). Paul is not discussing frequency; he just says when you do eat the Lord's supper, it shows the Lord's death. As to frequency of the Lord's supper, every week has a first day, and any event that is celebrated is celebrated as often as the day rolls around. For an example, how often do you celebrate your birthday? Well, until you get to be about 40, once a year! Why just once a year? Once a year only comes once a year. Now how often does the first day of the week come. Every week. When Moses told Israel, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8); why didn't

Time for Your Children

Larry Ray Hafley

In order to provide for a child, parents must take time with their children. It is not a mother's job alone. Though a godly mother likely will spend more time with a child, both parents must be involved. Both must give of their time. Mom, Dad, are you doing it? Are you setting aside time for your children? Do you listen to them? Do you really hear them? Do you let them know that their feelings, their wants and wishes, are important and will be given fair consideration? Or, do you ignore them? Do you usually tell them to "go away," or "go outside and play," or, worse yet, do you say, "Leave me alone"?

A child senses whether he is loved or whether he is simply being tolerated. Sometimes we blame "bad" children and say, "I don't understand him! I gave him everything!" Yes, you may have given him everything he needed except for the one thing he needed most — that is, *you and your time*. My friend, if you are "too busy" to take even a few precious minutes with your child, you are *too busy*! See Proverbs 31:10-31 and Ephesians 6:1-4.

he say remember every sabbath day? He did not have to say it that way. Jews knew that every week had a Saturday. In regards to the Lord's supper, the Holy Spirit knew that early Christians understood that every week had a first day! While eating in a MCL Cafeteria, I noticed a sign about the Lions Club. The sign said, "Lions Meet Here Tuesday 6:00 P.M." The sign does not say that the Lions meet here every Tuesday. It doesn't have to; Lions know that every week has a Tuesday!

Need I say more?

4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47404

Would you abandon your child in a wilderness and force him to make it on his own? Of course not! Yet, when we neglect to give our children time, when we fail to give our attention to them and refuse to hear the expressions of their tender hearts, we are forsaking and deserting them, leaving them to wander along the highway of life.

Perhaps this poem by Stan Gebhart will touch you and help you to see the importance of giving yourself to your dear ones.

I looked at you and smiled the other day.
I thought you'd see me, but you didn't.
I said, "I love you," and waited for what you would say.
I thought you'd hear me, but you didn't.
I asked you to come outside and play ball with me.
I thought you'd follow me, but you didn't.
I drew a picture just for you to see.
I thought you'd save it, but you didn't.
I made a fort for us back in the woods.
I thought you'd camp with me, but you didn't.
I found some worms 'n such for fishing if we could.
I thought you'd want to go, but you didn't.
I needed you to talk to, my thoughts to share.
I thought you'd want to, but you didn't.
I told you about the game, hoping you'd be there.
I thought you'd surely come, but you didn't.
I asked you to share my youth with me.
I thought you'd want to, but you couldn't.
My country called me to war. You asked me to come
home safely,
But I didn't.

Now, dear mom and dad, will you find some time today to share with your children and give them the greatest gift you could ever give them — yourself?

4626 Osage, Baytown, Texas 77521

Religious Controversy

Ron Halbrook

(The following three selections underscore the importance of religious controversy. I have slightly edited these excerpts of longer articles and have given them new titles. "The Prince of Peace Never Sheathed the Sword of the Spirit" is taken from Alexander Campbell, "Religious Controversy," *Millennial Harbinger* [4 Jan. 1830]:40-44. "I have Counted the Cost" is taken from Campbell, "The Rev. Thomas G. Jones and the Luminary," *The Christian Baptist* [1 Dec. 1823]:99 [reprinted by Gospel Advocate Co., 1955]. "The Only Safety for the Truth" is taken from J.W. McGarvey, "Bro. Hayden on Expedience and Progress," *Millennial Harbinger* [Apr. 1868]:219. Submitted by Ron Halbrook, 654 Gray Street, West Columbia, TX 77486)

The Prince of Peace Never Sheathed The Sword of the Spirit

"Who of the Bible's great and good men was not engaged in religious controversy! Whenever it was necessary, all — yes, all the renowned men of antiquity were religious controversialists. *Moses* long contended with the Egyptian magi. He overcame Jannes and Jambres too. *Elijah* encountered the prophets of Baal. Job long debated with the princes of Edom. The *Jewish prophets* and the idolatrous kings of Israel waged a long and arduous controversy. *John the Harbinger*, and the Scribes and Pharisees, met in conflict. *Jesus*, and the Rabbis, and the Priesthood, long debated. The *Apostles* and the Sanhedrin; the *Evangelists* and the Doctors of Divinity; *Paul* and the Sceptics, engaged in many a conflict; and even *Michael* fought in 'wordy debate' with the Devil about the body of Moses; yet who was more meek than Moses — more zealous for God than Elijah — more patient than Job — more devout than Paul — more

benevolent than John?

"If there was no error in principle or practice, then controversy, which is only another name for opposition to error, 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. 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.

"Religious controversy has enlightened the world. It has enlightened men upon all subjects — in all the arts and sciences — in all things — philosophic, literary, moral, political. It was

the tongue and pen of controversy which developed the true solar system — laid the foundation for the American Revolution — abolished the slave trade — and which has so far disenthralled the human mind from the shackles of superstition. Truth and liberty, both religious and political, are the first fruits of well directed controversy. Peace and eternal bliss will be the 'harvest home.' Let the opponents of controversy, or they who *controvert controversy*, remember, that had there been no controversy, neither the Jewish nor the Christian religion could have ever been established; nor had it ceased could the Reformation have ever been achieved. It has been the parent of almost all the social blessings which we enjoy.

