

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XVIII

1989

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

January 1989

Number 1

Do All Things Continue as from the Beginning?

Leon D. Stancliff

There is a very interesting passage of Scripture found in 2 Peter 3:3-4, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation." This passage is primarily intended as a warning to those persons who live worldly lives. But the passage is very meaningful with respect to the relationship between science and Christianity. It touches upon a principle very dear to the heart of the scientific community. It will be helpful to explore this matter.

This is the third article in this series. The first dealt with the folly of the unnecessary conflict between supporters of Christ and supporters of science. In that article I deplored the attitude of suspicion which prevents true science and true Christianity from working together in harmony. The second article discussed the unnecessary maneuvering that often occurs when Christians think they must compromise the teaching of the Bible to bring it into a working relationship with science.

The present article will handle another major obstacle which stands in the way of proper teamwork between the two. I speak of what is sometimes called the "**principle of uniformitarianism.**" If this principle of science were properly applied, much of the antagonism would be dissolved!

In discussing this issue, I am also laying the foundation for the next article, which will discuss the nature of miracles and the correct attitude of the scientific community toward them.

The phrase **principle of uniformitarianism** is quite a mouthful. When uttered in conversation it sounds like the speaker is trying to use one-upmanship on his listener. There are some who love to use complicated words and phrases to bewilder others in order to magnify their own reputation. I assure you this is not my intent. You either have heard the term, or you will hear it if you keep your eyes and ears open. I would like for you to know how it is useful to the scientist, and also how it can be dangerous when applied improperly.

The principle states that natural law operates uniformly through time and space. That's not so complicated, is it? Let me explain by illustration. When Isaac Newton gave us a statement of the law of universal gravitation, he was doing far more than reacting to the shock of an apple landing on his head. It is highly unlikely that such an event had anything to do with his discovery of the famous law. What Newton really accomplished was to describe a force of attraction which exists between bodies of matter in the universe. He showed that the force increases as the mass of the bodies increases, and that the force decreases as the distance between the bodies becomes greater. This is one of the most basic of all natural laws.

The law of gravity is useful to the scientist because it applies to planets moving around the sun, as well as to various bodies falling to the earth, and even to the attraction between a space vehicle and the various objects in the solar system.

The scientist expects the law of gravity to act the same way in the farthest reaches of the universe as it does nearby. He depends upon it having acted yesterday, or at any time in the past, as it acts today. He also anticipates that it will not be fickle in the future, but will be predictable and consistent.

The scientist is so dependent upon the consistency of natural law that he becomes extremely uncomfortable when discussion arises respecting any interruption in the action of those laws. To whatever degree natural law is undependable, his own explanations and predictions will be undependable. Without consistency in nature, science would

be in a state of chaos.

Serious problems begin to rear their head when the principle is extended to infinity of space and eternity of time. If God is the architect of nature, and the author of natural law, he has the power to intervene as he chooses. He can either suspend those laws, or work with them in accordance with his own wisdom and foresight.

Now what happens when the scientist uses radioactive dating to estimate an enormous age for the earth? He notes that the rate of change in radioactivity is one of the most steady and dependable changes in nature. He makes his calculations, based upon the principle of uniformitarianism. He also makes them, based upon the limited experience of science in time and space. It is at times like this that the scientist is sorely tempted to make overuse of the principle. It is quite possible that things have not continued as they were from the beginning.

If one observes a burning candle and notes that it is decreasing in length at a constant rate of one half inch per minute, he must have at least two important pieces of information to tell how long the candle has been burning. He must first know how long the candle was when it was burning. He must also know that the rate has not changed during the time period he is calculating. Some scientists are prone to ignore such vital missing information.

Many of the long term dates, explanations, and predictions proposed by scientists are founded directly upon the confidence that natural laws have acted from the beginning as they now act. This is a dangerous assumption. It overlooks the possibility of divine intervention in the operation of the world. It leaves no room for miracles, at any time or in any place. Our next article will deal with such divine intervention, particularly as it relates to miracles.

Some Warts Can Kill You

Roger Jackson

More and more, we are reminded these days that we need to “restudy our roots” and get back to the principles of the Restoration Movement. I deny that my so-called “roots” go back to the Restoration Movement. My roots go back to the Bible, which was the central objective of the movement and those who think otherwise are ignorant of both the church and the Restoration Movement. However, in the move back to those pseudo-roots, the advocates insist that we adopt the famous slogan of Thomas Campbell advocated in Article 6 of *The Declaration And Address*, viz., that no doctrine arrived at by inference can be made a test of fellowship. I deny such a position is sound doctrine. It denies the Bible the right to teach by any means except direct statement. Is it a matter of faith that we meet upon **every** first day of the week? We learn it by inference. It is only by inference that we know infant baptism is unscriptural. Is that a matter of faith and test of communion? Without the use of logic (inference), we would not know that Mark 16:16 applies to any of us, because not a one of our names appear in it.

Given the above moorings one might be led to believe that most of the things over which we are divided fall into the category of doctrines at which we have arrived by inference and therefore are matters of indifference comparable to Romans 14 and 15. A sample list might include the war question, various issues regarding benevolence and cooperation in evangelism, and sometimes instrumental music. At least the latter is the object of the whole thing most of the time even if it is not named specifically. Romans chapters 14 and 15 deal with **matters of indifference**—things that are neither right nor wrong within themselves. In dealing with the same subject, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8:8, “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.” Place instrumental music in the place of “eat” and see if it will work. But these matters of indifference or opinion are called “warts” and it is tremendously popular to suggest that we receive each other as Christ received us—warts and all. Is the advocate saying we ought to receive each other into fellowship with warts of opinion such as eating meats? I could not agree more. However, if he is suggesting, and most of them are, that we should accept people into our fellowship who have the warts of instrumental music, premillennialism, women preachers, charismatic gifts, etc., I could not disagree more! These are two different kinds of warts. The former are harmless while the latter will kill you!

I do not know why a person would insist upon protecting a wart in the center of his face when it can be seen easily and removed painlessly. If we receive one such warty offender, it will not be long before we are all covered with warts (1 Cor. 5:6; 15:33). Moreover, if we receive one another as Christ received us, we must first understand just how Christ receives us. It is true that he received us with the harmless warts of opinion on us, but he never

received one who believed, practiced and taught damnable heresy even after he was shown the truth (Mat. 15:13). All men who are baptized for the remission of their sins are received of Christ, but none could be baptized who did not repent of their sins (Luke 13:3). What about that wart?

In the past, we have had debates to resolve the differences between us that involve fatal warts. Now we are told that we should not do such a thing. Instead, it is insisted that we bring the parties together privately to explore the Word of God to find a solution to the question at hand. This, we are assured, is necessary because in debate, the one whose doctrine is reprov'd is embarrassed and he will refuse to change because of pride. However, let me remind you that I have had a number of private studies with false teachers, and I think they do a lot of good, but the fact of the matter is that few false teachers are going to make any changes in doctrines they have already taught publicly. In private, I have had "anti" brethren admit their error and insist that they were going to believe what they believed anyway. The reason for a public debate is in order that those who follow their leadership can see it.

The spirit of unity is indeed to accept one another, "Warts and all" so long as the warts are not the kind that will kill you and spread to others. If we had more people who make the distinction, we would be a lot better off.

1989 Bellview Lectures May 10-14, 1989 "In Hope of Eternal Life"

Begin to plan now to attend the **1989 Bellview Lectures**. The theme, covering lectures on Heaven, Hell, Eternal Life and related subjects, is "**In Hope Of Eternal Life.**"

Those presenting lectures include: **Gary Anderson, Curtis Cates, Winfred Clark, Bill Cline, Andrew Connally, Harrell Davidson, Roy Deaver, Daniel Denham, H. A. Dobbs, Guss Eoff, Ross Gallaher, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Alton Hayes, Ronnie Hayes, Roger Jackson, Bobby Liddell, Jerri Manasco, Jerry Martin, Ray Peters, Foy Smith and Steve Waller.**

Further information will be given in upcoming issues of *Defender* and other publications.

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

"What Does The Bible Teach?"

Lectures from **The First Annual "Know Your Bible Lectureship."** This is a hard-bound book of 360 pages on the fundamentals of the Faith which is being used to convert the lost.

You may order yours for only \$10.00 (postage included) from:

Roger Jackson
940 Old Wood Road
Oxford, Alabama 36203

A Critique Of How Christianity Grows In The City

In 1985, Alvin Jennings mailed over 15,000 copies of *How Christianity Grows In The City* to churches of Christ, in which was espoused a humanly-devised plan of church organization and evangelism. The book, outlining a modified Roman Catholic plan of organization with a Crossroads plan of evangelism, was dedicated to the infamous Boston Church of Christ holding them up as a "model to all the believers."

In response, brother Wayne Coats has written *A Critique of "How Christianity Grows In The City."* In 1987, the Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, oversaw the mailing of some 15,000 copies of brother Coats' book to congregations worldwide. In an effort to inform brethren as to the true nature of the Crossroads/Boston movement, this much needed volume (235 pages) is now available in lots of 12 or more for only \$1.00 per copy (plus \$2.50 postage per dozen). **Orders must be for at least 12 copies.** For orders above 12 copies, add .20 per copy for postage. Send orders to: **Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, Florida 32506.**

First Things First

Bobby Liddell

Life must have priorities; that is, organization according to importance. Man will, knowingly or not, rank certain items and aspects of his life. That does not mean that that which is considered to be important by man will be that which is considered to be important by God. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33). There is that which must be sought **first**, and that which follows in lesser significance.

Too often, man majors in minors. Neighbors stay lost while church members argue over the color of the carpet for the building. Parents work and worry to give their children designer jeans, but have no time to train them in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6). Preachers emphasize feeling good about one's self, but are ashamed to tell men the gospel of Christ that they might be saved and have true peace.

