



Sixteen Days, Sixteen Minutes, An Eternity!

Richard Thetford

On January 16, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia lifted off into space for a sixteen day journey only to be sixteen minutes shy of landing safely back on earth. What a terrible tragedy it was for those seven passengers, their families, the space program, and our nation. Just seventeen years prior the space shuttle Challenger exploded while taking off, killing all of the astronauts on board. Now the reality of the brevity of life is flashed before us once again. It is moments like this that should cause all of us to realize how precious the life that we have been given by God really is. Those seven souls aboard the Columbia had just completed sixteen days in space and now were headed home to their loved ones. Then, just sixteen minutes from landing, the shuttle broke up and exploded. They were so close to returning to their families, but instead began the very first day of an eternity. But the question is, “Where will they spend eternity?” Certainly God knows the answer to that question.

Do We Have Sixteen Days or

Sixteen Minutes?

How much time do you and I have left on this earth? We don’t really know, do we? Nobody really knows how much time they have left on earth. For all we know, we could be within our last sixteen days or perhaps our last sixteen minutes — we just don’t know. Isn’t that a sobering thought? The Bible teaches: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). I am convinced that, if every person would live life as if it were his last day, what a loving environment we would have. Words like “I love you,” “please,” and “thank you” would abound. Christians would sincerely strive to love one another and care for one another if they truly thought that this would be their last day. You know, we just may be taking our last few breaths of life upon this earth. We must be pre-see “Sixteen Days” on p. 185

m a g a z i n e

Vol. XLVII

No. 6

March 20, 2003

Editor: Mike Willis

Associate Editor: Connie W. Adams

Staff Writers

J. Wiley Adams	Olen Holderby
Donald P. Ames	Jarrold Jacobs
O.C. Birdwell, Jr.	Daniel H. King
Dick Blackford	Mark Mayberry
Edward Bragwell	Aude McKee
Bill Cavender	Harry Osborne
Stan Cox	Joe R. Price
Bob Dickey	Donnie V. Rader
Johnnie Edwards	Chris Reeves
Harold Fite	Tom Roberts
Marc W. Gibson	Weldon E. Warnock
Larry Hafley	Lewis Willis
Ron Halbrook	Bobby Witherington
Irvin Himmel	Steve Wolfgang

Guardian of Truth Foundation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Connie W. Adams	Fred Pollock
Andy Alexander	Donnie V. Rader
O.C. Birdwell, Jr.	Weldon E. Warnock
Dickie Cooper	Mike Willis
Ron Halbrook	Steve Wolfgang

— Subscription Rates —

\$22.00 Per Year

Single Copies — \$2.00 each

Foreign Subscriptions — \$24.00

— Bulk Rates —

\$1.50 per subscription per month

Manuscripts should be sent to Mike Willis, 6567 Kings Ct., Avon, Indiana 46123, (317) 272-6520. E-mail: mike.willis001@cs.com.

All business matters should be addressed to O.C. Birdwell, Jr. who serves as Executive Vice-President for the Guardian of Truth Foundation. He is available by phone at 1-800-633-3216 or by mail at P.O. Box 858, Athens, AL 35611.

Subscriptions, renewals and other correspondence should be sent to Truth Magazine, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

Book orders should be sent to Truth Bookstore, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. Phone: 1-800-428-0121.

Web Address: www.truthmagazine.com

Postmaster: Send change of address to P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

Truth Magazine (ISSN 1538-0793) is published twice a month by Guardian of Truth Foundation, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. Postage paid at Bowling Green, KY and additional mailing offices.

The Bible Doctrine of Hell

(4)

Mike Willis



The Meaning of Everlasting Torment

Any discussion of heaven and hell must ultimately face the fact that the Bible uses non-literal speech to describe heaven's bliss and hell's torment. One does not ultimately look to a place with literal streets of gold, gates made out of pearl, and walls made of precious stones. These are figures of speech to describe the consummate city as man's eternal home. In the same way, the figures that are used to describe hell deserve one's consideration. Do we expect literal fire, literal darkness, etc.? Indeed, some of the metaphors of hell seem to conflict with each other (fire/darkness). Let's examine what these figures are conveying to man.

• **The second death.** Hell is described as the second death in contrast to physical death as the first death. Such a statement appears in these passages in Revelation:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death (2:11).

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (20:6).

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death (20:14).

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (21:8).

James Orr wrote about the concept of life and death saying, "Life is not, in the Scripture usage, simple existence; death is not simply non-existence, but separation from true and complete life. This theory itself being witness, the soul survives in the state of natural death. It passes into the intermediate condition, and there awaits judgment. Life, in short, is, in the Scripture sense, a word with a moral and spiritual connotation; a person may not possess it, and yet continue to exist" (*The Christian View of God and the World* 342), see *Hell 4* on p. 185

“A Jewel of Gold In a Swine’s Snout”

Truman Smith

It would not be uncommon, when passing a hog farm to see one or more pigs with a metal ring in its nose. The reason is, these animals use their noses to dig or root-up things. They also find that their nose is quite handy in digging out a place in the mire in which to wallow. But because some are a little too handy at rooting under the fence and getting out, the owner will often have them “ringed” as a preventative; all of which brings us to the words of Solomon: “As a *jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion*” (Prov. 11:22). Thus, while it would not be out of the ordinary to see a ringed pig as we’ve described, what would be very highly inconsistent would be to see “a *jewel of gold*” in the nose of a pig. If we were to see that, we’d probably think that farmer fell up a tree!

At the end of a normal school day, an attractive and healthy looking girl, evidently barely in her teens, is walking across the school campus with some other girls toward the parking lot; she walks with grace and dignity, then suddenly lights up a cigarette, takes a puff, and blows the smoke away from her with much force, trying to appear smart and independent; then they ride away toward town. Here is a girl with such promise! She has not yet experienced the damage the smoking will do to her health, how it will effect her skin complexion, wrinkle her face, rob her of a feminine voice, shorten her breath, ruin a possibly beautiful singing ability, etc. Such a sight is “as a jewel in a swine’s snout”!

A young, reasonably attractive lady, a member of the local church whose parents and grandparents are doting on her to grow up and some day meet a fine young man, a faithful member of the Lord’s church, is gradually drawn into the company of her peers and begins to experiment with illegal drugs; the sight of which is “as a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout”!

Parents often take note of their daughter’s beauty, popularity, talents, good grades in school, obeyed the gospel at a tender age, etc. Soon she is encouraged to go out for twirling, pep squad, dancing, ballerina, band majorette, show business or such. Little does she realize that when she begins to go in such a direction and dress (or undress) for these parts that in God’s eyes she is “as a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout”!

Once we knew a young teen-age girl, a member of the local congregation where we were preaching at the time, who was told by some that she had

continued on next page

Sixteen Days, Sixteen Minutes, An Eternity!
Richard Thetford.....front page

The Bible Doctrine of Hell (4)
Mike Willis 2

“A Jewel of Gold In a Swine’s Snout”
Truman Smith 3

The Best of Times and the Worst of Times (Reminiscences 17)
Bill Cavender 6

“Blessed Are the Pure in Heart . . .”
Jim McDonald 10

Unwanted Women
Olen Holderby 11

“Honor Your Father and Mother”
Bobby Witherington 12

What the Bible Teaches About the Love of God
Chris Reeves 15

The Mormon Church and Jesus
Joe R. Price 16

The Lord’s Supper: Is the Day Specified?
Ron Halbrook 18

What Does Psalm 51:5 Teach?
Kyle Pope 21

Orienting a New Generation
Norman E. Fultz 23

If Necessary, Use Words
Johnie Edwards..... 24

What Is Your Attitude Toward the Bible?
Jarrod Jacobs..... 26

an attractive figure and was pretty enough that she should make her bid for “beauty queen.” Her picture appeared in a local newspaper, along with a write-up of her aspirations in that direction. She envisioned herself competing for Miss Texas, and perhaps even Miss America! Upon seeing this item in the paper, we immediately met with her privately and warned her of the sinfulness of such competitions, the bathing suit contests, etc. To this girl’s credit, she was able to change her mind and refused to take that direction in her life. Rather, she completed high school (we do not recall if she attended college or not, but possibly did) and fell in love with a young man, a member of the same congregation, and in time married him. The last time we saw her, she was very happily married and had made a fine mother to their children. It is our firm and settled conviction that this lady escaped being “as a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout”!

What are we talking about here? In each of the above cases, we can see that it is a blessing from God to have the beauty and talents (Acts 17:28-29; Jas. 1:17) that many girls have. Especially is this true when the beauty is inward! But how contradictory or inconsistent with such attractiveness it is for such young ladies to take up such a life that is of a worldly character! It is completely incompatible with such God-given beauty! Such a life is not becoming to “women professing godliness” (1 Tim. 2:10). Peter said: “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corrupt-

ible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pet. 3:4). When any young, beautiful, and talented lady aspires to any such worldly activities, it is often nearly impossible to talk them out of such a pursuit. However, we have a responsibility to help our youth to make wise decisions, especially in matters of such importance that might place them in a position where temptation to go wrong is increased. Even at best, they are faced with enough pressure from friends and peers to fashion themselves according to the world that they need all of the help that mature and good people are able to provide without being pushed into such. This is particularly the responsibility of godly parents, in which the father must take the lead. Paul said: “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

So, young people, parents, grandparents, and relatives, remember the words of Proverbs 11:22: “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.” Don’t ever encourage a young lady to be a contradiction “as a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout.”