**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.**

“When we love truth for its own sake, and when our efforts to maintain it proceed from brotherly kindness and love to all men, then we will plead its cause with force and with success; and then, and then only, will we be sanctified and blessed in the work. But a controversy for opinion, or for truth, instituted by vanity, by the pride of understanding, or the lust of power, will pollute the heart, aggravate the passions, sour the temper, and terminate in vain jangling. But because it has been *abused* shall we desist from the *use* of it? This would be to make a covenant with death, and an agreement with destruction. This would be to live in vain, and to die without honor. This would be to depart from the example of the Apostles of Jesus, and to renounce our allegiance to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. For so long as error in principle and in practice exists, so long will it be the duty of the intelligent and the good to oppose it; and as long as there are conflicting creeds, sects, and divisions among religionists, so long will it be our duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

“To your posts, then, O Israel! Remember you have enlisted not for *six months*, like some of our sectarian militia; but you have vowed allegiance during the war. ‘Fight the good fight of faith.’ Keep your eyes upon the Captain; and when the conflict is over he will cover you with laurels which will never wither, and bestow upon you a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.”

I Have Counted The Cost

(A “Rev.” Thomas G. Jones accused Alexander Campbell of being a troublemaker, “a sort of religious Ishmaelite,” one who caused division and opposed almost everything and everyone. Campbell responded in the following words.)

“I would say, as the Jews once said, ‘*Let my right hand forget her cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, rather than I should oppose one word, one doctrine, or one commandment of the Savior or his apostles.*’

But this I confess unto thee, Mr. Jones, that I do oppose, and will, by the grace of God, oppose, not only *almost*, but *altogether*; everything received as the Christian religion, not found in the New Testament, to the utmost of my ability and opportunity, at the risk of everything — of even offending Mr. Jones or any other reverend gentlemen. I have counted the cost, and put my hand to the plow, and while the Lord protects and enables me, I will not look back.”

The Only Safety for the Truth

(In 1868 A.S. Hayden suggested that brethren should be more flexible and tolerant toward such things as instrumental music in the name of expediency and progress. J.W. McGarvey responded as follows.)

“The loudest call that comes from heaven to the men of this generation is for warfare, stern, relentless, merciless, exterminating, against everything not expressly or by necessary implication authorized in the New Testament. Such is my unwavering conviction; and my only regret is, that I cannot fight this fight as it should be fought.

“In conclusion, let me add, that if any brother who reads this sees fit to style me intolerant, dictatorial, or self consequent, I say to him that I claim to be nothing more than one plain disciple of Christ, and to exercise a prerogative which belongs to us all. It is my duty to find fault with everybody and everything that is wrong; and it is equally the duty of every other brother. In the full and free performance of this task, lies the only safety for the truth. Error alone can suffer in such a warfare, and she alone is afraid of it. If I have struck one blow amiss, let it be returned on me double, and it will be well.”

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Compartmentalizing One's Life

James P. Needham



Christian



The above graphics illustrate an age-old concept many have of their lives. Some feel that life is made up of various compartments that don't overlap. Being a "Christian" is one compartment of life, but its principles do not govern what one does in business, as a citizen, or in the family, etc. Being a "Christian" is what one does when he goes to church, and when he is with other Christians, but how one conducts business, or acts in politics or in his family should not be governed by the value system imposed by the laws governing a Christian's conduct. Being a "Christian" is like a Sunday coat that one dons on Sunday, but puts off on Monday as he enters other compartments of his life. It is well said that a hypocrite is one who isn't himself on Sunday. John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* spoke of the person who "is a saint abroad

and a devil at home." I knew a church member, a preacher's wife, who was confronted about her social drinking and the use of tobacco. Her answer was, "Yes, I am a Christian, but I am also an individual, and if I want to smoke cigarettes, or have a drink with my friends, that's my business and does not mean that I am not a Christian." The true view of what it means to be a Christian is illustrated by the second graphic above; one should be governed by the principles of God's word in every compartment of his life.

There are people who go to church and talk as good a story as anyone; they contend for following the Bible in church work and worship; they may even preach from time to time and preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, nothing more,

nothing less and nothing else, yet be as crooked as a barrel of snakes in their business dealings and seemingly have no compunction of conscience whatsoever. We have all known of church members, even preachers, who appear to be sound, but cheat on their wives, seemingly with no feeling of guilt, lie, don't pay their debts, and otherwise violate God's word. I have to say that preachers have told me more lies than anyone else! We read and hear of preachers and priests who molest little children, engage in homosexuality, steal money, fail to pay their debts, and commit other acts of ungodliness. Some of our own brethren seem to be model Christians, but abuse their wives and children, if not physically, mentally, by selfishness and unkindness. We see this and wonder: how can it be! Do these people not know better? Can they not see their inconsistency? What such people are doing is compartmentalizing their lives, whether they call it that, or realize what they are doing. They see their church work as one compartment of their lives, and their business, or private lives as another, and one does not interfere with or govern the other. I had a very able preacher friend who did excellent work. We worked together in gospel meetings and other projects on many occasions. Once he held an excellent meeting where I was preaching, and during that very meeting a woman other than his wife was pregnant with

his child! How he could stand in the pulpit, much less preach, is a mystery. How he could associate with me, stay in my house, eat with my family, and talk of spiritual matters is difficult to understand unless he was compartmentalizing his life.

A brother wrote a well-known book as a professional historian in which he referred to the church of our Lord as a sect. When asked about it, he said he was writing as a professional historian. Many brethren were upset about it. I asked him would he have done it had he known the brethren would be so upset? He said, "Yes, he would, because he was writing as a professional historian." Here is a concrete case of compartmentalizing. He stepped out of his role as a Christian and wrote as a professional historian. He didn't take his Christianity with him. He thought he could do something as a professional historian that he couldn't do as a Christian. He very likely would not stand in the pulpit and call the Lord's church a sect, but he could sit at his typewriter as a professional historian and call it such! Compartmentalizing.

Pat Boone grew up as a Christian in Nashville, Tennessee. His family were all members of the church. He did some preaching as a young man. He recorded a song that made a hit, and he was off and running as an professional entertainer. As usual, Hollywood put him in the movies. Soon they wanted to cast him in a role where he would have to kiss the leading lady. He was reluctant to do so, but eventually justified it on the basis that he was not being disloyal to his wife, but was doing it as a professional actor. Compartmentalizing; he thought he could do something as a professional actor that he couldn't do as a Christian.

Jesus called such people *hypocrites*. They are not what they *claim* to be or *appear* to be when they are in church or in the presence of Christians. It is well said that a hypocrite is one who is

not himself on Sunday! Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but *inwardly* they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). He said such people are like "whited sepulchers . . . which indeed appear beautiful *outward*, but are *within* full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27).