How important shall the *things* of this life be one hundred years from now? Shall it matter if the car was a Cadillac or a Chevette? Shall the dimensions and elegance of the house be consequential in eternity? Shall power, possessions, pleasures, or prestige be significant then? What would the rich man of Luke 16 say? "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:23-25).

In view of eternal life (Mark 10:30), and eternal punishment (Mat. 25:41), man must correct his priorities according to God's will. Individuals and congregations must examine themselves and make sure that they have first things first. Spiritual things must have first place in the lives of those who seek to please God and have His fellowship now and eternally. Thus, the thoughts, plans, affections and activities must be brought into harmony with God's plan for man.

Man must Put God's Kingdom above All Man-made Religions. Denominationalism is not Divine, but human. **All** denominations are without the scriptural builder, Christ (Mat. 16:18); place of beginning, Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-2:1); time of beginning, Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus (Acts 2:1ff); foundation, Christ (1 Cor. 3:11); price, the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28); and number, one (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). **The church of Christ is not a denomination!** Christ shed no blood for division (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13); thus, it has **no place** in God's plan.

Man must Put God's Word above All Doctrines of Men. Only the Truth saves (John 8:32; 17:17). Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:22-23). Man shall be judged by the Truth, the Word of God—not the creed books, dogmas and doctrines of men. The only Savior of mankind said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Those who follow men's traditions, doctrines and commandments, instead of or in addition to the Word of God, worship God in vain and forfeit any hope of Heaven (Mat. 15:3-9).

Man must Put Obedience to God above Obedience to Man. When Peter and John preached Christ in Jerusalem, the Jewish religious leaders had them apprehended, questioned and threatened them. "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). Peter and John did not heed the words of men, but replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Later, the Jews imprisoned them again, but the angel of the Lord opened the doors and released them saying, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:20).

When they were found teaching in the name of Jesus again, they were brought before the council and the high priest asked, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us (Acts 5:28). **"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29).

Man obeys properly when he obeys from the heart (Rom. 6:17), because of love (John 14:15). There is no substitution for obedience to God. Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam. 15:24). Fear or love for those other than God does not excuse one's disobedience to God. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Mat. 10:37-38). "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).

A young Christian wife and mother, who was a new convert to Christ, was threatened and abused by her denominational husband (and his family) for her becoming a Christian. He would not let their children attend with her. He told her, more than once, that if she went to the Lord's church to worship, he would kill the children while she was gone and kill her when she returned. She went anyway. He would not let her take the car so she walked when she could not get a ride with someone else. He embarrassed her by threatening church members who came to pick her up, cursing and pointing a shotgun at them. More than once, he poured coffee or food on her dress or head just as she was ready to leave for worship. She changed and went anyway.

She did not attend where I preached, but as I had opportunity to speak where she attended, I could see the effect of her husband's (and his family's) abuse of her. She was frail and burdened and she would often weep as the gospel was preached. It was not unusual for her to come forward at the close of the service and seek the prayers of the church that she might be strong.

The burdens she faced did not cause her to forsake her Lord and His service nor to forget about the needs of others. Her life in Christ and her great example of dedication blessed the lives of others and encouraged them to put first things first. Her praise for gospel preaching was always generous and genuine and encouraged me to be a better preacher and a better Christian. How easy it would have been for her to offer excuses to God and put obedience to the voice of man above obedience to God.

Man must Put Making a Life above Making a Living. Man is commanded to work (2 The. 3:10); thus, work is right and good. Man should not expect a handout from the world while he refuses to be employed in honest work. God is not pleased with the slothful and sluggards.

Did God intend for secular work to consume all the time, talents and energy of a man? Is God pleased when one can not find the time to worship or work in the Kingdom because of his secular work obligations? Can a man (or woman) be the Christian spouse, parent, brother or neighbor he (or she) should be when that one puts making a living before making a life?

Consider this situation. The husband works a job that limits his worship to one meeting per week. The wife works a job that limits her to attending one service per week but at a different time than her husband. Their teenage son and daughter take jobs that prevent their attending but two or three times per month. Why? Is the family starving? Are they in need of financial help?

No. They just fell for Satan's trap. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). They allowed something to take priority over seeking the Kingdom of God. They have loved homes, cars, clothes and things of this world and the love of God is not in them (1 John 2:15-17). They have taught their children to love the world and pay lip service to God. What a sad eternity in Hell awaits.

Where is faith? Remember, Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and **all these things** shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33). Do we not believe that God can or will provide? David said, "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psa. 37:25). Where is faith?

Man must Put Faith above Feelings. The basis of faith is the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Someone says, "I would not trade this feeling I have for a stack of Bibles ten feet high." Feelings may deceive for feelings are affected by outward stimuli. One may feel he is saved when he is not. Joseph's father thought his son was dead and he grieved as if he were, but he was not. One may have strange feelings, good or bad, happy or sad, but feelings do not determine salvation.

Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one

that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). Hearing, believing and obeying the gospel results in man’s salvation. James, recorded, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21).

Man must Put Spiritual Things above Earthly Things. Wholesome recreation is good and is needed, but that must not keep one from studying, teaching, serving and growing. To take time to relax and to refresh is not wrong—Jesus did—but relaxation must not be our priority. Hobbies are helpful, but they must not take the place of God. Colossians 3:1-2 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

When a church of Christ (?) emphasizes parties, retreats, trips, lock-in’s, cookouts and the like; dismisses Sunday evening services on Christmas so the members can be with their families “which is more important;” thus, catering to the earthly desires of the flesh instead of tending to the spiritual needs of the flock, what shall follow? If such a group will not repent they should change their name and stop pretending to be the Lord’s church.

Man must Put Giving above Getting. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). How many believe that? Hear God’s warning, “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes” (Hag. 1:6).

What Is First in Your Life? Jesus will have first place or no place (Col. 1:18).

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

February 1989

Number 2

Miracles Do Make Sense!

Leon D. Stancliff

Many years ago, Dr. J. Ridley Stroop who was then a professor of psychology and Bible at David Lipscomb College stated that he was preparing material for a book which was to be titled *Christianity, A Rational Religion*. To the best of my knowledge it was never completed. I wish it had been. There is much to say about the topic. Some are convinced that Christians are intellectual cripples. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

I was invited to speak to a colleague's class on the Philosophy of Science. I knew the professor was a Pantheist. I wondered what kind of questions would be proposed by his students. After I had finished my presentation, the session was opened to the students. The first question asked was very sharp and to the point. "Have you ever seen a miracle?" I answered that I had not. If the discussion had ended at that point, I gained the impression that the student would have concluded I had no reason to believe in them if I had not seen one. That would have been an irrational conclusion. It is not necessary that I see them for them to have occurred.

The atheist says, "*There is no God.*" The agnostic says, "*I have no way of knowing.*" The Pantheist says, "*God is nature.*" The deist says, "*There is God, but he does not interfere with nature.*" The true Christian says, "*God is above nature, and in constant supervision of it.*" Only the last of these positions is reasonable.

Nature itself cries out on every side that there is design, and therefore intelligence, in the universe. Our own nature demonstrates that mind controls matter rather than the reverse. Standing beside the coffin of his deceased brother, even Robert Ingersoll was altered from his former insolence to humbly whisper, "If there be a God." Only the fool ignores the testimony of God's handiwork. There is a God in heaven (Dan. 5:21)!

The next step of logic is that if there is a personal God in heaven, it would be unthinkable that He would fail to reveal His will to His creation. And He has! The Bible is that revelation. We need not wonder what we should do to please Him. He has made His wishes clear. The skeptic will then counter, "How do you know the Bible is the revealed will of God?" The answer to his query is *miracles*.

At two important junctures in the history of civilization God has demonstrated His power by "many infallible proofs." These were not the only times God utilized miracles. They are, however, most impressive times. The first was in the escape from the bondage of Egypt, followed by the presentation of the law of Moses upon Mount Sinai. The other was during the lifetime of Christ and the apostles, as the law of liberty was presented. There were miracles in abundance at both times. God does not leave us without witness. He provides us a "reason for the hope" we have within us.

People have varying definitions of the word "miracle." Some speak of a miraculous play on the baseball field. That is not a Bible miracle. Webster defines a miracle as "an event or action that apparently contradicts known scientific laws." The student of the Bible will object to the use of the word "apparently" in Webster's definition. There are others who would define a miracle as a condition or event beyond the understanding of man. Some would consider the entire concept of miracles to be "tommyrot."

Many of the miracles of the Bible were for the distinct purpose of demonstrating that God was behind the giving of the laws. To accomplish this purpose, Biblical miracles met certain criteria which were indisputable. (1) *They had to be fully observable to the senses.* It is really a little difficult to miss this point when the waters of the sea are rolled back to allow hundreds of thousands of people to march between them, and then are plunged back together to drown their pursuers. It would also be hard to miss the glory on the face of Moses when he came back down from

Mount Sinai; a glory so bright the Israelites could not look upon it.

But, there were other criteria. (2) *Bible miracles were also done before thousands of witnesses*. It is ridiculous to make the assertion that over five thousand people were deceived into thinking they were fed with a very small number of loaves and fishes. Another time, Paul said that over five hundred persons observed the risen Lord at once (1 Cor. 15:6).

I will mention one other test. (3) *The miracle was of such a nature that only God could perform it*. There is no fakery when a man who has been lame for decades, from the time of his birth, is immediately healed and leaps to his feet praising God. Nicodemus admitted Jesus had performed such miracles. He said, "no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

I must also mention the difference between providential action and miracles. The miracle was deliberately awesome and public. It was for the purpose of catching the attention of the observer, and convincing him of the importance of obedience to God. In providential action, God may still manipulate affairs to bring about his ends.

My mother was constantly working behind the scenes in the training of her children. She used natural law, and things were different because she did so. If a godly mother can make things work together for the welfare of her offspring, when can not the Maker of all things do so? Prophecy has ceased, but the providential hand of God still moves.