From the Voice, Florence, Alabama, January 2003

Good Books For Your Library

The Christ, the Cross, and the Church

by Larry Ray Hafley

Discusses issues that are current among brethren with reference to salvation and the church. This book will be appreciated by those who wish to cling to the teaching of New Testament Scripture. #80263

\$13.99

The Gospel Plan of Salvation

by T.W. Brents
B r e n t s p o w -

erfully refutes the tenets of Calvinism in these studies on the new birth, faith, repentance, confession, baptism (what, who, why), and the establishment and identity of the New Testament church. #80022

\$19.99

Call: Truth Bookstore — 1-800-428-0121

The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

Bill Cavender

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.” Thus the beginning lines, Book I, Chapter 1, of *A Tale Of Two Cities*, a novel by Charles Dickens.

Only those of us who have lived in these days and times, . . . from the days of “The Great Depression” to the days of affluence, material wealth and prosperity, can really visualize and understand the changes which have taken place in the world, in our country, and in the churches and among our brethren.

This classic of literature, first published in 1859, is a “historical romance,” as the literary experts categorize it. Its historical setting is in the times of the French Revolution, approximately 1775 to 1800, in which period the king and queen of France, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, were put to the guillotine, executed by the revolutionists in 1793. The “two cities” in the novel are Paris in France and London in England. This masterpiece of world literature is well worth your reading. Each “Bastille Day” (July 14, the most important annual holiday in France, comparable to our American “Independence Day” holiday of July 4) the French celebrate the “storming of the Bastille,” a castle-fortress prison in Paris where royal prisoners were incarcerated and brutalized, the destruction of this inhumane prison, the release of the prisoners confined therein, resulting in the birth of the “First French Republic.”

In the file cabinet of my mind and memory, the years of 1945-1960,

at the end of and immediately after World War II (which ended in August 1945, with the unconditional surrender of Japan to General Douglas MacArthur on the main deck of the mighty battleship, the U.S.S. Missouri, anchored in Tokyo Bay), in the Lord’s churches in our country, and, by extension throughout the world, “it was the best of times” as Dickens wrote. In August 1945, I was an eighteen years old “Pharmacist’s Mate, Second-Class” in the U.S. Navy and a member of the Methodist church, but had just begun attending services of the Seventeenth Street Church of Christ in San Francisco. I can never forget and will ever remember into eternity that Japanese surrender day when *The San Francisco Examiner* newspaper, in tremendously large, bold, headline letters, published “an extra” at once and had the newspapers upon the streets “screaming” the wonderful news: “EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT! JAPAN SURRENDERS! THE WAR IS ENDED!” On that day the streets of downtown San Francisco immediately

filled with multiplied thousands of people. Office buildings were emptied of their workers. The workers down at the waterfront, the piers, and the docks left the ships which were docked there along the shore and came up to the main areas of the city, into the streets. I, along with other Navy personnel, emptied the eight story office building on Union Square where we worked, went down onto Market Street, where there was dancing for joy (no music, no bands, but lavish, overflowing happiness), hugging and kissing strangers, shouting profusely, that “THE WAR IS OVER, THE WAR IS OVER,” and military personnel “would soon be going home.” I would not be going home to Tennessee for another year as I was young, unmarried, and did not yet have enough “points” in age and length of service (one and one-half years to that time) to be discharged.

What was taught and practiced in American churches of Christ trickled down and spilled over into new brethren and churches in other countries, as American preachers and American money went into and influenced those new converts and congregations. In those days we had radio and the printing press. Tape recorders, television, videos, the Internet and e-mail, would come later. “It was the best of times” because the war was over; peace reigned amongst nations and between the churches and brethren; those who had gone off to war came home to families, to work, to school, to civilian life. Industries geared up and tooled up for reconstruction of Europe and Japan and to manufacture consumer goods (cars, refrigerators, washing machines, etc.) for domestic consumption. There was an abundance of good jobs and generous wages. There was material prosperity. There was national thankfulness. Untold opportunities for preaching and teach-

ing God’s word abounded. Churches were growing numerically (and also appeared to be growing “spiritually”), brethren seemingly loved each other, Christians could worship with just about any congregation anywhere and be welcomed, and the gospel of Christ was being preached to an extent unparalleled in the history of the kingdom of God. This decade and

era exceeded even the rapid spread of the truth in the first century, for there were more Christians in 1945-60 than in A.D. 30-100, more money to do God’s work, more useful tools (the printed word, radio, television, means of transportation, etc.) to do and go to the work, and peaceful governments throughout the world which were not, at that time, antagonistic to the truth (as were the circumstances in the first century when the Jews and the Roman emperors so violently persecuted and killed our brethren). Only those of us who have lived in these days and times, from 1926 to the present, from the days of “The Great Depression” to the days of affluence, material wealth and prosperity, can *really* visualize and understand the changes which have taken place in the world, in our country, and in the churches and among our brethren.

If ever there were “*halcyon days*” for and “in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph. 5:5), from Pentecost, Acts 2, until this present year of 2003, those “days” were in the USA, in the churches of Christ, immediately after World War II. Webster records that “halcyon” means “calm, peaceful,

tranquil, rich, wealthy, prosperous, happy, joyful, carefree,” as “times of peace,” “days of youth” (*Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, 1956 Edition). I had obeyed the gospel of Christ in February 1946, in San Francisco. These were the days when I, and so many, many young men like me — tempered by military service and warfare, having seen first-hand the sorrows, sadness, suffering, deaths of comrades, and heartaches of their loved ones, inflicted upon them by evil men and rulers, hatred, greed, lust for power, conflict and strife were converted to Jesus our Savior. We wanted to preach the gospel of redemption and salvation to lost souls everywhere, wanted to build and extend the kingdom of Christ and of God in this world, and desired to do all the good we could while we lived.

But those halcyon days were of very brief duration — in the world and in the church! The “cold war” period of time came quickly in Europe, between Stalin’s Russia on one hand in Eastern Europe, and the Western Powers of Europe and the USA on the other. An “iron curtain” (the famous description coined by Sir Winston Churchill in a speech at Fulton, Missouri, when he made a visit to the USA) fell upon and divided the nations of Eastern Europe, a “curtain” dropped by Stalin and his minions, rulers of the powerless nations under Russia’s control. Talk of war resumed and nations ceased disarming and began to rearm and rebuild their military might. Localized wars began to occur in various parts of the world (example: Korea). There had been “a time war, and a time of peace,” but peace was so short-lived and there was “a time of war” again (Eccl. 3:1-2).

Similar conditions and circumstances surfaced in the churches of our Lord. Very quickly “it was the worst of times” among brethren, as Dickens

wrote. As I wrote in an essay in this series, colleges and schools among the brethren, the administrators and boards of directors of these human agencies, well-known and reputable men, encouraged and assisted by well-known preachers and papers, led the way in our problems. The schools needed money immediately after the war. Classrooms, equipment, faculty, libraries, dormitories, etc., everything needed to operate a school, were demanded quickly due to tremendous influx of government-funded, "G.I. Bill," prospective ex-military students. New colleges were begun in various areas of the country. Too, more families were becoming financially able and could afford to send their children to college. Parents realized that the world was changing and children needed an education.