Jesus excoriated the Pharisees for saying and doing not; For ". . . tithing mint, anise and cumin, and leaving off the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." Jesus said, "these ye ought to have done and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23). Like many today, the Pharisees had a polka dot hermeneutic, they believed the Bible in spots. They were very meticulous in bringing their "mint, anise and cumin" to the treasury of the temple, but in their private lives they ignored "justice, mercy and faith." They were compartmentalizing.

We need to realize that if a person is not a Christian *everywhere*, he is not a Christian *anywhere*. Believest thou this? The Bible makes this very clear in such passages as 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). "Let your light so *shine before men*, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, *in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation*, among whom ye *shine as lights in the world*" (Phil. 2:15). "*In all thy ways acknowledge him*, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6).

Our public officials today are involved in one moral scandal after another, reaching all the way to the White House! Using brute power to satisfy personal lust is the rule of the day in Washington as well as in the office, in the school, in the military,

and in the factory. Listening to talk radio, reading letters to the editor, and following the various polls gives one a pretty good view of the state of public morals in this country, which today are in the gutter and despicable. Public reaction to the recent moral scandal involving the president, whether true or not, has brought to the surface compartmentalizing with a vengeance! Many people are saying, "What the president does in his private life has nothing to do with his ability to run the country. As long as he does a good job as president, it's none of our business what he does in his private life." (One lady said it is good to have an adulterous person in the White House!) People don't really believe this, but they think they do when it suits them or serves their purpose. What if in the president's private life he committed murder, embezzled funds, beat his wife, abused his daughter, or got drunk as a skunk, or did drugs on weekends, etc. would these people say the same thing? This is a naive view of matters.

It is a failure or a refusal to realize that the *character flaw* that would cause a person to violate his marriage vow or otherwise act immorally or dishonestly, indicates that he is a *dishonest person* who cannot be trusted in other compartments of his life. If one is less than honest or moral in his private life, what evidence do we have that he is otherwise in his public life, if it were to his advantage? If one will be dishonest or immoral to get what he wants in one compartment of his life, why not in another compartment, or in all compartments? This reminds me of a preacher who was answering questions from the audience. One person asked the preacher what he thought about a person who said he and his wife had been married for 30 years and had never had a cross word. The preacher answered, "You'd better watch a fellow like that because he will lie about others things too!" He who would steal an egg would steal an ox. We should realize that one is no better than his morals, and no worse

“Some Believed . . . And Some Believed Not”

P.J. Casebolt

This inspired statement reflects the different attitudes manifested by “the chief of the Jews” at Rome. These attitudes resulted from “the things which were spoken” by Paul, and those things pertained to Jesus and the kingdom of God (v. 23).

Why did some of the Jews believe and some not? Did Paul preach one message to some and another to the rest? Was the word spoken by Paul too difficult for some in his audience to understand? With due respect to the apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit which guided him, and even with like respect to the intelligence of those in his audience, the same word was spoken to all and all understood alike. This was simply one more example of the parable of the seed and the sower (Matt. 13:3ff), and the different kinds of soil in which the seed is sown.

In 1955 I preached in a meeting with the old First Avenue and Twenty-Sixth Street congregation in Huntington, West Virginia. I say “old” for I am not sure if the same building is at the same location, and I am sure that the membership of that congregation has undergone quite a change since that time.

Since I had scheduled the meeting, a different preacher had moved in to work with the congregation. When this new preacher found out that I was coming, he tried to get my meeting canceled. Our attitudes toward the word of God were markedly different, and could be described by the adjectives “liberal” or “conservative.” Back then, a con-

than his principles.

The religion of Christ is called a vocation (a full-time job), not an avocation (a sideline or a hobby) (Eph. 4:1). It is not a Sunday coat but work clothes. He who is not a Christian everywhere, is not a Christian anywhere!

1600 Oneco Ave., Winter Park, Florida 32789-1638

gregation or a preacher was classified as either “loose” or “sound,” and those terms generally applied to moral as well as to doctrinal values. In other words, some condemned worldliness and doctrinal innovations in no uncertain terms, some advocated such things, and we even had our “middle-of-the-roaders” back then. The elders informed their new preacher that my meeting was scheduled before he came, that they had never heard me preach anything other than sound doctrine, and that I was going to come. The local preacher decided to make the best of a temporary, if bad situation, and we treated each other courteously. But I didn’t change my style of preaching.

One night I preached what was then called a first-principle sermon, and it just happened to be a contrast between some points of Baptist doctrine and the doctrine of Christ. I did not know if there were any Baptists in my audience or not, but I did notice that the local preacher seemed to be unusually uncomfortable on the front pew which he occupied all by himself. We didn’t have upholstered pews back then, and I thought maybe the varnish was so slick that he couldn’t sit still.

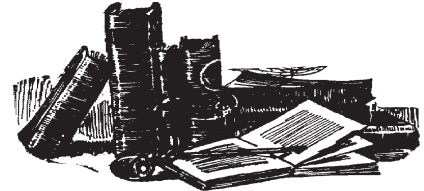
When the invitation song was sung, some came forward to be baptized for the remission of sins that they might be added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:36-47). You should have seen that preacher stop his squirming and hit the floor in an unmistakable fashion. Even his words were unequivocal, as he extolled the power of the word of God.

It turned out that the preacher had invited some of his Baptist neighbors, that they had accepted out of courtesy, but had assured him before hand that they had no intention of being baptized or of affiliating themselves with the church of Christ. Then I understood why he was so nervous, and I have seen other members of the church in the same situation. I’ll confess that I too have been apprehensive at times, wondering what the reaction toward the truth would be on the part of some in the audience, whether I or someone else were doing the preaching.

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On the same occasion, there were some other Baptists in the audience which took exception to the preaching and let me know as they left the building that they intended to continue in that persuasion as long as they lived. People have the right to disagree with what I preach, and they also have the power to choose what religious course they are going to pursue in life, if any. (And the "any" could refer to either life or religion.) Some 1900 years later, the same thing happened in the city of Huntington that had happened in Rome — "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

Others may ask me, as I have asked myself, whether or not I might have converted those who rejected the word if

I had not been so plain in my handling of that subject some 40 years ago. But, while it is fair to ask such a question, it is also fair to ask a similar question. Had I been less plain, would that couple who obeyed the gospel have done so?