Yes, my friends. Miracles do make sense. It is rational to believe there is a God. It is also rational to believe He would communicate His will to us. It should also be expected that he would confirm that will through indisputable evidence. And that is why at least some of the miracles took place. God is the Creator. He is the giver of both natural and spiritual law. No man should be more impressed with these facts than the scientist who specializes in the observation of God's wonderful works.

Free Bible Correspondence Course

A **Free bible correspondence course** may be yours just for the asking! Lesson One of this non-denominational course will be sent to you by mail for your inspection. All you need to study and complete the course is your own Bible. Following your return of the last lesson, you will receive a beautiful Certificate of Completion. The Bible Course is completed at your own speed and convenience, is handled through the mail, and there is **no charge**. (A work of Bellview Church of Christ).

To receive Lesson One, simply write to:

Bible Correspondence Course
% Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, FL 32506

Fruit of Deceptive Denominational Doctrine

Bobby Liddell

Our conversation began as the result of a wrong number. She was trying to reach a nearby denominational church to obtain the number of the **700 Club**. Upon my response of surprise at such a request, she explained what the 700 Club was and that Pat Robinson was a very famous man. I assured her of my knowledge of the program and its speaker and of my disagreement with many of his practices including his begging for money.

"I was raised church of Christ, but now I am definitely Baptist," she said. "God didn't make denominations, but it doesn't matter what church one goes to if he is born again and washed in the blood of Christ," she continued, "as a matter of fact, I have a very dear friend who belongs to the church of Christ denomination."

"But the church of Christ is not a denomination," I replied. She responded, "Well, do you believe that one can accept Jesus as his personal savior, be washed in the blood of Christ and be saved even if his interpretation of the Scripture is different from that of the church of Christ?" Sensing she wanted to say more, I asked, "What you really want to ask is, 'Will only those in the church of Christ be in Heaven?' isn't it?" "Yes, I suppose so," she answered. I explained that all those and only those who hear, believe and obey **all** the will of God will be saved. "Well, I am

glad that God is the judge and not me. The Bible says plainly, 'Judge not,'” she said rather heatedly. I answered, “The Bible also says, ‘Judge righteous judgment.’ In view of that, let me ask you this; will adulterers be in Heaven?”

Listen, friends, to what the result of accepting deceptive denominational doctrine is. She could not answer. She would not say whether adulterers would be in heaven. She said she could not judge! I quoted Galatians 5:19-21 for her, which says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Paul said, by inspiration, that adulterers; that is, those who continue in the sin of adultery without forgiveness, ‘shall not inherit the kingdom of God,’” I said.

“Well, why just pick adultery, and how do you know that person did not repent? He may have, on his deathbed. Besides, you can be lost for lying and we all have lied,” she replied. “We all have lied,” I answered, “and in view of the statement you have just made, I have another question for you. Will there be any liars; that is, those who continue in lying without forgiveness, in heaven?”

Listen again. She could not answer. She would not say whether liars would be in heaven or not. She said she could not judge!

I quoted Revelation 21:8, which says, “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.” “The Bible says, ‘all liars’ shall be in Hell, not in Heaven,” I said.

“Now if Paul said, by inspiration, that adulterers would not be in Heaven; and if Revelation 21:8 says that all liars will be in Hell and not in Heaven, do you mean to tell me that you can not tell whether there will be any adulterers or liars in Heaven?”

She stumbled and halted in her speech and finally said, “I am just glad that I am not the judge, but God is!” She was ready to end the conversation. I encouraged her to study her Bible and offered to study with her if she so desired. She ignored the offer and cordially concluded. I suppose I will never hear from her again.

I don’t know what happened in the rest of her day, but I do know this. If it were I, and if I had just been faced with the fact that I had to throw out the Bible to hold on to my denominational doctrine, I would have been pained and tormented in my soul, and could not have rested until I had resolved that problem.

How sad to see the fruit of deceptive denominational doctrine. The poor lady was so intent on being tolerant and not “judging” that she could not say that sin is sin and that sinners are sinners and that sinners will be lost and not saved; that is, will be lost eternally in the torments of Hell and not saved in the beautiful bliss of Heaven. Sadly, she had accepted the false doctrine that she ought not to say that anybody was wrong for that would be “judging” and so she should just “love” them and accept them in their sins.

Such an attitude may seem, at first glance, to be noble and loving, but it is neither. God’s Word teaches us to speak the **truth in love** (Eph. 4:15). It may appear that such a one is being Christ-like, but he is not. In a way that seeks to make good seem bad and bad seem good, the contrast is often made between: (1) the one who is faithful and courageous enough to make the distinction between truth and error, obedience and disobedience, sin and righteousness; and (2) the one who is not honest and courageous enough to do so. In agreement with this deadly error, the world and Satan will say a loud, “Amen!”

The fruit of deceptive denominational doctrine is a false hope based on delusion. Such often results in a smug confidence and a false security in the attitude (which is itself a result of “judging”), “I am better, more spiritual and more Christlike than you are because I will not say anybody is wrong for I will not ‘judge.’” The attitude of the Pharisee (Luke 18) may be seen in many forms, of which, this is one.

God’s Word says, “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 The. 2:10-12).

Can one learn from God’s Word what sin is? Can one say that sin is sin? Can one then say that one who sins and continues in that sin without forgiveness will be lost now and eternally? Does one sin if he so says; that is, does he violate the prohibition of Jesus in Matthew 7?

Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mat. 7:1-2). He **also said**, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Jesus did not contradict Himself, but He said, "Judge not," **and** "Judge righteous judgment." Matthew 7:1-2 teaches against unkind, unjust, unrighteous judgment. **John 7:24 does the same.** God commands us not to judge unrighteous judgment, but God commands us to judge righteous judgment.

Consider these examples. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, "your children...shall be your judges" (Mat. 12:27). He condemned the Pharisees in that they would, "pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done" (Luke 11:42). In Luke 12:57, Jesus asked of the hypocrites, "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Paul and Barnabas told the Jews, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Paul said to the Christians at Corinth, "do not ye judge them that are within?" (1 Cor. 5:12), and, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2), and, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3). In the context, he had said, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed" (1 Cor. 5:3).

Peter and John said to the Jewish council, upon the occasion of their being called before the council and being commanded not to speak at all nor to teach in the name of Jesus, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19). These passages and many others are illustrative of the fact that we must make judgments every day of our lives. In so doing, we are not to be unkind, unjust nor unrighteous. We are to judge as Christ commanded; that is, as we would be judged. Those who believe and teach that one can not, without himself sinning, make any judgment as to sin and those who practice sin have led multiplied millions to a destructive dilemma. As a matter of fact, they, according to their own reasoning, have sinned in that they have "judged" that one sins who "judges."

How could one follow God's will if he could not distinguish between good and evil and between those who do good and those who do evil?

Could 2 John 9-11 ever be followed if one can not "judge"? That passage says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Or, how could Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" be obeyed? What about, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14, 17)?

Following denominational doctrine bogs one in a morass of conflict and contradiction. Much of the problem is the denominational misconception of "love" which is one of the most hateful doctrines ever devised by men. Millions will be lost eternally who were too "loving" to follow Christ. One can not follow Christ who cannot distinguish between right and wrong or who will not stand on the truth that sin is sin and those who continue in sin will be lost. Our conversation was upsetting to the caller in that her beliefs were challenged and she could not answer such basic Bible questions. Our conversation was upsetting to me in that it reminded me of the deceptive and damning doctrines of denominationalism and of the precious souls that will be lost for having followed them. It caused me to be even more determined to have the courage and love to confront sin, expose error and preach the pure truth of the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What about you?

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MARCH 26-30, 1989

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

4400 Knight Arnold Road • Memphis, Tennessee 38118

THEME: "THE BIBLE-NONE LIKE IT"

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 1989

9:30-10:20 AM	"The Bible—None Like It on What Constitutes Christian Worship"	Rex A. Turner, Sr.
10:70-11:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Its Origin"	E. L. Whitaker
6:00- 7:00 PM	"The Bible—None Like It on Origins"	Thomas B. Warren

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 1989

9:00- 9:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Its Unity"	Wayne Coats
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Upholding Its Own Case in Refuting Error"	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Elevating Woman's Self-Esteem" (Women's Class)	Annette Cates
11:00-11:30 AM	How Did We Get the English Bible?"	James Boyd
11:00-11:30 AM	Class 1— <i>Critical Study</i> "Authenticity of the Scriptures"	Joe Spangler
	Class 2— <i>The Bible vs "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha"</i>	Eddie Craft
	Class 3— <i>Set for Defense of the Gospel</i> "Against Liberalism"	Virgil Hale
	Class 4— <i>Critical Questions</i> "The Synoptic Problem"	Jimmy Clark
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	"Can We All See the Bible Alike?"	Joe Gilmore
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>God's Word</i> "And My Personal Relations"	Carroll Beardain
	Class 2— <i>The New Testament Speaks</i> "On the Identity of the Church"	Jim Bryant
	Class 3—"Teaching the Establishment of the Church to Children" (Women's Class)	Lora Laycook
2:16- 3:00 PM	"False Theories vs the Truth on Inspiration"	Dub McClish
3:10- 4:00 PM	"Open Forum—Panel on Question of Everything One Does Is Worship"	Garland Elkins, Wayne Coats, Roger Jackson, Robert Taylor

6:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION

7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

7:30- 8:70 PM "The Bible—None Like It in Religious Authority" Alan Highers

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 1989

9:00- 9:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Fulfilled Prophecy"	Bobby Liddell
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Upholding Its Own Case in Refuting Error"	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Elevating Woman as Mother and Teacher of Children" (Women's Class)	Janis Dearman
11:00-11:30 AM	"How Did We Get the English Bible?"	James Boyd
11:00-11:30 AM	Class 1— <i>Critical Study</i> "Genuineness of the Scriptures"	Roger Johnson
	Class 2— <i>The Bible vs "Catholic Traditions"</i>	James Rogers
	Class 3— <i>Set for the Defense of the Gospel</i> "Against Radicalism"	B. B. James
	Class 4— <i>Critical Questions</i> "The Unity of Isaiah"	David Brown
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	"Rightly Dividing the Word"	Flavil Nichols
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>God's Word</i> "And My Business Relations"	Melvin Sapp
	Class 2— <i>The New Testament Speaks</i> "On Who is a Christian"	Dan Goddard
	Class 3—"Teaching the New Testament Conversions to Children" (Women's Class)	Lora Laycook
2:10- 3:00 PM	"Book, Chapter and Verse Preaching, Is it Out of Date?"	Calvin Barber
3:10- 6:00 PM	"Open Forum" Panel on <i>The Worldly Church</i>	Garland Elkins, David Brown, Dub McClish, Robert Taylor
1:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00- 8:30 PM	"The Bible—None Like It in Meeting Youths' Problems"	Andrew Connally

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1989

9:00- 9:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Its Indestructibility"	Goebel Music
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Upholding Its Own Cost in Refuting Error"	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:30 AM	"The Bible—None Like It in Exalting Women—Sarah" (Womm's Class)	Dorothy Mosher
11:00-11:30 AM	"Is the Bible as It is Adapted to Man as He is?"	Joe Nichols
11:00-11:30 AM	Class 1— <i>Critical Study</i> "Credibility of the Scriptures"	Rodney Rutherford
	Class 2— <i>The Bible vs "Denominational Dogmas"</i>	Bob Knox

	Class 3— <i>Set for the Defense of the Gospel</i> “Against World Religions”	Demar Elam
11:50- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:14- 2:00 PM	“The Bible as Its Own Best Interpreter” (Hermeneutics)	George DeHoff
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>God’s Word</i> “And My Marriage”	Jim Dearman
	Class 2— <i>The New Testament Speaks</i> “On Loving the Brotherhood”	William S. Cline
	Class 3—“Teaching the New Testament Conversions to Children” (Women’s Class)	Lora Laycook
2:10- 3:00 PM	“Preach the Word to the World”	Perry Cotham
3:10- 1:00 PM	“Open Forum” Panel on Scripturality of the Word “Church”	
	Garland Elkins, Perry Cotham, Goebel Muck, Robert Taylor	
4:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	“The Bible—None Like It in Influence”	Roger Jackson
THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 1989		
9:00- 9:30 AM	“The Bible—None Like It in Its Hope”	Clarence Lavender
10:00-10:30 AM	“The Bible—None Like It in Upholding Its Own Case in Refuting Error”	Thomas B. Warren
10:00-10:30 AM	“The Bible—None Like It in Giving Strength for Daily Christian Living” (Women’s Class) . .	Brenda Rutherford
11:00- 1:30 AM	“Can You Trust Your English Bible?”	Keith Mosher
11:00-11:50 AM	Class 1— <i>Critical Study</i> “Was the Virgin Birth of Christ Necessary for Man’s Salvation?”	Curtis A. Cates
	Class 2— <i>The Bible</i> vs. “Letting the Conscience be Your Guide”	Glendon Cantrell
	Class 3— <i>Set for the Defense of the Gospel</i> “Against Calvinism”	Jim Gribble
	Class 4— <i>Critical Questions</i> “Is Christ God’s Only Begotten Son?”	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
11:30- 1:10 PM	LUNCH	
1:10- 2:00 PM	“Must the ‘Clergy’ or ‘Scholars’ Give the ‘Official’ Interpretation of the Bible?”	Joseph Meador
1:10- 2:00 PM	Class 1— <i>God’s Word</i> “And My Role as a Parent”	Will T. Winchester
	Class 2— <i>The New Testament Speaks</i> “On Church Growth”	Harrell Davidson
	Class 3—“Teaching the New Testament Conversions to Children” (Women’s Class)	Lora Laycook
2:10- 3:00 PM	“Take Heed How You Hear”	Foy L. Smith
3:10- 1:00 PM	“Open Forum” Panel on “Only Begotten”	
	Garland Elkins, David Nance, Robert Taylor, Thomas B. Warren	
1:00- 7:00 PM	INTERMISSION	
7:00- 7:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:30- 8:30 PM	“The Bible—None Like It When the Books are Opened”	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

A Critique Of *How Christianity Grows In The City*

In 1985, Alvin Jennings mailed over 15,000 copies of *How Christianity Grows In The City* to churches of Christ, in which was espoused a humanly-devised plan of church organization and evangelism. The book, outlining a modified Roman Catholic plan of organization with a Crossroads plan of evangelism, was dedicated to the infamous Boston Church of Christ holding them up as a “model to all the believers.”

In response, brother Wayne Coats has written *A Critique of “How Christianity Grows In The City.”* In 1987, the Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, oversaw the mailing of some 15,000 copies of brother Coats’ book to congregations worldwide. In an effort to inform brethren as to the true nature of the Crossroads/Boston movement, this much needed volume (235 pages) is now available in lots of 12 or more for only \$1.00 per copy (plus \$2.50 postage per dozen). **Orders must be for at least 12 copies.** For orders above 12 copies, add .20 per copy for postage. Send orders to: **Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, Florida 32506.**

Bellview Lectures May 10-14, 1989 “In Hope of Eternal Life”

Begin to plan now to attend the **1989 Bellview Lectures.** The theme, covering lectures on Heaven, Hell, Eternal Life and related subjects, is **“In Hope Of Eternal Life.”**

Those presenting lectures include: **Gary Anderson, Curtis Cates, Winfred Clark, Bill Cline, Andrew Connally, Harrell Davidson, Daniel Denham, H. A. Dobbs, Guss Eoff, Ross Gallaher, Joe Gilmore, Noah**

Hackworth, Alton Hayes, Ronnie Hayes, Roger Jackson, Bobby Liddell, Jerri Manasco, Jerry Martin, Ray Peters, Foy Smith and Steve Waller.

As last year, a hardbound book of the lecture manuscripts will be prepared. Further information concerning housing, transportation, tapes, etc., will be given in upcoming issues of *Defender* and other publications.

Contributions to Defender

JUNE, 1988--JANUARY, 1989

Ava Burns	5.00	Harold Beale	10.00
Paul Ditoro	10.00	Herman Carter	25.00
D. A. Simmons	10.00	K. D. McKee	10.00
Michael Sollars	5.00	Lee Henson	50.00
D. A. Simmons	10.00	A. C. Knight	100.00
Willie Kitchen	10.00	Glenda Johnson	5.00
Harold Cozad	100.00	R. A. Simmons	10.00
Dorothy Lefevers	5.00	Richard Snider	10.00
Bill Willard	10.00	David Hardin	10.00
Olin Warmack	10.00	Michael Sollars	5.00
S. M. Bradley	20.00	Celina Mason	5.00
Jesse Condra	5.50	Robt. Yarborough	10.00
Betty Lynch	5.00	Wm. Mickelson	50.00
Roy Campbell	10.00		

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

“What Does The Bible Teach?”

Lectures from **The First Annual “Know Your Bible Lectureship.”** This is a hard-bound book of 360 pages on the fundamentals of the Faith which is being used to convert the lost.

You may order yours for only \$10.00 (postage included) from:

Roger Jackson
940 Old Wood Road
Oxford, Alabama 36203

Values Void

Steve Gunter

Modern man has long desired to escape the difficult duty of moral judgment. The Word of God made this devilish dream impossible (John 12:48). The scientific assault upon the faith made radical relativism attainable and in fact a frightening reality upon our earth.

Bertrand Russell, the founding father of modernist philosophy, embodied the values relativism of humanist thought in his critical creed, *A Free Man's Worship* (1918). That cruel creed proclaimed, “Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving, his origin, his beliefs and loves, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms. Nothing can preserve individual life beyond the grave, all the labors of the ages, the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the death of our solar system.”

In contrast to such profound pessimism, we have the Word of God in John 4:24, “God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.” The apostle Peter knew the fate of the material universe but this did not require him to embrace atheist attitudes and abominable error, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:10-11).

Professional humanism has unleashed a barrage of bilge seeking nothing less than the abolition of the faith once delivered unto sinful man. Unlike Carl Sagan and other militant materialists, the Psalmist remarked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psa. 8:4-5). Sagan's materialist propaganda is crammed down the throats of our children daily in the public schools of America. In the home state of the author, Arkansas, it is illegal to consider the creation alternative. The materialist monopoly guarantees generation after generation of youth who have literally never heard the Christian case for the divine origin of life and soul.

Christians must defend the faith (Phi. 1:17). The faith includes the teleology or purpose of human life (Ecc. 12:13). Children deserve a choice in the great issues and questions of human existence. For it is appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

It is our duty to reverse the success of Satan in his wicked perversions which blind modern man to the absolute truth of inspired revelation and its sweet message of redemption and salvation in Christ (Gal. 3:27).

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

March 1989

Number 3

The Blood Atonement

Larry D. Mathis

A correct understanding of “The Blood Atonement” is crucial, for “blood atonement” is the central message of both Old and New Testaments. In various ways, and by direct statement, the Bible emphasizes that, “apart from shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

The blood of clean sacrificial animals (beasts and fowls) was required of all men throughout the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. That trail of blood reached all the way from Eden to Calvary—enough blood to wash away the city of Jerusalem; a sea of animal blood; but, what did it all mean? That is the question.