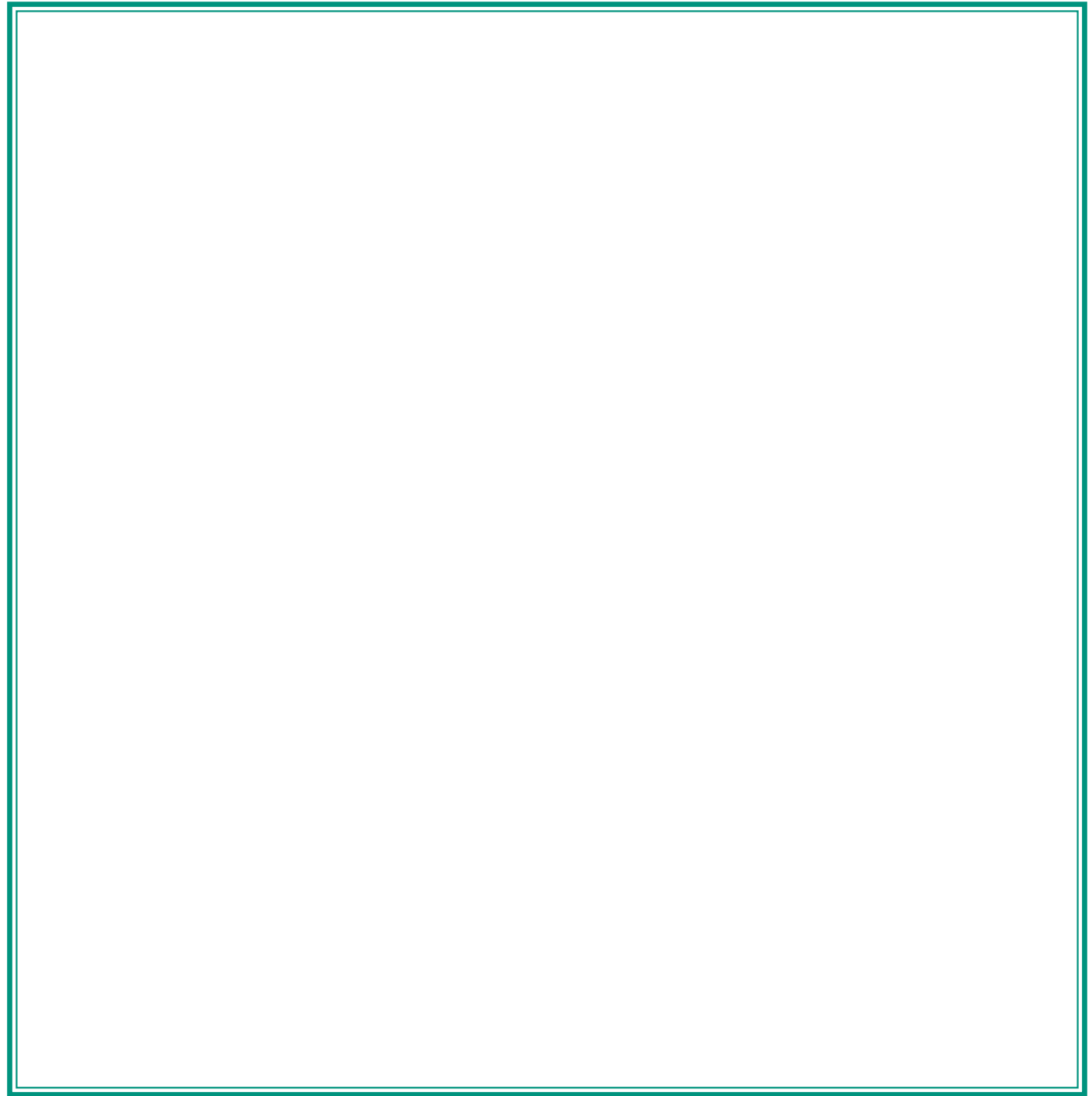
The college people, through mailed appeals to brethren and by personal appeals and visits from representatives of the schools, using reputations and exerting influence and pressures in every conceivable way, sought to raise funds. Some papers of brethren, notably the *Gospel Advocate*, with G.C. Brewer leading the charge, encouraged the congregations to support the schools. His speech at the Abilene Christian College lectures ten years earlier, in 1936, openly encouraged churches to support the schools. In 1946 and 1947 brother N.B. Hardeman wrote articles in the *Gospel Advocate* endorsing the theory of churches supporting the schools. Some of the schools began programs and courses of study "to train missionaries" and argued that churches could support these Bible departments and missionary training programs because they were teaching the Bible. The *Firm Foundation* paper in Austin, Texas, under the editorship of G.H.P. Showalter, and later under Reuel Lemmons, tried to take "a middle of the road," "ride the fence" position and attitude but, actually and practically, they supported the institutionalizing of the Lord's churches and became major contributors to the principles and causes of division among brethren. Prominent brethren and churches began obviously and openly to "take sides" in 1946-47. One paper, *The Bible Banner* (later named *The Gospel Guardian*) vehemently opposed churches contributing to the schools, led by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. (who, more than any other brother and preacher, influenced my thinking and convictions. I have read all his writings, some of them again and again, and I heard him preach many times). Such men as C.R. Nichol (whom I have heard in a gospel meeting in Dallas in 1952), J. Early Arceneaux (whom I visited in his old age in New London, Texas, with brother John W. Hedge), R.L. Whiteside (whom I never met), J.D. Tant (whom I never met), W.W. Otey (whom I never met), W. Curtis Porter (whom I heard debate Ben M. Bogard and Hoyt Chastain, Baptists), Roy E. Cogdill (who was our friend for many years, and who stayed with Marinel and me for a week in Cullman, Alabama, when he conducted the final gospel meeting of his lifetime; he was ill, had to stay in bed through the day, and had to sit down some of the time while preaching in that meeting. I have the tapes

of his lessons), all great and good men in their times and circumstances, stood in the breach and came to the help of Jehovah in time of need (Judg. 5:23). An innumerable host of many, many preachers and brethren arose in Israel to oppose "the college crowd."

In 1947, in the *Gospel Advocate*, N.B. Hardeman, the most influential preacher in the churches east of the Mississippi River argued, correctly and consistently so, that the colleges and the homes (orphan or aged) must stand or fall together. His expressed, written thoughts were that schools in the budgets of the churches and thereby binding the schools to the churches was not wise. However, he said he had believed, and still did, that a congregation could contribute to a school or an orphans' home if the elders decided to do so. This teaching was seized upon and argued; it was a turning point in the controversy: "If a congregation can support the orphans' home, it can support the school," for both are chartered, authorized, and legalized under the same civil laws of the states in the USA. This similarity of legal, civil, state-authorized agencies, thus formed the main foundation argument and basis for the congregational maintenance, support, and subsidization of the human institutions of men, of man's wisdom, and not of God's wisdom! If we can support the orphans' home, we can support the college."

In the early years of the twentieth century, when orphan homes began to exist, some congregations sent funds to orphan homes, most did not. Some of these state chartered, institutional "homes" were becoming old by 1946-47 (Tipton in Tipton, Oklahoma, Potter in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Tennessee in Spring Hill, Tennessee, Boles in Quinlan, Texas, etc.) having begun in earlier years of the twentieth century, in a period of time in which there were "some real orphans," i.e., children who had lost their parents in death.

Folks did not divorce their mates back then. Women did not "abort" their babies in those days. People "cared for their own." But people died in greater numbers proportionately in the early nineteen hundreds. There were the terrible flu epidemics, rampant tuberculosis (consumption), colitis (dysentery, diarrhea), diphtheria, smallpox, whooping cough, etc., before the inventions of antibiotics, vaccinations, etc. There were few hospitals and no nursing homes. Good medicines were not available. People were generally poor. Many "orphans" were cared for and raised by family members, or by more distant relatives, by friends and neighbors, and by brethren. "Pure and undefiled religion" (Jas. 1:26-27) was more fashionable in those days. Orphan homes began in the denominational churches before our brethren began to become involved in these ventures, mainly because denominational churches were more numerous and larger in numbers of members, more wealthy, and older and more established in communities



throughout the country than were churches of Christ. Too, the various states began to operate orphanages, supported by taxation, alongside of the county poor house(s) which became so well-known in our society in the twenties and thirties. All of us who were growing up in those times and circumstances knew people, or knew of people, in the poor house or of some family who had taken an orphan or relative into their family and under their roof to care for and to raise as their own. Even in abject, base poverty, folks

cared for their own (1 Tim. 5:4, 8, 16) and very few people were low-down enough to send a child or children off to the orphan home! (To be continued)

1822 Center Point Rd., Tompkinsville, Kentucky 42167 caverb@aol.com

“Blessed Are the Pure in Heart . . .”

Jim McDonald

There is a natural longing on man's part

to see the face of God. Moses pled with God to show him his face. The Lord responded that none could look upon it and live, but he allowed Moses to see his hinder parts (Exod. 33:18ff). Philip said, “Show us the Father and it sufficeth us” (John 14:8). This longing has been formed into poetry and set to music. We sing: “Face to face with Christ my Savior. Face to face what will it be? When with rapture I behold him, Jesus Christ who died for me!” It is mere speculation to draw by brush the face of God. Still such a longing is there! John addressed this desire when he wrote: “Beloved now are we children of God and it is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him for we shall see him even as he is” (1 John 3:2). To see God we must be pure in heart. Jesus said “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

Jesus told his disciples, “Not that which entereth into a man defileth the man but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man” (Matt. 15:11). Jesus made a similar statement in Mark 7:14b-15: “Hear me all of you and understand. There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile him.” Jesus spake these words because his disciples were criticized for eating with unwashed hands and ignoring many of the traditions of the elders (Mark 7:2).

Still, his disciples (although they had ignored the elders' traditions) did not understand his response to the Jews. So, they asked him what the parable meant. Eating food that is not washed or to eat with dirty hands might make one ill, but would not “defile” us. It is what we say that defiles us for our words are simply the echoes of our hearts. Your heart is the real *you*. We are told, “As a man thinketh within himself, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). All wickedness originates in the heart “. . . for within, out of the heart evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murder, adulteries, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness, all these evil things proceed from

within and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

Control the heart and you control the man! Our hearts are purified from the guilt of its wicked thoughts through an obedient faith. Peter said of the Gentiles “that God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit even as he did unto us . . . and he made no distinctions between us and them, cleansing (purifying) their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8). But, he also wrote: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience unto the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently” (1 Pet. 1:22). Only God can forgive sins and thus “purify” (cleanse) our heart from sin's guilt. We cannot do what God can do in this regard, but we can *and must* purify it by checking our hearts and ridding it of every wicked thought and way. James urged, “Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (Jas. 4:8).

Paul urged, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilements of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord” (2 Cor. 7:1). Like David, we should pray, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer” (Ps. 19:14).

The pure in heart shall see God. They shall be eternally saved. This is the ultimate goal of all believers and is reward for all our struggles and trials. Therefore we must daily search our hearts to see if there is any unclean thing therein for we may be sure that God is doing so. The wise man gave good advice when he wrote: “Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).

P.O. Box 155032, Lufkin, Texas 75915-5032



Unwanted Women

Olen Holderby

Most of us have run across some people who are undesirable and it serves no good purpose for us to be around them. In fact there are some with whom we do not wish to associate at all. Sad, but true, we may find some such people “in the church.” There are some kinds of women which are not wanted in the church — either by the Lord or his faithful. Shall we notice some such women?

Women who misrepresent the truth as did Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). This may be done by misrepresenting what the preacher says, or by simply gossiping about other members of the church — at least these are common ways of so doing. James said, “. . . if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man” (3:2). Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). Jesus also said we would have to give an account in the day of judgment for every idle word we speak (v. 36). Women who continue to do such would be unwanted.

Women who look back as did Lot’s wife (Gen. 19:17, 26). She looked back to where her home had been, where her goods remained, where her relatives were living, and where her good friends or neighbors remained. All of these were still in Sodom, so her longings were behind and not “out front.” Jesus warned, “Remember Lot’s wife” (Luke 17:32). Paul said he would forget those things which were behind and press toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13-14). Looking back often has us right back to where we were!