Faithful preachers will pray for wisdom before they preach, while they are preaching, and will pray and engage in self-examination long after they have preached a sermon. But we cannot afford to wallow in self-guilt or doubt the truth of the gospel. And the condition of the soil (hearts) will still affect the results of sowing or watering "the seed of the kingdom."

72211 Grey Rd., Vinton, Ohio 45686

The Bible and Near Death Experiences

Steve Wallace

Luke 16:19-31 contain an inspired account of life after death. Both Lazarus and the rich man died. The Bible records what happened to them afterwards. We, by faith, look at this and other inspired accounts to learn God's teaching about the afterlife.

We are presently experiencing an explosion of information regarding another supposed source of knowledge about life after death: The Near Death Experience or NDE. In 1994 the recent history of the NDE was chronicled from the standpoint of books in print:

As a publishing phenomenon, it all began with *Closer to the Light*, written a few years ago by Melvin Morse. That book sold well and so was soon followed by his sequel, *Transformed by the Light*. Mr. Morse did not claim an otherworldly encounter himself but soberly catalogued the stories of hundreds of near-death cases. Next came the classic of the genre, Betty J. Eadie's 1992 *Embraced by the Light*, so successful that even now it tops the bestseller lists. Then *Saved by the Light*, by Dannion Brinkley, also a bestseller. He sees Mrs. Eadie one up by having died not merely once but twice, returning each time with various prophecies we ignore, he warns, at our peril. And now we have *Beyond the Light*, by Phyllis Atwater, who has trumped Mr. Brinkley with a *third* trip to higher realms (*The National Review*, September 12, 1994).

Suffice it to say that it will help us if we prepare to confront the NDE phenomena in people to whom we try to teach the gospel. We will likely meet people who have been in some way influenced by it.

While NDEs of many people contain similarities it must be pointed out that researchers have found differences in almost every story in spite of similarities. Cases have been found where people had negative NDEs in which they imagined themselves in hell or in a very unpleasant place. Others have had NDEs that are compatible with the teachings of Hinduism. An atheist reported having an NDE

and continued on in his unbelief after being resuscitated. In another case, a criminal who confessed to having killed two people had an NDE where he saw himself among saved people. Still another woman who had an NDE said that she now believes in reincarnation but not in God. Others have switched religions or become more religious. There is no consistent message from NDEs.

By contrast, the Bible speaks against the NDE as a source of knowledge about matters pertaining to God, the afterlife, and salvation. To show this we offer the following points:

1. *Near death, not dead.* People who have had NDEs were brought back from being clinically dead. They were clearly not dead in the Bible sense of the word (Jas. 2:26; Eccl. 12:7). Biblically, a person only dies once (Heb. 9:27). The Bible teaches that we go to the afterlife *after* death, not *near* death (Luke 16:19ff). Hence, reports from NDEs are similar to someone coming back from a ride in a balloon and telling what they saw on the moon!

In light of the above facts, the next point logically follows.

2. *NDEs are born of one's subjective feelings.* They are not found in the Bible. The NDE is our age's contribution to the "religious experience" common among denominationalism. For centuries, people have claimed to have had some sort of "salvation experience." Today, people are simply going a step further, claiming not only to have been saved, but to have gone into the spirit-realm of saved beings. The same verses that answer the claimed "religious experiences" of our denominational friends answer the experiences claimed by those resuscitated from near death (Jer. 10:23; Prov. 16:25). God's people should not let NDE claims bother them anymore than the traditional claims people have made in past. They all come from the same source: the mind of man.

Guilt Removed in Christ

Harold Fite

Guilt is a heavy burden to bear. It caused Peter to weep and drove Judas to hang himself. It prompted David to say, "Make me to hear joy and gladness" (Ps. 51:8). Guilt removes joy, peace, and tranquility. It can destroy our physical and mental health. To continue in guilt over a prolonged period is to lose respect for self, and not having a self to live with is tragic.

Guilt feelings may be justified or may not be justified. You may feel guilt because of a failure to measure up to what people expect of you. You may also feel a sense of guilt because you didn't measure up to self-imposed goals. The greater problem is a failure to measure up to God's law. This is what this article is all about.

Guilt is, "trouble arising in our mind from a consciousness of having done contrary to what we are verily persuaded was our duty" (*Oxford Dictionary*). It is a failure to live up to the "ought." Where there is no sense of "ought," there is no sense of guilt.

Guilt comes as the result of breaking law. To violate God's law is sin (1 John 3:4; Isa. 53:6; 2 John 9; Rom. 3:23). Sin produces guilt. Conscience also comes into play. There is no guilt without conscience! Conscience is "the sense within us by which we approve or disapprove for having followed, or failed to follow a standard known by us." In speaking of the Gentiles, Paul said, "they show the work

continued next page

3. *People who claim to have had NDEs are not Christians!* Do you know a N.T. Christian among the people claiming to have had a "positive" NDE? (I do know that one man who had such an NDE had killed two people!) How can a person who has had an NDE claim to have the comfort of the knowledge of salvation when *God* has said he has fallen short of what it takes to enter heaven (Matt. 7:21)?

4. *Reports from NDEs are inconsistent with Bible cases of people returning from the afterlife.* Paul was forbidden to reveal what he heard in "the third heaven!" (2 Cor. 12:1-7). Further, there is no account of any resurrected person — in either the O.T. or N.T. — telling what he experienced while dead! This is especially noteworthy when we consider the number of people raised from the dead in the Bible (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; 13:20-21; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-16; John 11:1-54).

5. *There is no value in those really dead returning.* The rich man thought it would be a good thing if Lazarus

went back from the dead and spoke with his five brothers. Abraham told him otherwise (Luke 16:26-31).

6. *God communicates to us today through his word.* The many books being written about NDEs and the messages of comfort they contain are like so many denominational creed books. They represent *another gospel*, separate and apart from that found in the N.T. (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11). It is the gospel of Christ that holds the power of salvation for all men today (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16). Let us do our best to turn people away from the message of the NDE and to the inspired word of God.