Some “theologians” object to references to blood in religion! They rant and rave and rip all references to blood from their hymn books, and banish the mention of it from so-called “sophisticated” pulpits, and belch forth innuendos accusing those of us who believe in atoning blood as having a “slaughterhouse religion!” Are they correct? No. Should we assume their posture? No. Yet, questions remain: “Why did Jehovah require blood?” “Why did He require animal blood?” “Why did God require so much blood?” I reply Jehovah required blood to atone for sin.

Blood atonement involves: (1) ransom; (2) redemption; (3) reconciliation; and (4) expiation. I am certain that blood atonement encompasses the whole Remedial System, the Scheme of Redemption, God’s Plan of Salvation for all lost human sinners.

When Adam sinned in the garden of Eden it is likely that the angels, both good and bad, looked upon man as lost, ruined, hopelessly forever lost! And why not? Why should not they have so concluded? That would seem to be a logical deduction—for what was the condition of fallen angels? See Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4. Why should man’s standing before God be different? Why should man be spared?

The fact that God’s man (created in God’s own image—Gen. 1:27), had sinned was known everywhere—in heaven, earth, and hell. And the fact that justice demanded satisfaction was also known. But when, where, and how would this satisfaction be given? In other words, how could Jehovah be a just God if He justified the sinner? How could he “pass over” sin and maintain his absolute holiness?

At this point in time, nothing had yet appeared within the horizon of even the tallest angel in glory that was sufficient to justify such an event as the salvation of one single soul that had been defiled by sin. My friends, there was something yet undeveloped; that is, something which no created eye had yet seen; something which no created ear had ever heard; neither had it entered into the heart of man the things God Almighty had prepared (Isa. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9)—but the shadow of which was then present upon every Patriarchal altar.

I should like to pursue this thought momentarily. What was that “something?” In this study I am affirming that, Jehovah, in eternity, before making man, made a plan for man(kind); that this plan originated in the mind of God before creation; that this plan was to be implemented in the eventuality that man should succumb to sin; that Adam and Eve’s sin did not catch God “off-guard” so to speak; but rather Jehovah headed straight for Calvary; God began implementing his plan to save sinners, all human sinners, in view of “The Blood Atonement” of Jesus Christ.

This plan (mystery) was revealed to man and angels in progressive stages of development (cf. Mark 4:26-29), being fully and finally consummated “in Christ” on the cross. This means that God planned a way for man in the event that He needed it; He anticipated the birth of Christ, the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the blood of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the church of Christ. The church was no afterthought! Be sure to read 1 Peter 1:18-20;

2 Timothy 1:8-11; Ephesians 1:3-7; and Acts 20:28.

Had not the Remedial System been in prospect, no doubt Adam and his bride would, like the angels that fell, have been at once banished forever from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power (2 The. 1:9). But, Jehovah knew perfectly well that, in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4), He could, and would, demonstrate to the whole intelligent universe that He had acted justly in passing by, for the time being, sins committed during the Patriarchal and Jewish Ages (Rom. 3:21-26).

It seems apparent that before Christ could come, an urgent need had to be met; the task of educating and enlightening mankind. This effort proved to be a long process involving many hundreds of years. God began “schooling” humanity—beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden immediately after the fall. In Genesis 3:15, the first glimpse; the first promise of human salvation and redemption is mentioned. God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This prophetic promise implied the following:

- (1) Mankind’s need for salvation (cf. Jer. 10:23);
- (2) That a Redeemer would come;
- (3) That this Redeemer would be of the human family;
- (4) That this Redeemer would be miraculously brought forth of “the seed of the woman”;
- (5) That this Redeemer would be wounded;
- (6) That this Redeemer would be victorious over the Old Serpent;
- (7) That this Redeemer would be a “male”—the use of “he” in the prophecy indicated that one person, a male was meant.

I do not hesitate to affirm that none other than Jesus Christ, the Savior, meets the demands of this prophecy. From Genesis through Malachi, we learn that somebody “is coming”; Acts through Revelation tells us that that same somebody (Jesus), is “coming again.”

In Genesis chapter three; beginning with Adam and Eve, Jehovah took it upon Himself to institute the sacrificial system. A temporary, substitutionary covering for their sin was demanded. Adam and Eve needed far more than a mere physical covering for their bodies, their nakedness—they needed their sins covered by atoning blood! “And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). Surely, no one would contend that these animals were “skinned” without being “slain.” And, who would suggest, after studying Genesis 3:15, that the blood of these animals was merely thrown out on the ground without any application whatsoever to the sins of Adam and Eve? We can only imagine how Adam felt when he realized that those innocent animals had died; the very ones he had named—died to provide a covering for himself and his bride!

With what feelings of surprise, too, must Satan and all his rebel host have heard from Jehovah that awfully sublime and mysterious oracle, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent!” Had I been in his place I think I would have feared every male child born into this world from that day forward. Perhaps he did, and, perhaps, this in part helps to explain Satan’s unrelenting attacks upon every good and righteous man in Old Testament times.

How intensely Satan and his angels must have gazed upon the first lamb that was ever offered in sacrifice. Surely, Satan and his emissaries were not idle and indifferent spectators of the scene. Does any one seriously entertain the notion that God took Satan aside into his secret counsels to reveal to him his battle strategy—the great Scheme of Redemption in its fullness? Have we forgotten that a spiritual warfare has been raging since before Eden? In my judgment, Satan, like all others, had to learn about God’s plan as it was revealed in its progressive stages of development. He, too, became a diligent student of the sacrificial system and watched closely the shadows, types, promises and prophecies.

As time progressed and Jehovah began more fully uncovering the mystery of redemption, His holy angels became evermore interested in the sublime drama of human salvation. This fact, no doubt, was symbolized in the time of Moses by the two angelic figures in the Most Holy Place above the Mercy-Seat.

As you will recall, their faces were turned downward, as if anxious to penetrate the mysteries that then lay concealed in, and beneath, the golden Propitiatory. To this, Peter seems to allude when he says that the angels desired to look into these things (1 Pet. 1:12). And, the same apostle informs us that the ancient Hebrew prophets earnestly inquired into these matters, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them

did signify when He testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

There, in the location of that God ordained Mercy-Seat, was revealed the key of all God's dealings with the race, namely, God's mercy converging with God's law—sprinkled with atoning blood! When Aaron the high priest applied the atoning blood; when he applied it at the place where God's mercy and God's law converged; when he applied it in the prescribed manner; Jehovah then "passed over" their sins (Rom. 3:25), in anticipation of far distant Calvary. Generations of men beheld this wonder but neither man nor angels fully comprehended it, nor could they fully understand it, till Jesus ascended Golgotha.

The reason they could not understand it fully is because that old system was a shadow, and the new the very image of the heavenly things. As the bud brings forth the flower, just so, Judaism brought forth Christianity. Moses thus delivered the Christian system "embryonically" in the prophecies about Christ, in the minute details of the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, and in the definite instructions for all the feasts, sacrifices, and ceremonies. It is now so very clear to us that Judaism foretold and eventually proved the redemptive ministry of Christ.

The law and all its provisions were typical, carnal, earthly, material, and employed mortal devices, having no efficacy at all, except as they directed the minds of the worshippers to the holy and heavenly things prefigured. Just as a man's shadow would reveal far less information about him than a three-dimensional color representation; just so, that shadow of things as revealed in the law is far inferior to the reality in the new.

Animal blood could not make the worshiper perfect as pertained to his conscience (Heb. 9:22; 10:4); and in its cleansing it was typical, partial, and temporary; but, it procured the necessary respite until, God, in His own good time, should allow Christ to die for all.

Since the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4), Christ, the Great Volunteer, undertook the task. But it should be noted that he would not be able to accomplish God's will with mere animal sacrifices, but would need "a body,"—a body prepared of God (Heb. 10:5, 10), and made available to the Messiah through the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22). Absolutely nothing less than the death of man for the sins of man could prevail; and no ordinary sinful man would suffice for such a purpose. Nothing less than the perfect and sinless Lamb of God could prevail to make "The Blood Atonement."

He was holy (Luke 1:35); there was no fault in him (Luke 23:4); he could not be convicted of sin (John 8:46); he knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21); he did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22); he was without sin (Heb. 4:15); he was without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:19).

In time, the long awaited King would come; a just King; having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, upon the foal of an ass (Zec. 9:9). He would be smitten—the sheep would scatter (Zec. 13:7); he would be wounded in his hands, in the house of his friends (Zec. 13:6); they would look upon him whom they had pierced and would mourn (Zec. 12:10). In that day there would be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zec. 13:1). In one day he would remove iniquity (Zec. 3:9). The man whose name is the Branch would build the temple of the Lord, and he would bear the glory, and would sit and rule upon his throne; and he would be a priest upon his throne (Zec. 6:12-13). He would speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion would be from sea to sea (Zec. 9:10).

God accepted that offering; the blood of His own Son as being fully adequate to meet and to satisfy all the demands of his government; and thus was solved the greatest moral problem that had ever occupied the attention of men or angels—for Jehovah could be just, and at the same time justify sinners.

Yes, the Great Antitype of all the sacrifices that were slain by Divine appointment appeared on the old rugged cross, the Christian's altar, His flesh torn and mangled; His atoning blood shed for the sins of the world. With death and hell whipped, life and immortality came to light by the gospel. The way into the holiest of all was made possible. Jesus ascended far into the heavens, to God's throne, as our Great High Priest, not with the blood of goats and bulls, but with His own blood, he made "The Atonement."