Women who cause wickedness as did Jezebel (1 Kings 21). She schemed the death of Naboth in order to get his possessions. She did this by “stirring up” her husband, Ahab. She used the idea similar to, “Are you man or mouse?” This proved to be disastrous to Ahab. Sometimes women will “stir up” their husbands to get their own way in the church. Such women would not be wanted.

Women who discourage their husbands as did Job’s wife (Job 2:9). She urged her husband to “curse God, and

die” (2:9). Why do you suppose she did this? Could it be that she did not wish to listen to his plight or observe his experiences! Many men never amount to anything in the church because their wives discourage them.

Women who are quarrelsome as were Euodias and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2). Both were Christians, but they were not of the same mind (1 Cor. 1:10). They had failed to do those things which would edify one another (Rom. 14:19). Being irresponsible, they had forgotten to grow up in Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:15) and were not being kind and forgiving (v. 32).

Women who are tattlers and busybodies as in 1 Timothy 5:13. They were idle and wandering from house to house, and they were speaking things which they ought not. It is so easy for one to go from “house to house” today via the telephone. O, for the heartache this often causes!

The encouraging thing is, no woman has to be any of these. She can rise above all these disgusting things and be a real jewel in the labors of this life. She can go to heaven, and she can try to take others there with her. There is no better goal!

1515 Walnut St., Alameda, California 94501

He Looked For a City

by Ottis L. Castleberry

Biography of John T. Lewis, influential Birmingham (AL) preacher and leader in churches of Christ. #80004

\$11.99

“Honor Your Father and Mother”

Bobby Witherington

It has been observed that reverence for parents has been inculcated in every moral code ever impressed upon human beings — regardless of how ancient or modern, backward or enlightened the affected society may have been. This is particularly true with reference to the Bible, the one Book which originated in the mind of the Creator and revealed to those beings created in his “image” (1 Cor. 2:10-13; Gen. 1:27). The necessity of children showing respect and honor for their parents is clearly spelled out in both the Old and New Testaments. Let us now notice a few instances in both Testaments in which respect for parents is mandated.

Old Testament

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you” (Exod. 20:12). “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (Exod. 21:15). “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (Exod. 21:17). “Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father” (Lev. 19:3). “A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Prov. 10:1). “A wise son heeds his father’s instructions, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke” (Prov. 13:1). “Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old” (Prov. 23:22).

New Testament

“For God commanded, saying ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death” (Matt. 15:4). “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1). “Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:2). “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord” (Col. 3:20). “But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn

to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim. 5:4). “If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows” (1 Tim. 5:16).



Observations

A Pharisee asked Jesus, “Which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus replied, saying, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Concerning this command, Jesus said, “This is the first and the great commandment.” But Jesus then said, “The second is like unto it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” And Jesus added this comment: “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:35-40). With these two statements in mind, it would be appropriate to

observe that the Ten Commandments (recorded in Exod. 20:1-17 and Deut. 5:1-21) may be summarized under two categories: (1) man’s obligation to God, and (b) man’s obligation to fellow human beings. And in the second category (pertaining to man’s obligation to fellow human beings), the very first command (in the order cited) is this: “Honor your father and your mother” (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). The point is clear — loving your neighbor begins with “honor your father and your mother!”

What Does “Honor” Mean?

From the Scriptures cited (from both Testaments) and the necessary inferences drawn from Christ’s summation of “the Law and the Prophets,” it is clearly evident that a God-fearing, God-obeying person must honor his parents. But what does it mean to honor one’s parents?

Weust, in *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* (commenting on Eph. 6:2, “Honor your father and mother”)

had this to say: “Honor” (from *timao*) means “to estimate, fix the value.” He then made this statement: “To honor someone therefore, is to evaluate that person accurately and honestly, and treat him with the deference, respect, reverence, kindness, courtesy, and obedience which his station in life or his character demands.”

“Honor” does not mean “humor.” Some people grudgingly humor or give in to their parents’ requests — not because they truly respect their parents, but because they figure that by so doing they can get their parents “off their backs.” For that matter, many parents humor or indulge their children’s every unreasonable demand because they (not having learned a thing about loving discipline) don’t want to listen to their children’s whining. And to that situation I have but one comment: May the Lord have mercy on their children!

How Does One Honor His Parents?

1. By treating them with respect. Were it not for your parents, you would not even exist! In all likelihood, your parents fed you when you could not feed yourself, bathed you when you could not bathe yourself, and provided for your every physical necessity when you were totally helpless. That ought to count for something!

2. By being an honorable person. “A wise son makes a glad father, But a foolish son is the grief of his mother” (Prov. 10:1). There is much sorrow in this world, but I can not think of anything that causes more agony than that so often experienced by aged, morally-upright parents whose children live reprobate lives, bringing their parents nothing but sorrow and shame. In contrast, a very spiritually minded man once said, “I know that God never smiles on a boy that breaks his mother’s heart.” It is the very essence of ingratitude to let down the very ones who brought you up! If, by chance, your parents were not all they should be, then you can still honor them by being better than they were.

3. If necessary, by providing material support. On the one hand, “children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children” (2 Cor. 12:14). And this is generally the way it goes. In fact, many parents have gladly deprived themselves of basic needs, while working themselves into an early grave, in order to provide for their children. But sometimes the tables are turned. In some instances, in effect (due to financial, physical, or mental loss), the parent becomes the child and must be provided for by the children. With this in mind, the apostle Paul penned these words: “But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents, for this is good and acceptable before God” (1 Tim. 5:4). It was in this context that the same apostle said, “But and if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1

Tim. 5:8).

4. By being a good parent. In most cases, children grow up, marry, and become parents themselves. They are now in a unique position to really show honor to their parents. It has been observed that “you don’t fully repay your parents for raising you until you start raising your own children.” Solomon said, “Children’s children are the crown of old men” (Prov. 17:6). While this writer is hesitant to call himself an “old” man, he proudly acknowledges that his “children’s children” are his “crown”! But what if his “children’s children” were parent-disobeying, glue-sniffing, drug-using, law-breaking, allergic-to-work, immoral reprobates? Frankly, it would be difficult to wear that kind of “crown” with pride!

Conclusion

Respect for parents lies at the very root of reverence for God and respect for others. Multitudes, when laying their parents’ remains in lifeless graves, would give anything if they could call their parents back and give them the honor they refused to give them while they were alive. But this is impossible, so the reprobate offspring must now do that which is almost equally as impossible — they must live with their own conscience!

The bottom line is this — one cannot simultaneously honor God and dishonor his own parents. Those who dishonor their parents tear to shreds the very fabric of society. The connecting link between the home and the stability of society is so interwoven that it has been said, “He who is a blessing in the home will never be a curse out of it.” But being a “blessing in the home” begins with the proper response to the command to “Honor your father and mother.”

506 Triple Crown Ct., Seffner, Florida 33584

Living Together in Knowledge

by Don and Jane McWhorter
After more than thirty years of successful marriage, the authors share secrets of communication and happiness. #10444

\$7.95



What the Bible Teaches About the Love of God

Chris Reeves

Our English word “love” is used in many ways. We might say, “I’m falling in love,” or “I love Mexican food.” But, when the Bible says, “*God is love*” what does that mean (1 John 4:8, 16)?

Love is an attribute of God. When speaking of the attributes of God, we sometimes describe them as “natural attributes” and “moral attributes.” The term “natural attributes” is a term used to describe the attributes of the very nature of God’s being or essence (eternal, infinite, immutable, etc.). These attributes are unique to God and they cannot belong to mankind. The term “moral attributes” is a term used to describe the attributes of God that he reveals to mankind and shares with mankind (holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, etc.). These attributes are not unique to God and should be reflected by some degree in everyone. We should be like God in his “moral attributes.”

The goodness of God is one of several “moral attributes” of God. God is good. He deals kindly and generously with all those who are in need. He is the final standard of good. God demonstrates his goodness in five ways. He is loving, benevolent, merciful, gracious, and longsuffering. Love is one expression of the goodness of God. Indeed, God is “*the God of love*” (2 Cor. 13:11). “Love” (Gr. *agape*) means the concern for the welfare of another. Love is active goodwill toward another. For example, the “loving kindness” of God focuses on the kind acts that proceed from God’s love (Jer. 9:24). Love does not mean “unconditional acceptance” or “love regardless of behavior.” Love is not emotional sentimentalism that is better felt than told. When speaking of God’s love, we must resist using the trendy phrases so popular in today’s culture and stay with what the Bible teaches.

God’s love is described in Scripture in many marvelous ways. Let us examine them. The love of God is . . .