Conclusion

There is only one credible testimony regarding what happens when we die. It is the Bible. In a precarious world, we are all potentially "near death." Are you near heaven or hell? The Bible will both answer this question for you and tell you how to prepare to go to heaven and avoid hell.

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of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thought one with another accusing, or else excusing them” (Rom. 2:15). Our standard is the word of God and our conscience excuses or accuses us when we follow or fail to follow that standard. We must not ignore conscience.

There are two kinds of guilt: (1) Subjective, (2) Objective. In most states a person who commits a crime must be examined by a psychologist to determine whether the defendant is mentally capable of standing trial. The psychologist is not concerned with “what” he has done but “why” he did it. What were the circumstances? What pressure was he under at the time? What in his background would cause him to commit the crime? The prosecutor, on the other hand, is not concerned with why the person committed the act, but that he violated the law and must pay the penalty.

Many look to God as the psychologist. They think explaining to God why they sinned against him — outlining the circumstances; the tremendous pressure they were under at the time — that God will understand and rule in their favor. Saul pursued this course without success. Saul didn’t destroy the Amalekites and tried to blame the people for his failure: “the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen . . . I feared the voice of the people and obeyed their voice” (1 Sam. 15:15, 24). God was not concerned why Saul disobeyed him, but that he did, and he removed him from being king. While transporting the Ark, Uzzah touched it, violating God’s command. God killed him on the spot! Uzzah could have argued that the oxen shook the Ark and it looked as if it were going to fall and he instinctively reached out for it. God’s concern was that his commandment had been broken and Uzzah had to suffer the consequences of his action, circumstances not withstanding. God is not concerned with the circumstances surrounding our sin, but that we have sinned and must bear the guilt of sin.

The Jews under the law could not remove the guilt of sin. It was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin (Heb.10:4). Their sacrifices reminded them daily of their sinful state (Heb. 9:9). It took the blood of Jesus Christ to “cleanse your (their) conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). Guilt is expiated by punishment or atonement. Thanks be to God who chose for us the latter. “Him who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Modern man is trying to flee from guilt. The word “sin” has almost become archaic. A new vocabulary is being created to negate guilt: abortion, alternate life-style, love baby, unacceptable, etc. Renowned psychologists flippantly announce to the world, “You can have it all without guilt.”

Only the blood of Christ can remove the guilt of sin. For the blood to be viable it must be applied. The blood is the remedy for sin; the word is the applicator. Jesus said, “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). Peter, however, told those gathered on Pentecost, “Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . .” (Acts 2:38). Without the blood of Christ one cannot be saved. Jesus shed his blood for all men, but we will never receive the blessings that God intended for us to receive unless we apply the word.

The sinner might reply, “That’s too easy! I must suffer for my sins.” Here is the good news: Jesus has already done the suffering for you and atoned for your sins.

Dear reader, why go through life burdened with the guilt of sin? Purify your soul in obedience to the truth (1 Pet. 1: 22).

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What Does the Bible Say?

Clarence Fell

Anger

- Be slow to anger (Prov. 16:32).
- Warps understanding (Prov. 18:13, 17, 19).
- Overlook mistakes sometimes (Prov. 19:11).

Assembly

- Not to be forsaken (Heb. 10:24-25).

Baptism

- Christ commanded (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16).
- Rejection of baptism is a rejection of God (Luke 7:30).
- Baptism is into Christ (Gal.3:27).
- Baptism is unto remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
- Baptism is part of the plan of salvation (1 Pet. 3:21).
- Baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12).

Belief and Obedience

- Saving faith obeys (Rom. 10:16; Heb. 3:18-19; 5:9; Jas. 2:14-26; 1 Pet. 2:7).
- Love obeys (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14).

The Bible

- God's final and complete word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; John 15:15).
- It will judge all men (John 12:48).
- It will never pass away (Luke 21:33).
- Reveals salvation (John 8:31-32; Rom. 1:16).
- Man not to alter (Gal. 1:6-9; 3:15; Rev. 22:18-19).

Bible is the Pattern

- Avoid those who change (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9).
- Follow apostles' example (Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 6:12; Jas.1:25; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 9-10).

Blood of Christ

- Blood saves (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20).

Boasting

- No grounds for boasting (Luke 17:7-10).
- Is foolishness (Jas. 4:13-17).

Calling of God

- Is through preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:14; John 6:44-45).

Celibacy (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Children

- Are a blessing (Ps. 127:3-5).
- Are to obey parents (Eph. 6:1-3).
- Are to be taught (Eph. 6:4).
- Are to be imitated (Matt. 18:4-10).
- Jesus enjoyed them (Matt. 19:13-15).

The Church

- Jesus established one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4).
- He purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28).
- He is the only savior and head (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).
- The church is reproduced only by planting the pure word of God (Luke 8:11; 1 Tim. 3:15).
- Denominational division is contrary to God's plan (John 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10).

Confession

- Essential (Matt.10:32-33).
- Of faith in Christ (Acts 8:37).
- Unto salvation (Rom. 10:8-10).
- Confession alone is not enough (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46).

Death

- Christians not to fear (Matt. 10:28).
- Like a sleep (John11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:36).
- A rest for saints (Rev.14:13).
- Not the end (Luke 16:19-31).
- We carry nothing out (1 Tim. 6:7).

Divorce

- Forbidden (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:1-10; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:1-16).

Elders and Deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9).

Faith

- Comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17).
- Obeys (Rom. 10:16; John 6:26-29).
- Is essential (Heb. 11:6).
- Can be worthless (Jas. 2:14-26).

Forgiving Others

- Is to your glory (Prov. 19:11).
- Required (Matt. 6:14-15; Col.3:13).
- God is our example (Eph. 4:32).

Good Intentions

- Alone not enough (Matt. 7:21-23; Rom. 10:1-2).

Government (Rom. 13:1-7).

Heaven

- Home of the faithful (Rev. 21:1-27; 22:1-5).

Hell (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 14:11; 20:10, 15; 21:8).

Homosexuality

- Forbidden (Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9).

Husbands (1 Cor. 7:3; 11:3; Eph. 5:25-33; Col. 3:19; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:7).