My friends, are you purified by His blood? Jesus made the atonement for you. God sent His own Son that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16-17); Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:5-6); He was once offered to bear the sins of many (Heb. 9:28); to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17); He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2); and is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him (Heb. 7:25). Please understand me, Jesus is able to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

If you would be purified by His blood you must first obey His precepts. Surely, you would not reject the rich

benefits procured for you through the infinite merits of that blood. Perhaps you are asking, “What must I do to be saved?” “What must I do to reach the benefits of my Lord’s blood?” You must: (1) hear the gospel—this you have just accomplished in this article (John 6:44-45); (2) You must believe (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17); (3) You must repent of all sins (Acts 17:30-31); (4) You must confess that Jesus Christ is God’s Son (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10); and (5) You must be baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38; 22:16). If you will do this you will become a member of the Lord’s church—the church He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

505 Schultz, Parkersburg, WV 26101

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

Upcoming Lectures

West Coast Firm Foundation Lectures, March 15-19. “Great Characters Of The Bible.” 977 Grant Avenue, San Lorenzo, CA 94580. (408) 264-1866. San Lorenzo Church.

Memphis School of Preaching Lectures, March 26-30. “The Bible—None Like It.” 4400 Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN 38118. (901) 362-5139.

Southwest Lectures, April 16-19, 1989. “The Book Of Psalms—I.” 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, Texas 78748. (512) 282-2486.

Born of Water

David W. Hester

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). In this passage, Jesus told Nicodemus the terms of admission into the kingdom. The elements of birth are water and the Spirit, and a man must be born of both to be born again. Please notice, though, that Jesus said one must be “born of water.” Much speculation has centered upon this phrase, and men have twisted its meaning to fit their own theories. What does God’s Word say about the subject?

First, one must see what the Savior does **not** mean. Contrary to the teaching of many, Jesus is not speaking of physical birth. This position is widely held in the denominational world, albeit sincerely. If true, then Jesus is not saying that water baptism is essential for entrance into the kingdom. However, a simple reading of the context refutes this view. Nicodemus asked Christ, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4). This inquisitive Pharisee thought that the new birth was of a physical nature. Jesus had said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). When Nicodemus asked his question in verse four, Jesus specified the elements involved—water and the Spirit. He further said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). This statement by Christ answered Nicodemus’s question, “Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Jesus is referring to two different births in verse six. The new birth, which is spiritual, is nothing like the birth of flesh which Nicodemus had in mind in verse four.

Some denominationalists will actually claim that the water in verse five is that of natural birth. However, Jesus is speaking of a man, not an unborn child. Christ further says that a man must be **born again**. The natural birth is called a “birth of flesh” in verse six. Also, this erroneous view would make Jesus a babbler. A spiritual birth, not physical, is what Christ is describing. The water involved is literal, not figurative. Many compare the water of verse five to the “living water” of John 4:14 and try to say they both are figurative. This view is false. Jesus says simply, “water,” not “**the** water.”

Many contend that one must “get religion” at one point and then, baptized with the Spirit, be baptized again in water. This theory makes two births where there should be but one. The language is **born again**, not once at the altar and once at the baptistry. Jesus said born of water **and** the Spirit, not born of the Spirit **and then** born of water.

What does Christ mean when He says, “born of water?” The answer is simple. He is referring to the act of baptism. Baptism is the means by which one is placed in and delivered from the water, according to the teaching of the

Spirit: “**Buried** with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him*” (Col. 2:12). Rom. 6:3-6 describes how a man contacts the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—by baptism! Paul also writes that “our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6). Paul also describes how that Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the church through the “washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:25-26). The Hebrews writer exhorts, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

The essentiality of baptism for man’s salvation shines forth from the pages of the New Testament. “He that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved**; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Contrary to the belief of many, Saul was not saved on the Damascus road. The Lord told him, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:6). When Saul was come into Damascus, after three days, Ananias came to him. To the persecutor of Christians, Ananias said, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). The same conditional relationship that existed between Naaman’s leprosy and dipping seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kin. 5) exists between water baptism and man’s salvation. Also, the children of Israel were commanded to look upon a brass serpent on a pole to be healed of poisonous snake bites (Num. 21). Again, the same conditional relationship exists. Jesus commanded baptism; it is His way. He did the bleeding, suffering and dying. He alone has the right to set the terms for the salvation of mankind. When the Lord says, “Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” then one must comply in order to obtain membership.

A final consideration must be dealt with. Exactly what is the kingdom to which Christ refers in John 3:5? First, one must realize that the kingdom has been established. Jesus told a group of listeners, “That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, **till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power**” (Mark 9:1). Some claim the kingdom is yet to come, and even try to pinpoint the day when Christ will come and set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. If true, then let them deal with Christ’s own words, as recorded by Mark. Let them find those individuals present when Jesus made this statement! They would be over 1,950 years old! Jesus spoke of the kingdom, and He equated it with His church. In Matthew 16:18, Christ said He would build His church; the next verse records that Jesus would give Peter the keys of the kingdom. Clearly, they are the same. John, in Revelation 1:9, said that he was “**in the kingdom**.” To be in the kingdom—church is to be in Christ. “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18). Salvation is found only in Christ. “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11). When one becomes a Christian, he is added to the kingdom—church at the same time. “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26-27). The Savior’s command to be “born of water” must not be overlooked or taken lightly. If man wishes to receive eternal life in heaven, he must trust and obey. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14-15).

Route 2 Box 977, Quinton, AL 35130

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

Biblical Notes Resumes Publication

Biblical Notes resumed publication with the January/February, 1989, issue. We highly recommend your subscribing to this excellent journal as a means to enrich your understanding. Roy Deaver, Editor, says, “The paper will continue to be ‘a personal medium: to uphold the right, to oppose the wrong, to edify the saints, to teach the Word of God, to reach the lost.’”

Each issue will be 16 pages, 3-hole punched. There will be one issue every two months. Roy Deaver will be the Editor. The Associate Editor will be Mac Deaver, upon whom I will depend very much in the production of every issue.

Subscription charge will be \$10.00 per year. We must have at least 2000 subscriptions to pay the production and postage costs, and—for this reason especially—we need to hear from you **Immediately**.

Please send NOW your name, address (street or box, city, zip code), and telephone number. Be sure to **write clearly**. If you prefer to do so, you may send your check; otherwise, we will bill you later.

Above all, we sincerely and humbly request your prayers for this work, and for all our labors in striving to accomplish the Lord's work."

Sincerely Yours in the Kingdom,
Roy Deaver
8900 Manchaca Road
Austin, TX 78748

1989 Bellview Lectures
"In Hope of Eternal Life"
May 10-14, 1989
Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526

Wednesday, May 10

7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	There Is A God In Heaven	Joe Gilmore
8:00 PM	How Beautiful Heaven Must Be	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

Thursday, May 11

9:30 AM	The Angels Of God In Heaven	Alton Hayes
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part One)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	Hated Hindrances To A Home In Heaven	Noah Hackworth
1:15 PM	The Origin, Personality And Work Of Satan	Guss Eoff
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part One—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	A Study Of Heaven And Hell In The Original Languages	H. Daniel Denham
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Sing To Me Of Heaven	Harrell Davidson
8:00 PM	Will Heaven Cost Too Much?	Foy Smith

Friday, May 12

9:30 AM	Some Things Not Found In Heaven	Steven Waller
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Two)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	The Eternal Kingdom	Joe Gilmore
1:15 PM	In Hope Of Eternal Life	Foy Smith
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Two—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Shall Only Those In The Church Of Christ Be In Heaven?	Ronnie Hayes
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Holy Spirit Of God And The New Testament Church	Roger Jackson
8:00 PM	The Boundaries Of Fellowship—Now And Eternally	Andrew Connally

Saturday, May 13

9:30 AM	Shall We Know One Another In Heaven?	Jerri Manasco
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Three)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
10:50 AM	In The Beginning Was The Word	Ross Gallaher
1:15 PM	The Lord Formeth The Spirit Of Man Within Him	Gary Anderson
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Three—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Eternal Principles Of Worship	B. C. Carr
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Has Any Brought Back Word From Heaven?	Curtis A. Cates
8:00 PM	Is Hell Real?	William S. Cline

Sunday, May 14

9:00 AM	The Doorway To Another Life	Bobby Liddell
10:00 AM	Do We Really Want To Go To Heaven?	Jerry Martin

7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Last Enemy That Shall Be Destroyed	Ray Peters
8:00 PM	Are You Ready?	Guss Eoff

Pre-Publication Book Offer

Save \$8.40 off regular price by ordering **SPECIALLY PRICED SETS**

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526

Date _____
(Offer expires May 15, 1989)

Brethren:

Enclosed please find a check or money order for \$ _____. Please send:

- _____ **1989** Lectureship books, **"In Hope Of Eternal Life"** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **1988** Lectureship books, **"Are We Moving Away From The Cross Of Christ"** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **SPECIALLY PRICED SETS** of **TWO** books (**ONE** 1989 Lectureship book and **ONE** 1988 Lectureship book) at **\$20.00 total** (includes postage).

TO: Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

I understand my book(s) will be shipped by the 30th of May. I also understand that all orders received after the 15th of May will be billed at the regular price of \$12.95 per book plus \$1.25 shipping and handling.

Signed _____

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

April 1989

Number 4

Accountability of Man's Spirit

Gary Anderson

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Paul said, "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10, 12). We will be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48), standing before the just Judge, Jesus Christ (Mat. 7:22). There will be a separating of the sheep and the goats (Mat. 25).

The certainty of a judgment rings throughout the Bible. The humanistic cry that there is no God, therefore there is no law, therefore there is no judgment, and therefore there is no accountability of a person, is simply a mockery of the highest form. The doctrine that all men will be saved is simply unreasonable to say the least. If such were the case, why would God have given us His Word?