- **Superlative** (John 3:16; 15:13; 1 John 3:1) — there is no love on earth like it.
- **Unmerited and undeserving** (Deut. 7:7-8; Mal. 1:2; Rom. 5:8; 9:13; Eph. 2:1, 4, 5; Tit. 3:4) — there is no human work or deed to merit it.
- **Generous** (Deut. 7:13; 10:18; Hos. 11:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:16) — there is no good gift that it will not give.
- **Protective** (Deut. 23:5; Isa. 38:17; 43:2-4) — there is no good protection that it will not offer.
- **Saving** (Ps. 51:1; Isa. 63:7-9; Hos. 14:4; Jonah 4:2; Mic. 7:18; Zeph. 3:17) — there is no sin that it will not forgive.
- **Active** (Isa. 63:9; John 3:16; 1 John 4:10) — there is no good deed that it will not act out.
- **Sacrificial** (John 3:16; 15:13; 1 John 4:10) — there is no sacrifice too great for it.
- **Enduring** (Ps. 89:31-33; Isa. 49:15-16; Jer. 31:3; Hos. 3:1-2; 11:1-4; Zech. 3:17; Rom. 8:35-39) — there is no obstacle that can stand in its way.
- **Universal** (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:14) — there is no human being that it will not reach.
- **Incarnate** (John 3:16; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 John 4:9) — there is no good deed that it will not manifest.
- **Personal** (2 Sam. 12:24-25) — there is no part of it that does not personally touch mankind.
- **Demanding** (Deut. 10:18-19; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 2:5; 4:11, 12, 21; 5:4) — there is no right conduct not required of mankind. God’s love demands righteous conduct (Pss. 11:7; 33:5; 37:28; 146:8). God’s love demands obedience to his commands (John 14:21, 23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5). God loves all men, but the blessings and benefits of his love are applied to each one of us only when we meet the conditions he has laid down. God loves all men, but not all will be saved. If the benefits of God’s love are not conditional, then universal salvation is the result! A man may be loved of God, but not saved by God because that man chose not to obey the conditions and commandments laid down by God (Mark 10:21-22).
- **Corrective** (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19) — there is no sin that it will not point out and reprove.
- **Unforced** — there is no part of it that is forced upon man against his will (John 14:21-24).

The Mormon Church and Jesus

Joe R. Price

In December 1995, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) adopted a new logo design. As reported in the December 20, 1995 issue of *The Salt Lake Tribune*, then managing director of LDS public affairs Bruce L. Olsen explained, “The logo re-emphasizes the official name of the church and the central position of the Savior in its theology” (*The Salt Lake Tribune* [12/20/95], A-1). The news report continued to say that LDS Church leaders wanted a logo that was “less corporate-looking” with a “warm, friendly, inviting feel” (*Ibid.*). So, after a couple of years of redesign work and months of market testing, the new logo was approved.

The Mormons can display the name of their church however they want. But their intention is clear: With it they continue their effort to be identified with and accepted by mainstream “Christendom.” They do not want to be thought of as a cult or as some strange religious group. They aim to promote this goal by emphasizing Jesus Christ in their official logo, which appears on official buildings, documents, teaching materials, and the like.

These are marketing techniques, pure and simple. A “less corporate-looking” logo does not change the fact that the LDS Church is a multi-million dollar (per day) tax-exempt

Yes, “God is love.” What a marvelous Bible truth! God is unselfish and benevolent in his concern for all mankind. In return, God expects us to be loving. God expects us to have the same kind of love that he has. He expects us to love him, and to love our fellow-man (Matt. 5:43-48; 22:37-38; John 13:35; 14:15; 15:12-13; Rom. 13:8-9; 1 Cor. 13:1ff; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:24; 1 John 2:7ff; 3:10ff; 4:11, 19-21).

Friend, is the love of God shed abroad in your heart today (Rom. 5:5)?

4922 Ogg Rd., Cedar Hill, Tennessee 37032 chrisreeves@juno.com

corporation. It is big business! Let there be no mistake: Emphasizing the name of Jesus Christ in a logo does not mean Christ is the head of the LDS Church.

This article will not engage in so-called “Mormon bashing” — far from it. Instead, we propose that any church claiming to be “Christ-based” will be glad to have its doctrines and practices examined in the light of the word of Jesus Christ to determine if it is indeed “Christ-based” (1 Pet. 3:15).

When the doctrines of the LDS Church are compared with the Bible, we are compelled to conclude the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the church built by Christ (Matt. 16:18). The Mormon Church is the product of the wisdom and will of men (Col. 2:8; Gal. 1:6-9).

Since the LDS Church wishes to emphasize the “central position of the Savior in its theology,” join me in an examination of some of their teachings about Jesus Christ which bring us to this conclusion.

The LDS Church teaches that Christ was the first spirit child born to God the Father in a pre-existent state. “Christ is the Firstborn, meaning that he was the first Spirit Child born to God the Father in pre-existence” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* 281). When the Bible uses the term *firstborn* to refer to Christ, it does not mean *the first one born*. Instead, it conveys the preeminence of Christ. For example, the nation of Israel was called God’s firstborn in Exodus 4:22. Israel was not the first nation to ever exist on the earth. However, God gave her a place of *preeminence* among the nations. Likewise, the psalmist prophesied that God would make Christ “*My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth*” (Ps. 89:26-27). This statement attributes the concept of priority or preeminence to the term *firstborn*. The apostle Paul confidently applied this meaning of firstborn to Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:15-18, the Son is identified as the “*firstborn over all creation*” because he created and sustains all things by his power (vv. 15-17). Christ is preeminent in the church, being its head (v. 18). He is the “*firstborn from the dead*” since his resurrection displays his supreme power over death (v. 18).

Christ has always been God. He did not progress to his present state of godhood: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-2, 14). Designing a logo that causes people to think they are “Christ-based” does not change the fact that the Christ of Mormonism is not the Christ of the Bible!

*Mormonism teaches that, as the “Son of God,” “Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers” (Ibid. 546-547). A truly shocking doctrine! However, the word phrase “the only begotten of the Father” means “single of its kind” (John 1:14, cf. Luke 7:12). Thus, Jesus is unique. No one else is like him. The Bible often uses the expression *son of* to represent *sameness* (i.e., bearing the same characteristics of something or someone else, see Matt. 23:15; Luke 10:6). Likewise, Jesus is the *Son of God* because he is *one* with the Father (John 10:30, 33, 36). He is equal with God (John 5:17-18). He is Immanuel (*God with us*). Jesus Christ is God in the flesh (John 1:14; Col. 2:9).*

The LDS Church has Jesus Christ in its name, but it is not the church of Christ. We call upon every member of the LDS Church to compare their doctrine with the Bible, to see the errors and contradictions their “prophets” have perpetrated and perpetuated upon millions, and come out from among them!

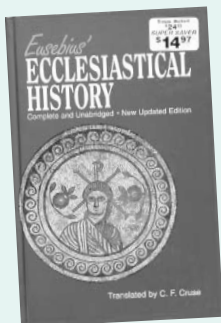
While publicizing “the central position of the Savior in its theology,” the doctrine of the LDS Church diminishes Christ Jesus by denying his preeminence and his divine, eternal nature.

bibleanswer.com,
6204 Parkland Way, Ferndale, Washington 98248 joe@

Unquestionably, “in all things He (has) the preeminence” (v. 18)! Mormonism makes a blasphemous assertion when it concludes Jesus is a “spirit child” of God. Emphasizing the name of Christ in a logo has not prevented the LDS Church from misidentifying him. Despite their logo, the LDS Church is not “Christ-based.”

Mormonism teaches that Christ is not eternal in his divine nature. Hear former LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie as he explains Christ’s progression to his present state of godhood: “By obedience and devotion to the truth he attained that pinnacle of intelligence which ranked him as a God, as the Lord Omnipotent, while yet in his pre-existent state” (Mormon Doctrine 129). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that Christ was not always eternal God. They believe he progressed to his current level of knowledge, power, and godhood due to his obedient devotion to truth.

This idea is an extension of their “spirit child” view of Jesus. In opposition to the doctrine of the Mormon Church, Jesus identified himself as the eternally existing One: “before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58; cf. Exod. 3:14).



Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History

Translated by C.F. Cruse

This classic work chronicles the first three centuries of church history. The writings of Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) are of equal stature with those of Josephus. #10104

\$24.97

The Lord's Supper: Is the Day Specified?

Ron Halbrook

When we eat the Lord's supper on the Lord's day, we do so under his authority. When we assert the right to do so on any other day, we do so without his authority and solely by human authority.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus gave his Apostles the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). After he ascended to heaven, the Apostles waited in Jerusalem as he instructed until they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel of Christ. This occurred on the very next Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. The crucified and risen Savior was proclaimed for the salvation of the world. Sinners were commanded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:38, 41).

The Church Begins and Begins to Worship

Immediately after the first baptisms in the gospel age, the first thing recorded is the teaching or pattern of truth regarding worship (Acts 2:41-42). "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The expression "breaking of bread" means essentially eating something, and whether it is eating the Lord's supper or a common meal must be determined by context. Obviously, in Acts 2:42, Luke is discussing wor-

ship because he described a regular practice of Christians gathering to do specific things. "They continued stedfastly in" the following activities:

1. "The Apostles' Doctrine." They met to learn more of the Apostles' teaching. The full gospel message was to be revealed through the Apostles of Christ and followers of Christ were committed to learning everything revealed through the Apostles (Matt. 16:18-19, where the things determined "in heaven" would be revealed through the Apostles "on earth": John 16:13, "the Spirit of truth" would guide them "into all truth"). Therefore, Jesus commanded his Apostles to baptize men and then to begin "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20).

All of the teaching of the Apostles in Acts 2 was revealed to them as the truth sent from heaven by the Holy Spirit, including the practices mentioned here in Acts 2:42.

2. "Fellowship." They met to give into a common treasury for the work of the church. The word "fellowship" basically means our spiritual relationship with God and with each other in the Lord (1 John 1:3). Then, the term is used of our giving into the treasury as an expression of our spiritual fellowship, and of our using the treasury for the work of the church in relieving the needs of destitute saints or sup-

porting gospel preachers. Context clarifies these various uses of the term “fellowship.”

The Greek term for “fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is *koinonia* and its root form is found again in verse 44, *koinos*, translated “common” in reference to the treasury of the church. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common,” and from this common treasury they cared for those who were in need (vv. 44-45). This is a very brief statement, but this practice is elaborated in Acts 4:32-37 and 5:1-11, where we learn the common treasury was kept by the Apostles “and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (4:35).