Judging Others

- Judge righteous judgment (John 7:24; Matt. 7:15-20).
- Restore the fallen (Gal. 6:1).
- Avoid evil men (1 Cor. 5:11; 15:33).

Kingdom of God

- Not visible (Luke 17:20-21).
- Not of this world (John 18:36).
- Established in the first century (Mark 9:1; Col. 1:12-13).

Law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21).

Love

- Obeys (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14).
- Brotherly (Rom. 12:9-21; 1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Obedience

- Required of all (Matt. 7:21-23; John 14:23-24; 1 Cor. 7:19; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Heb. 5:9).

Once Saved Always Saved

- Unfruitful cast out (John 15:5-6).
- Fear of being disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27).
- Take heed (1 Cor. 10:5-12).

Parents (Deut. 6:6-9; Prov. 13:24; 29:15; Eph. 6:4).

Peace (Phil. 4:6-7).

Persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

Prayer

- Brings peace (Phil. 4:6-7).
- God answers (Jas. 5:16).
- No need to fear in prayer (Heb. 4:16).

Repentance

- Required (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30).
- Is a privilege (Acts 11:18).
- God desires all to repent (2 Pet. 3:9).

Resurrection (John 5:28; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Riches

- Desire for can cause pain (1 Tim. 6:6-19).
- True riches are in Heaven (Matt. 6:19-21).
- Can't serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).
- Your soul is priceless (Matt. 16:26).

Salvation

- Hear God's Word (Rom. 10:14-17).
- Believe in Jesus (John 3:16; Heb. 11:6).
- Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31).
- Confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33).
- Be baptized for the remission of sins (John 3:5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

Silence of God

- We are to respect God's silence (Lev. 10:1-2; Deut. 29:29; 2 Sam. 7:7; Isa. 55:8; Jer. 14:14; 23:21; Ezek. 13:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:11).

Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Speech

- Let your yes be yes (Matt. 5:37).
- Every idle word counts (Matt. 12:36).
- No corrupt speech (Eph. 4:29; 5:4, 12).
- Seasoned with grace (Col. 3:8; 4:6).

Study

- Complimented (Acts 17:11).
- Commanded (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- The way of growth (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Truth Unites

Steven F. Deaton

The Lord Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:17, 20-21). From this we learn: (1) The word of God is truth; (2) Jesus desires unity among believers; (3) Unity comes through believing the word of God — the truth.

Truth

Earlier in the book of John, the Savior gave comfort to his disciples by informing them of things to come. He told the twelve apostles that he was to leave them, but he would not leave them without help (John 13:36; 14:1-4,

Trust

- Absolute (Job 13:15).
- In the face of danger (Dan. 3:16-18).

Wisdom of Man (Prov. 14:12; Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 10:23; 1 Cor. 1:25-27).

Wives (Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

Working (Eccl. 3:12-13; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; Tit. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:18-21).

Works (Gal. 5:6; Eph. 2:10; Jas. 2:14-26).

Worry (Matt. 6:25-34).

Zeal

- Zeal alone is not enough (Rom. 10:1-2).
- God’s people are zealous (Tit. 2:14).

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26). They were told that the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, would come and guide them into all truth (John 15:26; 16:13). This truth was recorded and now exists as “the word of truth” — the New Testament (Eph. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:18).

Unity

God desires and demands unity among his people. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). When men are united in the service of the Lord, there is tranquillity and happiness (Ps. 133:1). Likewise, unity sends a strong message to the unbelieving world (John 17:21, 23).

Unity In Truth

Though God desires and demands unity, he does not want it at any price, but in truth (John 17:20-21). Men can be united in error, but this will do them no good concerning their relationship with God. Ananias and Sapphira were united in their deception (Acts 5:1-2, 9). Yes, God mandates that men are to unite, but it is to be based upon the one standard of truth — his word (Phil. 3:16).

Do you desire unity in the truth? If so, won’t you believe, repent of sin, confess Christ, be baptized, and unite with us upon God’s word alone (John 3:16; Acts 3:19; Luke 12:8-9; Acts 2:38)?

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“Promises” continued from front page

5. *Eternal inheritance.* Christ is the mediator of the New Testament so that “they which are called *might receive the promise of eternal inheritance*” (Heb. 9:15).

6. *Eternal life.* John wrote, “*And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*” (1 John 2:25).

Is it any wonder that Peter would refer to these promises as “*exceeding great and precious*” (2 Pet. 1:4)? They are *great* because they offer us so much. They are *precious* because they mean so much to the soul.

Promised to Christians

The promises of God that are precious to the soul are made to his children (2 Cor. 6:18). “*They which are called*” receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). Christians are the people who have responded to the call of God issued through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). The promises of God are also said to be “*to them that love him*” (Jas. 1:12). Gentile Christians were said to be “*partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel*” (Eph. 3:6). Christians are the ones who have obeyed the gospel. The promise of life is said to be “*in Christ Jesus*” (2 Tim. 1:1). The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the promise of heaven is made for God’s people, Christians who compose the Church.

We Can Depend Upon God’s Promises

Three things are said about God that make his promises sure: (1) “*He is faithful that promised*” (Heb. 10:23; 11:11). (2) *God cannot lie.* Paul said he was “in hope of eternal life, which God, *that cannot lie*, promised before the world began” (Tit. 1:2). (3) Peter said, “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise . . .*” (2 Pet. 3:9). Because God does not lie, when he makes a faithful promise, he will not ignore it — he will fulfill it!

He Is Able

The things which were listed before, which God has promised to his children, would be meaningless to us if the promises had been made by a mere man. Man simply is not able to give us a crown of life, eternal life, eternal inheritance, or eternal rest. We would not expect to receive such things from men. However, these promises came *from God*, and they are our hope for eternity. We are depending upon these things which God said he will do for his people. Paul said Abraham “*staggered not . . . through unbelief*” because he was “fully persuaded that, what he (God) had promised, *he was able also to perform*” (Rom. 4:20-21). God is able to do what he has said he will do. Like Abraham, we also can depend on it!