When one realizes he must at sometime give an account of what he has said, done and thought it should cause him to evaluate himself. Paul declared, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). For anyone to get ahead, he must first examine where he is. The accountability of every person is seen in the marching orders Christ gave to His followers, "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). God will not accept one's ignorance concerning the matter, but "commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

What part of man will be responsible for giving an account? The spirit of man within him. Certainly our physical being, as we know it, will not be faced with that task. The key is the inner man! When the gospel of salvation is preached what is it directed to? The inner man! We must reach men through their heart and mind. Notice what happens to one who is being converted. First, he must hear the word of God preached (Rom. 10:14). He then must believe what he has heard (Rom. 10:14). He is to believe in his heart (Rom. 10:9). This will produce within the inner man godly sorrow, which in turn works repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). The attitude he now has makes him qualified to confess with his mouth his belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37) and to be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). He rejoices in his heart, the depths of his very being (Acts 8:39). He has committed his whole person (physical and spiritual) to his new Master. He is ready to continue to grow and bear fruit for his King. What is it that is going to grow spiritually? The spirit or the inner man. Throughout one's walk with the Christ one must realize that it is a walk in the truth. Our love for the truth and the application of it in our lives will show the lost world the light.

While attending preacher training school at Bear Valley, brother Lanier would often point out to us that if we would fail to prepare, we need to be prepared to fail. Each day we live is but one short breath away from death. Ask yourself, "Am I really prepared for the judgment?"

*Someday you'll stand at the bar on high;
Someday your record you'll see.
Someday you'll answer the question of life,
What will your answer be?*

*Sadly you'll stand, if you're unprepared,
Trembling, you'll fall on your knee;
Facing the sentence of life or of death,*

*What will that sentence be?
Now is the time to prepare, my friend,
Make your soul spotless and free.
Washed in the blood of the Crucified One,
He will your answer be.*
(Song by Tillit S. Teddlie)

Route 7 Box 823, Pensacola, FL 32526

Editor's note: The foregoing is an excerpt from the very fine manuscript prepared for the 1989 Bellview Lectures, included in the lectureship book and entitled, "The Lord Formeth The Spirit Of Man Within Him." Brother Anderson is a very fine gospel preacher and member of the Bellview congregation. He will speak on Saturday, May 13, at 1:15 P.M. You will surely want to hear him and all the other capable and dedicated "Men of the Book" who shall be with us May 10-14.

Rejoice Always

Bobby Liddell

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice" (Phi. 4:4).

To follow this God-given command is a test of faith for every child of God. Those "in the Lord" have neither hope nor promise that they shall escape all the pain, problems, grief and loss inherent with human life in a sin-tainted world. Ours is not a "charmed life" insulated from outside factors nor free from consequences of others' actions past or present. Into each life, even the lives of faithful disciples, the darkness of sad and tragic events shall come whether soon or late. Thus understanding, our faith should not be as the flower which shows forth in beauty by the light of the day, yet whose grace is hidden by shut petals in the darkness. Let the world see God's people full of faith even when the sun is absent from our lives, for even then the Son is with us. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice."

Dear readers, please consider the heart-breaking sorrow and the hopeless over-whelming agony of those outside of Christ. The great majority of our neighbors have not gotten into Christ where real rejoicing is; that is, they have not put on Christ by faith and baptism according to God's Holy Word ("For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ"—Gal. 3:26-27).

Others, our own and still loved backsliding brethren, have not continued in Him; therefore, their lives are not lived "in the Lord." Perhaps, the excuse given for their waywardness is that of a particular hardship, illness, setback, disappointment or other disturbing misery. Maybe, they thought that when they became a Christian, bad things like that would not happen to them. Unprepared, with a faith untested, too often their armor and weaponry laid apart and rusted, they are unable, by human reason, to reconcile adversity and Christianity. Who should be astonished at their spiritual calamity?

In times of adversity, rejoicing is far from the hearts of those whose hearts are far from God. Some such men, faced with vexing trials and troubles, doubt the very existence of a benevolent God. With consuming anger, and fist raised toward Heaven, they curse the God who made them and who has provided them with every good gift (Jam. 1:17).

How dismal to be outside of Christ, subject to the storms without shelter, strength or comfort, alone and helpless, confounded and disconsolate, naked and ashamed. Such is the lot of the disobedient and rebellious. In need of help, to whom shall the man go who has turned away from the only Lord (John 6:66-68)?

How delightful to be "in the Lord" and rejoice. What sweet hope! What blessed assurance! "For to me to live *is* Christ" said Paul (Phi. 1:21). Is that the happy statement you can make today? Can you, in all honesty, say for you to live *is* Christ? In Christ, Paul was neither afraid nor overwhelmed by the reality of pain and disappointment nor by thoughts of death to come. He lived in Christ and Christ in him. Notice, in the same verse, he continued, "*and to die is gain.*"

Rejoice, all who are in the Lord, even death is gain for the faithful! John wrote these encouraging words, "we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28). The redeemed can rejoice now,

rejoice at death, rejoice when Christ comes for them, rejoice alway in the Lord! Can you?

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

Upcoming Lectures

Southwest Lectures, April 16-19, 1989. *The Book Of Psalms—I*. Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, Texas 78748. (512) 282-2486.

“Biblical Notes”

Roy Deaver, Editor, announces the publication of *Biblical Notes*. Send your name, address and telephone number to:

Roy Deaver
8900 Manchaca Road
Austin, TX 78748

Subscription cost is \$10.00 per year. Each bi-monthly issue will be 16 pages.

“POWER”

Thomas B. Warren, Editor, and Garland Elkins, Managing Editor, announce the beginning of a new quarterly journal, **POWER**. “The journal will be concerned for two basic things: (1) **to uphold** the truth (not merely a religious doctrine) and (2) **to oppose** every false way.” **POWER** will be under the oversight of the eldership at the Southaven Church of Christ, P.O. Box 128, Southaven, MS 38761. To subscribe for a nominal fee, write **POWER** at the above address. Preachers and elders can receive **POWER** free of charge. The first issue is planned for the fall of 1989.

First Annual POWER Lectureship

“The Providence of God.” August 27-31, 1989. Southaven Church of Christ, Southaven, MS.

“An Open Letter”

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The **Fourteenth Annual Bellview Lectures** will be conducted May 10-14, 1989. The theme is: *In Hope Of Eternal Life*. There will be thirty speeches instructing and encouraging men to so live that Heaven might be their home. Please examine the schedule on Page 30 and note the topics and the speakers, men of soundness and dedication, noted and respected in the brotherhood.

I know you will desire to attend this lectureship so that you might be fortified in the faith. The topics have been chosen to be informative and encouraging that Christians might be stimulated to fight the good fight of faith and be stedfast to the end that the crown of righteousness might be theirs eternally. Thus, these lessons are of utmost importance now and eternally.

I want you to make your plans now to be with us **May 10-14, 1989**, at the Bellview Lectures in Pensacola, Florida. The lessons presented and the warm fellowship with brethren of like precious faith will surely help you in your Christian life. See the schedule and other information on pages 30 and 31.

We are looking for **you** at the Bellview Lectures, May 10-14, 1989.

Sincerely,
Bobby Liddell

For Heaven We must Yearn

Jerry Martin

To **yearn** is “to desire, to long persistently for something or someone.” God has filled His book of Holy Writ with reason after reason for us to yearn for heaven. First of all, heaven is where God dwells (Ecc. 5:2; Dan. 2:28). Christ, the Son of God, in instructing us to love our enemies said, “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven (Mat. 5:45). Again, while instructing His disciples concerning prayer, Christ said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven” (Mat. 6:9). The fact that our Father is in heaven is repeated over and over again. Add to that knowledge the assurance that Christ our Saviour now sits at the right hand of the heavenly Father (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55; Col. 3:1). To further deepen our yearning for heaven our Lord made the following promise, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

In describing the judgment scene, the Lord said these comforting words to the sheep on His right hand, which represent the righteous. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat. 25:34). No wonder Paul said to Christians, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-2).

With so many reasons why we should yearn to go to heaven, why is it then that so many will miss heaven? Satan blinds the mind of many to keep them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). He blinded the mind of Eve by luring her eyes away from the instruction of God and caused her to desire the forbidden fruit. Satan has had similar success down through history causing men to yearn for temporary earthly pleasures rather than eternal heavenly joy. Through lustful desires, he draws men away from God and heaven’s promises. James outlines Satan’s strategy as follows, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jam. 1:14-15). The Evil One uses all kinds of attractive lures to distract our eyes from their heavenly view.

James also lays before us a counter- action to such powers. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded” (Jam. 4:7-8). The only way we can resist the Devil is to keep our eyes and minds fitted on things above. If we really want to go to heaven we will follow the Lord’s instructions to: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat. 6:19-21). If you do not have a yearning in your heart for heaven, the indication would be that you have placed your treasures in the wrong place. A vivid example of such misguided affection is given by the Lord in the form of a parable of a certain rich man in Luke 12:16-21:

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

The enticements of the world have captured the hearts of many individuals and congregations today and will rob them of a place of eternal security for their souls. This danger is precisely why the Lord warned, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:13,14).

What about you, my friend? Do you really want to go to heaven? How often do you think of heaven? I don’t

mean, do you have an occasional thought or a shallow wish. I am asking you how deep is your yearning. Not until you want to go to heaven more than you want anything else in this world will you go to heaven. Not until you have an insatiable hunger for heaven will you go there. The Lord said, "Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6). This spiritual appetite is a required characteristic of a Christian. It is hard for us, in this land of plenty, to comprehend the hunger the Lord described here. My wife and I had an image of true hunger etched into our minds a few years ago. Though neither of us had experienced such hunger, we were foster parents to two young boys who had. My wife was called late one evening by the Department of Human Resources to come and pick up these children because they had been abused and neglected by their mother. Their father was in prison. There were four little boys in all and the police who took these children into the custody of the state related a heart-breaking story. It had been reported by neighbors that the children had for some time been searching through the neighborhood garbage to find any morsel of food. After we searched our house and found nothing sufficient to eat, someone was sent to get a bucket of chicken. When they arrived with it, they were almost attacked by the little fellows. During the "attack" a piece of chicken was knocked out of the box onto the ground where a cat began eating it. The oldest of the boys, who was six at the time, kicked the cat off the half-eaten piece of chicken and devoured it himself, dirt and all. Now, friends, this is true hunger. Experiencing such deep craving for food was never forgotten by those young lads. While keeping the two oldest in our home during the next three years, there was never a time, that I can recall, when they left the meal table without asking, "When are we going to eat again?"