The early Christians were taught to express their fellowship with God and each other by giving of their financial means into a fellowship fund, and to further express this fellowship by doing the work God ordained such as caring for the needy among them.

3. “Breaking of Bread.” Bread was “broken” or eaten in the first century in ordinary meals, in Jewish feasts such as the Passover, in idolatrous feasts, and in the Lord’s supper as worship by Christians. As Jesus and his Apostles completed the last Passover feast, “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.” He then added that he would share this supper of remembrance with his followers “in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:26-29). In Acts 2, Peter proclaimed Christ was reigning “on his throne” and 3,000 souls entered his kingdom, his body, or his church on that day by obeying the gospel (John 3:5; Acts 2:29-41, 46).

What Jesus taught about his followers eating the Lord’s supper is fulfilled in his kingdom, which began

on the first Pentecost after his resurrection. This is not an ordinary meal eaten to satisfy physical needs and social purposes, but it is a memorial observance honoring and worshipping Christ as our Savior.

4. “Prayers.” The death of Christ as the perfect sacrifice for our sins opened the way to heaven. When our sins are forgiven, we have the privilege of praying to God as our Father. Jesus taught that we should not make a vain display of public prayer and should rather pray often “in secret,” but he also taught through his Apostles that we should pray together when we assemble to worship (Matt. 6:5-13; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Cor. 14:15).

5. “Sing.” In other passages, we learn that the Apostles taught Christians to sing praises to God when they assembled to worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

The Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day

In Acts 2:46, we read, “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” The early Christians assembled in the spacious courtyards of the temple complex in Jerusalem because large crowds could be accommodated in this way. In such gatherings, they constantly learned more of the Apostles’ teaching, even meeting every day for some period of time. Such daily meetings were necessary in order to get new saints from so many nations grounded in the faith before they returned to their native lands (Acts 2:9-11). Does this imply they ate the Lord’s supper every day they met?

We must remember that Acts 2:42-47 is a very concise summary of the beginning days of the first church in Jerusalem. This is not a detailed record of everything taught and practiced. For instance, to learn what food was eaten in the Lord’s supper we must look to other passages because

that information is not provided here (“unleavened bread,” “fruit of the vine,” Matt. 26:17-29). By the same token, to learn on what day the early Christians ate the Lord’s supper and gave into the treasury we must take into account additional information.

In Acts 20:7, we learn as follows: “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.” With the presence, the participation, and the approval of an inspired Apostle of Christ, the early saints ate the Lord’s supper every Sunday. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul instructed, “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” Every Sunday the early saints gave something into the treasury of the church, each according to his ability.

Were such instructions and practices unique to one or two places, or were these things taught uniformly among all the churches in every place to fulfill Jesus’ direction, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:18-20)? Paul spoke of his teaching and practice as “my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church,” and he urged his listeners not “to think of men above that which is written” (1 Cor. 4:17, 6). “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9). “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (2 Thess. 2:15). In other words, Paul’s teaching was the same in person and in writing.

What one Apostle of Christ taught, all Apostles of Christ taught, because their teaching was revealed to them from one God. The teaching done by Peter and the other Apostles in

the early days in Jerusalem was identical with the teaching done by Paul after his conversion. In fact, the other Apostles publicly gave to Paul “the right hands of fellowship” to signify their unity in faith and practice (Gal. 2:9). *The faith and practice recorded in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 is the same faith and practice taught by the early Apostles in those daily meetings in Acts 2:46.* No, they did not eat the Lord’s supper every day, but in those daily sessions the Apostles taught all things commanded by Christ, including the proper observance of the Lord’s supper on the Lord’s day.

What about the “breaking bread from house to house,” was that the Lord’s supper (Acts 2:46)? Rather than assemblies of the church for worship, this refers to individual hospitality extended by the early Christians to each other as they ate “their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” Two distinct activities at separate locations are described: meeting “daily with one accord in the temple” for worship and study, *and* visiting “from house to house” to share social or common meals. These latter gatherings were private or individuals gatherings “at home” (footnote, KJV), “in their homes” (NIV), or “in the various private homes” (footnote, NAS). These were not house churches, because the church was meeting “in the temple.”

The Lord’s Day Specified

Yes, the Lord’s day, Sunday, is specified by the Lord for eating the Lord’s supper. Christ arose from the dead at the dawning of “the first day of the week” (Matt. 28:1-2). The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, which was on Sunday. The Apostle John wrote those things which were revealed to him “on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). This day, this day *alone*, is the day authorized for eating the Lord’s supper when saints assemble to worship (Acts 20:7).

This day, this day *alone*, is the day authorized for taking a collection when we assemble to worship (1 Cor. 16:2).

Is it a sin to eat the Lord’s supper on other days? *Yes, it is!* It is always sinful to act without the authority of Christ. He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” and we are commanded to do all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17). His “power” and his “name” refer to his authority, his supreme and sole right to command. All authority resides in him. When we eat the Lord’s supper on the Lord’s day, we do so under his authority. When we assert the right to do so on any other day, we do so without his authority and solely by human authority.

To act outside the sphere of Christ’s authority is the very essence of sin. On the judgment day, many of the lost will claim that they have done “many wonderful works” in honor to Christ, but, Jesus said, “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23). The word “iniquity” literally means “lawlessness,” acting outside the authority and approval of divine law.

Luke 6:46 records our Savior’s plea, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” As followers of Christ, let us be content to act under his authority, remembering his words, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). Let us exalt Christ by submitting to Christ, eating the Lord’s supper on the Lord’s Day.

3505 Horse Run Ct., Shepherdsville, Kentucky 40165

Bible Class Workbooks

Seeking The Lost

by Quentin McCay

Excellent workbook based on conversions

in Acts. #80076

\$5.99

Joshua, Judges, Ruth

by Mike Willis

A commentary-workbook. Excellent for class

and individual study. 18 lessons. #80087

\$5.99

What Does Psalm 51:5 Teach?

Kyle Pope

One of the main texts used by those in the religious world who teach the doctrine of inherited original sin is Psalm 51:5. The text reads “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (NKJV). The argument is that David in this Psalm claims to have been born with sin (though the text itself says “in sin”). The conclusion from this is that this sin must refer to Adam’s sin which he had inherited (so they say). Is this argument sound?

What is the Context?

The context of the passage is clear — David’s anguish over his sin. The Psalm begins with an introductory note claiming “A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”¹ In his sorrow over his horrible act of rebellion against God, David writes the verse in question.

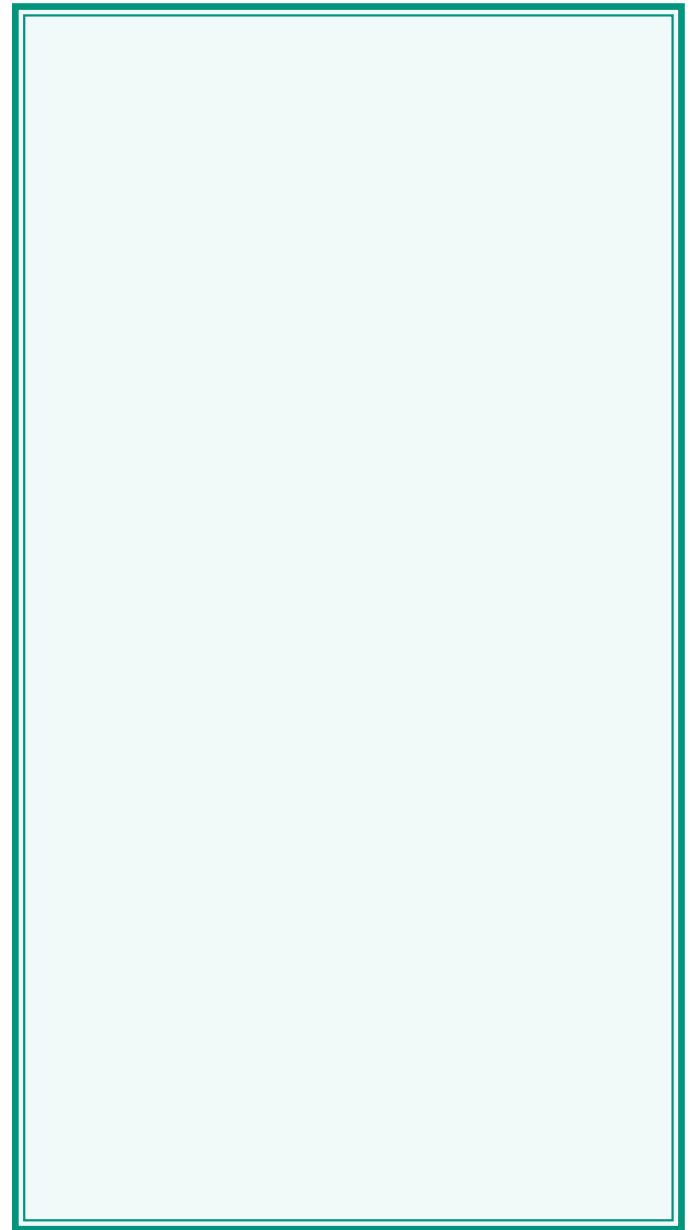
Key Words

There are four words in the text that are crucial to a sound interpretation: “in iniquity” and “in sin.”