Conclusion

What conclusions, then, can we draw from these truths about God’s promises? The promises are in Christ, and

realized by our obedience to the gospel (Eph. 3:6). We must make absolutely certain that we have obeyed the gospel! Thereafter, we must be determined in our efforts to live the Christian life. We must meet the requirements of faithful living (1 Cor. 4:2), worshiping and serving God in all things (Matt. 4:10). God and the Kingdom must be the focus of our affection and our work (Col. 3:1-2; Matt. 6:33). Then, we must never become careless or impatient as we await the fulfillment of God’s promises. The Hebrew writer instructed Christians, “*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*” (Heb. 6:12). We must have enough faith to persevere to the end (Rev. 2:10); we must be careful to maintain good works (Tit. 3:8, 14); we must not lay down our sword before the battle is won (Eph. 6:17). If we do so, this is the promise of Jesus Christ: “*He that endureth to the end shall be saved*” (Matt. 10:22).

I still like the words of R. Kelso Carter, in his well-known hymn:

Standing on the promises I now can see,
Perfect, present cleansing in the blood for me;
Standing in the liberty where Christ makes free,
Standing on the promises of God.

Standing on the promises, I cannot fall,
List’ning every moment to the Spirit’s call,
Resting in my Saviour, as my all in all,
Standing on the promises of God.

Dear reader, can we say, “*I’m standing on the promises of God*”?

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“Psalm 64” continued from page 2

no difference to those who wish to sling mud to destroy another’s reputation. Any misstep into sin will serve the purpose of the slanderer. Sometimes the mere charge that one was guilty of sin is enough, without regard to whether or not the charge is true.

William S. Plumer wrote, “The ingenuity of man has been wonderfully tasked and exercised in two things, destructive weapons of war, and devising various methods of ruining men by wicked words. The list of the former is found in military writings. But the various forms of evil speaking can hardly be cataloged. Evil speakers have arrows, sharp, barbed, dipped in poison. They have ‘swords, flaming swords, two-edged swords, drawn swords, drawn in anger, with which they cut, and wound, and kill the good name of their neighbor.’ Sins of the tongue are commonly very cruel. When slander is secret, as it commonly is, you cannot defend yourself from its assaults. Its canons are infernal. One of them is, If a lie will do better than the truth, tell a lie. Another is, Heap on reproach; some of it will stick” (*Studies in the Book of Psalms* 639).

Slanderous Words Are Bitter

1. *They spring from a bitter source.* James spoke about such sinful speech saying, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?” (Jas. 3:11). The fountain that issues slander is a bitter fountain. It is full of hatred toward its brother, the kind of hatred that Jesus identified as the cause of murder. Jesus rebuked this hatred in the Sermon on the Mount saying, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:21-22).

2. *They are bitter in the result they produce.* Slanderous words injure the one against whom they are spoken. They cause pain and anguish to the innocent.

The Defense Against Slanderous Words

David knew how to fight the lion and the bear; he knew how to fight against Goliath; he knew how to lead the armies of Israel against the Philistines. He was a mighty warrior who won the respect of the nation of Israel. But David did not know how to fight against the slander of man.

The manner in which David dealt with man’s slanderous words was to take his complaint to the just God of heaven and lay out his petitions before him. He was convinced that the impartial God would rise up in his defense. “But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. So they shall make their own tongue to fall

upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away” (Ps. 64:7-8).

About the only defense one has against slander is to trust himself to the providence of God. A godly man cannot win a mud-slinging contest because his opponent will stoop to things he will not do. Consequently, his best defense is his own righteous life and the providence of a just God.

Some Things That Are Not Slander

One is not guilty of slander when he replies to the preaching of another whom he believes to be teaching error. One is commanded to “try the spirits” to see whether or not they are from God (1 John 4:1). A public teacher should not think that his character has been slandered because another examines in a public manner what he has taught. If we ever lose our willingness to have what we have preached tested by the standard of God’s word, we will have lost one of those things God has given to protect us from apostasy.

One is not guilty of slander by making available to others the public writings of a man which writings demonstrate what he believes. Sending out a packet of photocopied articles containing the articles of a man as a means of documenting what that brother is teaching is not slander. If it is, then the one writing the articles is slandering himself!

Vicious Assaults Still Occur

Vicious verbal assaults against the character of men are still going on among men and, unfortunately by some who are preachers. We call attention to these assaults in the hope of better conduct in the future.

Brethren do speak slanderous words against each other. I recently had breakfast with a brother whom I love and respect. He and I were discussing some of the differences that have arisen over *Christianity Magazine*’s series of articles advocating unity in spite of serious moral and doctrinal differences, including the position that brother Hailey had preached on divorce and remarriage. I explained that I had made four efforts to meet with the editors of *Christianity Magazine* face to face to discuss our differences and had been turned down on each occasion. This brother replied that one of the editors had explained their unwillingness to meet. The explanation offered attacked the moral integrity of those who were asking for the meeting. Men have spread this report from one end of the country to another. I know the moral integrity of the men who have responded to this series of articles. They are not liars. They are sincere, morally upright men who conscientiously oppose what they perceive to be false doctrine. They have given a lifetime to the propagation of the gospel, raised godly families, and conducted themselves honorably before God and the brethren. To defend one’s unwillingness to meet with one’s brethren to discuss their differences by assaulting the moral character of these men is slander! I for one take offence

at the charges and, like David, will commit myself to the providence of a just God to answer such false charges against my moral character.

A man is guilty of slander when he reports the conduct of a brother who stumbled into sin many years ago as a means of destroying his reputation. One report published among us charged that one man who had stumbled into sin was being used as a preacher/writer even though he had “brought no fruits of repentance.” The report failed to mention that the man repented of his sin, confessed his sin before more than one church, and has lived many years subsequently in honorable conduct. Another brother’s sin which was committed nearly 20 years earlier was mentioned in the same article, although that brother too had repented of his sin, confessed it to God and man, and lived many years of morally upright conduct. But their sins were dug up and broadcast in an effort to destroy their reputations and the reputation of those associated with them. Like the enemies of David who slandered him, slanderers today “search out iniquity” (Ps. 64:6) and for the same reason.

Preachers Needed

Racine, Wisconsin: The church in Racine is looking for a preacher. The congregation averages 75-80 members. They can provide full support. If interested, please contact Steve Crotteau, 1612 Arthur Ave., Racine, WI 53405, 414-634-1096.