“In iniquity” in the Hebrew is *be avown*. *Be* meaning “in” and *avown* meaning “evil, fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin” (Strong’s #5771). It is argued that *be avown* must mean “in a state of iniquity.” This is how the Amplified Bible in their highly prejudicial translation puts it inserting in brackets “I was brought forth in [a state of] iniquity.” This gives the false impression that “in iniquity” undoubtedly means that David bore the guilt of iniquity.²

Consider another text where *be avown* is used. Genesis 19:15 records the warning to Lot to leave Sodom “lest thou be consumed in the iniquity (*be avown*) of the city” (ASV). This is not saying that Lot bore iniquity himself, but rather that he was “in the midst of iniquity.” This may well be the very thing that David is saying. He was born into a sinful world, and he has followed its pattern of sinfulness.

“In sin” in the last part of the verse seems clearly to refer to the condition of David’s mother. The Greek Septuagint



uses plural forms of both the word for “iniquity” and “sin” thus literally “in iniquities” and “in sins.” That could not

be referring to Adam's single act of disobedience in the garden.³ This is not to suggest that David's birth came from an adulterous relationship on his mother's part, but simply the fact that even his own mother (a universal symbol of purity) was subject to sin.

The Full Witness of Scripture

We should note that nowhere in the Old Testament is it explicitly stated that Adam's sin was passed down! One would think that, if Adam's sin had such a monumental effect on his posterity, it would at least be eluded to in the account of his sin. Yet all that is declared is (1) Adam and his wife were cast from Eden, Genesis 3:23; (2) This deprived them of the tree of life (which deprived them of unending physical life), Genesis 3:22; (3) The man was cursed with having to work for food, Genesis 3:17-19; and (4) The woman was cursed with pain in child birth and submission to man, Genesis 3:16.

The New Testament deals more explicitly with the effect Adam's sin had on mankind. 1 Corinthians 15:22 declares, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (NKJV). In the context of explaining the reality of the resurrection, Paul simply describes the effect of Adam's sin as physical death.⁴ Romans 5:12 describes a different effect of Adam's sin claiming "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." There is little question (from the context) that this refers to spiritual death, yet how does the text say this death was passed? Through imitating Adam's example of sin! Notice "thus death spread to all men, *because all sinned*" (Emphasis mine).

Finally there is one very simple passage of Scripture which must be harmonized with Psalm 51:5 — Ezekiel 18:20. The passage reads, "The soul who sins shall die.

The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son." There is no way that the doctrine of inherited original sin can be true if this passage is also true!

Conclusion

What David is saying is simple. In his grief over his own sin he laments the very condition of the world into which he was born. He was born into a world plagued by sin and even his own mother is not free from its influence. An entire system of thought has been built on a faulty and speculative interpretation of a very simple idea.

Footnotes

¹ These introductory statements at the beginning of the Psalms are often taken to be human additions. However, this conclusion is difficult to accept with any certainty given that these notes are included within the Hebrew text on which all translations are based, as well as the Greek Septuagint (c. 200 B.C.) and the Latin Vulgate (c. A.D. 400) translations.

² We should note that the preface to the Amplified Bible admits that words in the brackets "contain comments, whether implied or not, which are not actually expressed in the immediate original text" (*Explanation of Arbitrary Punctuation Marks*, xv, Zondervan, 1962).

³ The Septuagint is simply a human translation, so it does not offer any definitive proof, yet it does show us how Jews before the time of Christ understood this verse.

⁴ Since Adam was denied access to the tree of life he died, as have all his posterity who were deprived with him — Genesis 3:22.

att.net
8927 Widmer Rd., Lenexa, Kansas 66215 kmpope@worldnet.

Spirit of Liberalism

by Frank Chesser

This book is a plea for Christians to resist the temptation of developing an "I think" or an "it feels good" religion. Rather, it encourages adherence to the instruction of the Holy Spirit as revealed in the written word.

Paper. #16950

\$9.95

Orienting a New Generation

Norman E. Fultz

In his introduction to the book of Deuteronomy in *The Narrated (And Daily) Bible* (203), brother LaGard Smith wrote, “Moses addresses his people as would an aging head of state before transfer of leadership. Moses feels keenly the responsibility for orienting a new generation to the history of their young nation, its unique relations to God, and their purpose in the conquest which will begin shortly — in fact, just over a month from this very week in which Moses himself will die.”

The discourses recorded in the book of Deuteronomy have been called Moses’ valedictory address, and they reveal Moses’ efforts in the process of orienting the nation. He was speaking to a generation whose fathers had died in the wilderness wanderings after being delivered from Egypt as “with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” Moses reviewed their history, the good and the bad. He reminded them of what his position among them had been and of the laws, statutes, and judgments God had made known to them through Moses. He recalled the great miracles God had manifested in his deliverance of Israel from bondage and his provision for them in their wilderness plodding. And finally, Moses set before the people the matter of “life and good, and death and evil.” Life and good would accrue for loving and faithful obedience, death and evil were to result if their heart should turn away from hearing the Lord and to the worship and service of other gods. Then, having done what he could, Moses ascended Nebo and from Pisgah’s lofty heights he gazed into the Promised Land before dying and being buried by the Lord himself.

There were other occasions in which Israel had to be oriented, to be reminded of whom they were and from whence they had come and that they should “praise the Lord.” In fact, there were repeated orientations by other spiritual leaders. Two such instances are Psalms 78 and 105. The reformations accomplished under the good kings Hezekiah and Josiah were attempts to reorient a nation that had gone astray as were the incessant pleas of the prophets who warned of a coming destruction, barring national repentance.

The preparatory work of John the Baptist which called

upon his fellow Israelites to “Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight,” and Jesus’ call to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” if heeded, would orient one to the blessings to be enjoyed by the Messiah who had come “to seek and save the lost.” And Stephen’s sermon (Acts 7), in the early days of the New Testament church, sought to reorient a people who were “stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” and who, like their fathers, did “always resist the Holy Spirit.” He would have them to understand the truth of this “Jesus of Nazareth” whom he preached to them.

To “orient” is “to align or position with respect to a reference system” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). Israel’s reference point:

For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you *were* the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments (Deut. 7:6-9).

Our own nation needs some reorienting for we have wandered far away from our original reference system: “one nation under God with liberty and justice for all,” a nation that from its inception affirmed, “In God we trust.” There are voices that ceaselessly cry out, seeking to orient the present generation to the fact that we are a nation founded on the noblest of principles. But these voices are often smothered by the wearying din of humanistic apologists who subscribe to an amoral credo and libertinism, often under the guise of “choice.” Leaders who profess to live personally and to act from a basis of faith in a God to whom we are all accountable are openly derided and pub-

licly ridiculed. We can only imagine what the ultimate end will be unless the course is stayed, and this and succeeding generations are turned from the slippery slope of moral decline, which has come to define us as a nation.

The Lord's church, too, in every generation of kingdom citizenry has to be reoriented. Sermons on the identity of the New Testament church used to be commonplace. No doubt was left that the church of the New Testament, the fulfillment of ancient prophecies, had certain marks that in any generation could identify it and distinguish it from the creations of man. Book, chapter, and verse preaching clearly proclaimed the time and place of its establishment, the city of Jerusalem in the days of the Roman kings. The manner of its worship, consisting of certain avenues as characterized those early saints under the direct guidance of the inspired apostles was sharply contrasted with the inventions of man. The simple organization it was given for efficiently carrying out its mission and purpose, sav-

ing souls and glorifying God, were an antithesis to the machinations of councils and synods. The descriptive terms by which it was spoken of in the days of its infancy were elucidated as fully appropriate in any age. The holiness of life demanded of God's people was unblushingly proclaimed; and the conditions of entry were boldly set forth leaving one to understand clearly how he might be translated out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Whether as a nation, or as the kingdom of God, or even in our families, there arises from time to time the need for someone to stand up like Moses and "orient a new generation."

13018 N. Oakland Ave., Kansas City, Missouri 64167

If Necessary, Use Words

Johnie Edwards

There is a sign on the highway just east of the Ellettsville Church meeting house which says, "Preach Christ Always, If necessary, Use Words." Let's take a look at this thought.

Christ Must Be Preached

There is no doubt about it, the New Testament demands that Christ be preached. When Philip went to Samaria, the record states, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5). A reading of the eunuch's conversion will reveal that Philip "opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

Use Words

The sign says, "If necessary, use words." It is necessary that words be used in preaching Christ. There is no way one will ever believe without words. Paul told the Romans, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). Paul further said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). So, it does take words to bring about faith. When Peter went to Cornelius' house, he went with words. The record states, "Who shall tell thee *words*, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). It took words to save Cornelius!

Sermon Words

Every gospel sermon contained words. When the first sermon was preached on the Day of Pentecost, words were employed. Acts 2:22 tells us, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words." After the sermon was preached, it is said, "Now when they *heard this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). It took words to answer their question. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). It took words on this occasion and words are still necessary in preaching Christ.

4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47404

“Sixteen Days” continued from front page

pared, we must be ready for our Lord’s eternity.

Where Will We Spend Our Eternity?

Can we know where we will be spending our eternity when we die? Sure we can. Our God is a God of promise (Heb 9:15). God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). Therefore, if we do the will of God (Matt 7:21), we can enter the kingdom of heaven. God has not lied to man. God has promised that those who abide in his teaching will put on incorruption and live with him eternally. Because God is a God of promise who cannot lie, he has told us specifically what we must do to have eternal life. We must believe (Heb 11:6), repent of our sins (Acts 17:30; 2:38), confess Jesus (Rom 10:10; Matt 10:32), be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and live faithful until death (Rev 2:10). That is what God has asked us to do in order to have eternal life. The apostle Paul wrote: “Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality” (Rom 2:7).