Roseville, Michigan: The South Macomb Church of Christ (18551 Eastland, Roseville, Michigan; phone: 810-775-4059) is looking for a full-time preacher. Roseville is a suburb of Detroit, where more than 1 million souls need the Gospel message preached. The South Macomb congregation has been self-edifying for the last 2 years while repairing their existing building. These renovations will provide a solid facility for the Lord’s people in the area. Our current membership is under 20, but the building can hold nearly 90 before a new meeting place will be needed. The congregation can provide some support for a time, but outside support will be needed until the Gospel seed sprouts. Roseville has become a hot area for young families and first-time home buyers in the area. E-Mail address: adarney@juno.com.

Berwyn, Illinois: The church at Berwyn is looking for a preacher. Berwyn is a suburb of Chicago. They have about 85 members. A house and full support are furnished. They need someone by mid-July. If interested, please contact Wally Bretzer at 708-301-8830, Hobert Floyd at 708-788-

Slander is sometimes tolerated if the slander is against the right person. Some will not tolerate the least possible offence against their friends but have no concern for how their enemies are treated. One’s friend is sinned against when his public teachings are photocopied and sent to another, but one’s enemies are not mistreated when one digs up sins long ago repented of and confessed and reports them far and wide. It just depends upon *who* one slanders as to whether or not it is tolerated with some! Brother Harry Pickup, Jr. says that one of the tests of a man’s character is how he treats his enemies! Slander is slander without regard to whom its victim is and godly men will always oppose those guilty of slander, backbiting, whispering, and such like conduct.

6567 Kings Ct., Danville, Indiana 46122

5204, or David Terry at 708-749-4953.

Toronto, Ohio: The Dennis Way church in Toronto is looking for a full-time preacher. If you are interested, please call 740-537-4921 and leave a message on the answering machine or send a resume to: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 67, Toronto, OH 43964.

Parkersburg, West Virginia: The Marrtown Road Church of Christ in Parkersburg, West Virginia is actively seeking a full-time evangelist. The congregation of about ninety members is self-supporting. Please contact Jeff Dorton at 304-863-6548 or Eric Minigh at 304-863-6343 or rminigh@access.k12.wv.us.

Mobile, Alabama: The Tillman’s Corner church is looking for a full-time preacher. The church can provide about \$2500 per month toward one’s support. Their Sunday morning attendance is about 50. If interested, call Maurice Gaut (334-342-0382) or Oliver Barnet (334-957-6036).

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Notable Quotes

“Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: Nothing is more destined to create deep-seated anxieties in people than the false assumption that life should be free from anxieties.”

“David J. Wolpe: An old saying has it that there are three things we should not discuss in polite company: sex, politics and religion. We don’t follow this advice when it comes to sex and politics. Sexuality, especially in the context of relationships, is an everyday topic of conversation. Office and national politics are discussed constantly. The third theme alone is missing.

“Next time you’re at a party, try sidling up to someone, drink in hand, and ask, ‘So what do you think about God, anyway?’ You will quickly find yourself alone. Everyone has his or her own ideas about God, we are told. But that is equally true of sex and politics. The truth seems to be that most of us have lost the knack for talking about the deepest issues of life. This lack impoverishes our conversation and, ultimately, our lives as well” (*Reader’s Digest* [November 1994], 212).

Study Says Faith-healing Caused Untimely Deaths

“Chicago — Parents who refuse to seek medical care for their sick children because of religious reasons are essentially dooming the youngsters to untimely deaths, suggests a new study by members of an advocacy group.

“Researchers found that the majority of such children who died could have survived if they had received conventional treatment.

“The report in the April issue of the journal *Pediatrics* is designed as ammunition for lawmakers opposed to efforts by religious groups to exempt parents who practice faith-healing from laws against homicide and child neglect.

“A lot of people believe that this is a freedom of religion issue, but it’s not,” said Dr. Seth M. Asser of the department of pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego. “You can’t be allowed to abuse your children based on your religious beliefs” (*The Indianapolis Star* [April 7, 1998], A7).

Jury: Abortion Foes Guilty of Conspiracy

“A jury in Chicago put anti-abortion groups in the same

category as mobsters Monday, ruling they violated federal racketeering laws by conspiring to close abortion clinics through violence nationwide.

“The ruling, which critics say could endanger free speech, may cost the movement millions of dollars.

“. . . The lawsuit, filed by the National Organization for Women, was the first nationwide class action suit to use the Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Law, of RICO, against the anti-abortion movement.

“That law, passed in 1970, has been used primarily as a weapon against organized crime. But jurors in this case found that anti-abortion activists Joseph Scheidler, Timothy Murphy and Andrew Scholberg engaged in 21 acts of extortion, including threats of physical violence, to shut down clinics.

“They ruled that Operation Rescue and the Pro-Life Action League played a role.

“The defendants were ordered to pay \$85,962 in damages, which will be tripled under RICO. It will go to clinics in Milwaukee and Wilmington, Del., to cover the costs of increased security after they became targets of violence.

“‘They want to bankrupt us,’ said Scheidler, head of the Pro-Life Action League.

“Critics warned that the verdict could affect other groups like environmentalists, labor unions and civil rights activists.

“‘The decision in this case effectively equates freedom of speech with racketeering,’ said Cardinal Francis George of the Chicago Archdiocese. Defense lawyers said the verdict will be appealed” (*Carrie Hedges, USA Today* [April 21, 1998], 1A).

Rate of Teen-age Births Declines 6th Year in Row

“Washington — The percentage of teen-agers having babies declined for the sixth year in a row, falling in every state and the District of Columbia, and among every major racial and ethnic group for the first time, the federal government reported Thursday.

“Although nearly a half-million American teen-agers still give birth every year, the overall rate has fallen 12 percent since 1991. The birth rate for black teen-agers is down 21 percent since the beginning of the decade to the lowest level ever reported.

“The rate for Hispanics, the nation’s fastest-growing minority group, remains the highest, but the new statistics show it falling for the first time, by 4.8 percent from 1995 to 1996” (*The Indianapolis Star* [May 1, 1998], A16).