It saddened everyone here on earth to learn that the seven astronauts had just spent sixteen days in space and were just sixteen minutes away from home here on earth when they perished. Good friend, God has given you the choice upon where you will spend your eternity by way of the sixteenth chapter, the sixteenth verse of the book of Mark: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

7921 Goodway Dr., Indianapolis, Indiana 46256 Richard@Thetfordcountry.com

“Hell (4)” continued from page 2

Writing along the same lines with reference to eternal death, Joseph Stump wrote,

Eternal death is the eternal continuance of the spiritual death incurred by sin. It becomes the lot or fate of all those persons in whom grace in this world does not succeed in replacing spiritual death with spiritual life. It involves eternal persistence in enmity and antagonism against God, and hence eternal separation and exclusion; namely, an eternal abiding in that condition and place in which there is an utter absence of light and love and a constant presence of indescribable darkness, hatred, raging passions, unutterable woe, and endless despair (*The Christian Faith* 413).

• **Gehenna.** The picture of hell as gehenna is drawn from a valley on the southwest side of Jerusalem. The location drew its name “from the cries of the little children who were thrown into the fiery arms of Moloch, i.e. an idol having the

form of a bull. The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by king Josiah (2 K. xxiii. 10), that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires were always needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by the putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called *geenna tou puros*. . . . and then this name was transferred to that place in Hades where the wicked after death will suffer punishment” (Thayer 111). One sees the appropriateness of the metaphors of “where the worm dieth not” and the “fire is not quenched” from a reflection on the use of the word Gehenna to describe hell.

• **A place where both body and soul are tormented.** The torment of hell is a place where both body and soul suffer. Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). The word “destroy” is not used in the sense of annihilation but in the sense of the loss of well-being. *Apollumi* means “to destroy, i.e. to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin.” The word is used in Matthew 10:28 with the sense of “to devote or give over to eternal misery” (Thayer 64). The word is used to describe the lost coin and lost sheep, which were not annihilated, but were simply lost (Luke 15:6, 9). The word is used in Matthew 9:17 to describe the burst wineskins and in Matthew 26:8 for the waste of pouring the expensive ointment over Jesus’ head. An interesting passage is Luke 9:24 — “For whosoever will save his life shall lose (*apollumi*) it: but whosoever will lose (*apollumi*) his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” In the first instance, “lose” refers to the torment of hell, which those who affirm conditional immortality must say means “annihilation.” However, the second half of the verse has one losing his life for Christ’s sake. Has his life been annihilated? If so, in what sense is it saved? Obviously, the idea of annihilation does not inhere in the meaning of the word.

Understanding that the word “destroy” does not mean annihilate, one should consider the significance of both soul and body being destroyed in hell. Hell involves the loss of well-being for both body and soul. In this respect, hell and hades differ. The hadean torment in which the wicked are held between one’s death and the resurrection is a place where the souls of men are tormented while the body rots in the earth (Luke 16:19-31). At the resurrection, the body of man is raised from the dead with immortal quality (fitted to its eternal habitation, see 1 Cor. 15:42-44) and reunited with his spirit. Those who are alive at the second coming will experience a change in the nature of their bodies (1 Cor. 15:51-54). This body will be fitted for eternal habitation, whether that be in torment or heaven. The torment of hell will, therefore, involve the torment of both body and soul. Hell is not limited to the torment of the soul (mental

What Is Your Attitude Toward the Bible?

Jarrod Jacobs



Attitude is defined as: “manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing” (Webster’s). I know there are many who possess a great attitude toward the Bible. Yet, certainly not all men do. Some deny that it is truth (John 17:17). Others deny that it is inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Therefore, we have a generation of people (including some Christians) who are ignorant of

God’s word. What is our disposition toward the Bible? Are we interested in learning more about God’s word? Are we striving to live it daily?

All Christians ought to strive daily for a fuller and more complete comprehension of the word of God. If one asked you: “What must I do to be saved?” what would you tell them? If one wished to know of our origins upon this globe, or asked you what the purpose of life is, could you tell them? Be honest! Some people don’t know the apostles

anguish).

Annihilation is Not Punishment

Annihilation is not punishment. According to the doctrine of conditional immortality, at the resurrection both the wicked and righteous will be raised. The wicked will be raised to judgment. When they are sentenced, they will be punished with a punishment commensurate with their crimes. When that punishment is over, they will be annihilated. Even this statement distinguishes between the punishment for sin and the annihilation that follows.

One notices then that annihilation is not punishment (Gerstner, *Repent or Perish* 81). Quite the contrary, annihilation is relief from punishment. When Job was suffering the debilities of his illness, he asked to be relieved of his suffering, wishing that he had never been born (Job 3-4). He thought that annihilation would bring him relief from his suffering. It was not suffering. Gertsner wrote,

I must keep repeating that annihilation is an alternative to or substitute for pain, not a form of it. People in misery beg for annihilation as the cessation of pain. Fudge himself recognizes this, which is the reason he avoids the usual annihilationist doctrine (*Repent or Perish* 91).

Understanding that annihilation is not punishment and

that the Bible promises to punish the wicked, Fudge asserts that each person will be punished with a punishment commensurate with his sins prior to being annihilated. This raises the question, “What is adequate punishment for sin against an infinite and holy God?” Gerstner observed, “. . . Fudge thinks adequate punishment for a life of sin against an infinite God is some finite time period while the orthodox see guilt against an infinite being itself infinite. Punishment must, therefore, go on forever” (113). “Extinction is no punishment at all, because it leaves no one to suffer any punishment” (153). Limiting the punishment for sin minimizes the seriousness of sin.

The idea of resurrection to annihilation was addressed by Tertullian. He wrote, “Else it would be most absurd if the flesh should be raised up and destined to ‘the killing in hell,’ in order to be put an end to, when it might suffer such an annihilation (more directly) if not raised again at all. A pretty paradox, to be sure, that an essence must be refitted with life, in order that it may receive the annihilation which has already in fact accrued to it” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* III:571).

6567 Kings Ct., Avon, Indiana 46123, mikewillis001@cs.com

from the epistles! What about you? Me? All men must know and understand God's word (Eph. 5:17).

Because of the rotten attitude many have toward the Bible, we are living in a time of starvation. No, not because we have a shortage of food, but we are starving spiritually in this country because people do not know the word of God! Sadly, this is nothing new. God told Israel: "Behold, the days come, . . . that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11). Again we read: "And the word of the Lord was precious (rare) in those days; there was no open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1).

May I suggest that we are in much the same situation as those people were. We are starving spiritually! No, this is not a famine, for the word "famine" implies a lack of something. God's word is not scarce in our country! We have Bibles aplenty, CDs, audio tapes, computer programs, web sites, printed materials, etc. that are all filled with God's word. "Then why say we are starving?" one may ask. The reason why men are starving today is not because we lack (spiritual) food, but because we *refuse to eat!* Did you know that if we refuse to partake of food, we'll starve just as quickly as the one who lacks food to eat? Clearly, we have Christians today who are emaciated spiritually because they refuse to partake of that spiritual food (milk/meat), called God's word. Remember, it is the soul which is eternal, not the body (2 Cor. 4:16)!

How can we change our attitude and establish good "eating habits" for the soul? It can be done! Let us consider three "guidelines" that will help.

1. Spend time in God's book. There is no shortcut! David said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). He said the "blessed man" is the one who meditates "day and night" in God's word (Ps. 1:1-2). Are we doing this? How can we expect to know the Bible if we don't spend time in it? Let's remove the distractions, and our poor attitude, and spend time in God's book! You'll be amazed at the good that will come from it! Stop making excuses and make time for God's word!

2. Pray to God. What would you think if your children stopped talking to you? Would this matter to you? Remember, communication is a two-way street. As God speaks to us through his word, so ought we then to speak to him through prayer (1 Thess. 5:17-18). Christ taught that "*men ought always to pray*" (Luke 18:1). Generally, when someone's attitude toward the Bible is poor, he's not praying, either!

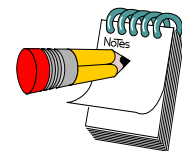
3. Worship God with those of like-minded faith. One thing which will help us to improve our attitude is to discuss God's word with others who love it. When we gather

to worship God (John 4:24), this is also an occasion for speaking God's word with others and encouraging each other. Yet, we find some Christians who, when it comes to spiritual matters, it is like pulling teeth to get them to talk. (One speaks about what is of interest to them, you know!) Can you imagine living on three meals a week? No, we eat three meals a day (and sometimes more than this)! Yet, for some Christians, three "meals" of God's word in a week (i.e., occasions when the church assembles together) is considered extreme! What does this say about our attitude and priorities?

Other problems besides a lack of Bible knowledge are associated with those who have a poor attitude toward the Bible. Generally, it is this same person who will complain about sermon length, "boring" worship services, "unfriendly" members, etc. He is not interested in spiritual things, so it naturally follows that he will be bored when gathered for a spiritual purpose. Yet, the answer is not to cater to that carnal attitude. The answer is to repent of carnality and strive to be more spiritually minded. Let us fix our attitude and allow God's word to have first place in our lives!

77420 Hwy 405 E, Maceo, Kentucky 42355

Quips & Quotes



More People Gambling, Study Finds

"The New York Times — Gambling in the nation continues to rise, with 82 percent of adult Americans saying they had gambled in the last year, a study has found.

"The report, by the Research Institute on Addictions at the State University of New York at Buffalo, is in the winter issue of The Journal of Gambling Studies. The principal investigator was Dr. John H. Welte.

"The researchers defined gambling as everything from office pools and friendly card games to dog racing and casinos" (The Indianapolis Star [February 2, 2003], A29).

Subscribe for