Jesus said that until we hunger for righteousness like those starving children hungered for food, only then will we be filled. He was not talking about a hunger that could be satisfied with a cup of coffee and a donut. Over half of this world's population will go to bed tonight physically hungry. Millions will know real hunger. I wonder how many will go to bed spiritually hungry. How many yearn for heaven more than they desire job, money, popularity, power or anything else in this world? This business of going to heaven ought to be a matter of spiritual craving, a great desire based on a deep-seated yearning. We ought to think of heaven day and night, night and day. We should never be satisfied with the earthly. We ought to get homesick for a heavenly home.

To miss heaven is to be lost, eternally separated from God. One will not find himself in this hopeless state because there have been no provisions made for his salvation. Jesus tasted "death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). God's desire for man's salvation and the provisions He made are expressed in the sacred words of His Son in John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." There truly would be no greater tragedy known to man than for him to miss heaven after so much has been done on heaven's part for him to live there.

Route 1 box 379, Nauvoo, AL 35578

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from Jerry Martin's 1989 Bellview Lectureship manuscript, "Do We Really Want To Go To Heaven?"; indicative of the quality and soundness of the lectures. Jerry will speak Sunday morning, May 14, at 10:00.

Important Information for Those Coming to the Bellview Lectures

Bellview Lecture Housing

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call 904/455-7595 or write the church office). The following Motels are available nearby and are providing **special rates** (tax not included) for those attending the Bellview Lectures. **Hospitality Inn** (4910 Mobile Highway)—\$32.50 for 1-4 people per room; includes free breakfast; children stay free. Their number is 904/453-3333. **Rodeway Inn** (I-10 at Pine Forest Road)—\$28.00 for 1-4 per room; includes free breakfast; children stay free. Their number is 904/477-9150.

When checking into either of the above motels, show them this advertisement for these special rates, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the Bellview Lectures.

Bellview Lecture Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch from Thursday through Saturday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at registration.

Bellview Lecture Nursery

An attended nursery will be provided during all lectures (**not during meal breaks of unscheduled hours**) for children up to school age.

Bellview Lecture Exhibits

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of Bellview elders and available space.

Bellview Lecture Audio and Video Tapes

All lectures will be recorded on audio tapes and on video tapes and may be obtained during the lectures or by mail. Order blanks and price information will be available during the lectures or by mail. If making your own recordings, please keep the pulpit area free and consult with one of our sound technicians.

Bellview Lecture Books

Everyone will want to purchase copies of the 1989 and 1988 lectureship books for themselves and perhaps for gifts. See below for more information.

Bellview Lecture Transportation

For free transportation from the airport, please call or write our office.

Pre-Publication Book Offer

Save \$8.40 off regular price by ordering **SPECIALY PRICED SETS**

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
4850 Sauflay Road, Pensacola, FL 32526
Brethren:

Date _____
(Offer expires May 15, 1989)

Enclosed please find a check or money order for \$ _____. Please send:

- _____ **1989** Lectureship books, **"In Hope Of Eternal Life"** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **1988** Lectureship books, **"Are We Moving Away From The Cross Of Christ"** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **SPECIALY PRICED SETS** of **TWO** books (**ONE** 1989 Lectureship book and **ONE** 1988 Lectureship book) at **\$20.00 total** (includes postage).

TO: Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

I understand my book(s) will be shipped by the 30th of May. I also understand that all orders received after the 15th of May will be billed at the regular price of \$12.95 per book plus \$1.25 shipping and handling.

Signed _____

1989 Bellview Lectures

“In Hope of Eternal Life”

May 10-14, 1989

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526

Wednesday, May 10

7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	There Is A God In Heaven	Joe Gilmore
8:00 PM	How Beautiful Heaven Must Be	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

Thursday, May 11

9:30 AM	The Angels Of God In Heaven	Alton Hayes
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part One)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	Hated Hindrances To A Home In Heaven	Noah Hackworth
1:15 PM	The Origin, Personality And Work Of Satan	Guss Eoff
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part One—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	A Study Of Heaven And Hell In The Original Languages	H. Daniel Denham
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Sing To Me Of Heaven	Harrell Davidson
8:00 PM	Will Heaven Cost Too Much?	Foy Smith

Friday, May 12

9:30 AM	Some Things Not Found In Heaven	Steven Waller
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Two)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	The Eternal Kingdom	Joe Gilmore
1:15 PM	In Hope Of Eternal Life	Foy Smith
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Two—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Shall Only Those In The Church Of Christ Be In Heaven?	Ronnie Hayes
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Holy Spirit Of God And The New Testament Church	Roger Jackson
8:00 PM	The Boundaries Of Fellowship—Now And Eternally	Andrew Connally

Saturday, May 13

9:30 AM	Shall We Know One Another In Heaven?	Jerri Manasco
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Three)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
10:50 AM	In The Beginning Was The Word	Ross Gallaher
1:15 PM	The Lord Formeth The Spirit Of Man Within Him	Gary Anderson
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Three—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Eternal Principles Of Worship	B. C. Carr
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Has Any Brought Back Word From Heaven?	Curtis A. Cates
8:00 PM	Is Hell Real?	William S. Cline

Sunday, May 14

9:00 AM	The Doorway To Another Life	Bobby Liddell
10:00 AM	Do We Really Want To Go To Heaven?	Jerry Martin
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Last Enemy That Shall Be Destroyed	Ray Peters
8:00 PM	Are You Ready?	Guss Eoff

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

May 1989

Number 5

Those Not Found in Heaven

Steve Waller

The Bible identifies those who will suffer eternal torment in Hell. It should be noted that John does not merely list some sins in Revelation 21:8, 27. He states clearly that not only will sin not be in Heaven, but sinners—those who have committed the sins—will not be there. John identifies the people with the particular sins they have committed. This should clearly drive home the fact that people are accountable to God. People, impenitent people will be going to Hell and will miss Heaven. These people are those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 20:15). "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." People are responsible for their actions. Sinners are responsible for their sinful actions. Just who are those who will not be found in Heaven? John mentions:

1. *The Fearful*. These would include those who are too timid or cowardly to stand for what is right and holy. It includes those who are two-faced, who stand on both sides of issues where matters of faith are involved, who are afraid of being disliked, losing popularity, or being ostracized. Fear of physical abuse may keep some from obeying the gospel or prevent some from being faithful to Christ as they should. The fear of being rejected emotionally, socially, or physically cast out may hinder some from living up to the high standard which Christ has set for us. Paul encourages us in Ephesians 4:1 to: "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." When Peter and John were brought before the council in Jerusalem for healing the lame man and preaching the salvation in Christ, the boldness of Peter and John amazed them (Acts 4:10-14). Faithful Christians have always been characterized by boldness in standing firm for the truth. Acts 4:31 describes the typical manner of preaching performed by the apostles: "and they spake [spoke] the word of God with boldness." Frequently, in the book of Acts, one reads of the boldness of Paul (Acts 9:27, 29; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8). The compromiser and the weak-kneed will find no rest in heaven. Jesus admonished, "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" (Mat. 10:28). The Christian cannot be afraid of being laughed at or scorned in the everyday walks of life because he is a Christian. Our awe of God should be greater than any shrinking fear of our fellowman. No moral or spiritual coward will enter heaven.

2. *The Unbelieving* will not go to heaven because they have rejected the teachings of Christ. This includes apostates, pagans, atheists, modernists, and misguided denominationalists. The atheist is a fool for his rejection of God. "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*" (Psa. 14:1). Some have never believed in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Modernists have rejected the deity of Christ, His miracles, and the Bible as the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Heaven will not be home to such infidelic ones. The tragedy of unfaithfulness in the church has claimed many souls. Those who have lost their faith are in a perishing condition, and we grieve for them. There are many brethren who at one time stood for the truth, but have become immoral, or are in full fellowship with religious error, or are unconcerned about the Faith. The Hebrews writer warns us, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). Paul sends forth a word of admonition, "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1:19). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

3. *Those classed as Abominable* shall not be found in Heaven. Those who are corrupted, defiled, and polluted with idolatry and its various types of worship are included. False religious practices and sex perversions are all abhorrent to God. The use of the mechanical instrument of music in worship, snake handling, and the mockery of so-called “tongue-speaking” today is an abomination. The perverse greed of ungodly religious charlatans; the “holy prostitutes” of Corinth and other ancient cities; the casting of babies into fires or rivers or volcanoes as a sacrifice, and a host of unspeakable crimes all come under the heading of abominations.

4. *Murderers*. The apostle of love wrote, “no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15). Murder is the intentional slaughtering of a human being. Those who take the life of another with that malicious intent in mind will not be found in heaven. Genesis reveals how gracious God has been to man by creating him in His own image and giving him an eternal soul (Gen. 1:26-27). When one person develops such a depraved mind that he would go out and take the life of another human being who also is made in the image of God that person is not only guilty of murder, but guilty of presumption as well. Murder is man’s rejection of God’s plan for human life. An Adolf Hitler, a John Wayne Gacy (both mass murderers), or a host of medical personnel who daily make their living by murdering unborn babies to the tune of four thousand abortions per day will face God in the day of judgment accountable for snuffing out the lives of so many people. Think of the precious babies that could have been born, loved, and cared for, who will never have an opportunity at life. No amount of excuses will justify the dehumanizing of the unborn by calling them a “blob of protoplasm,” “a mass of fetal tissue,” or some other senseless term. The same applies to people who practice euthanasia. To dare to consider murdering an elderly person or one who is terminally ill because “they are useless to society” is to be guilty of the same heinous crimes of which Hitler was guilty in World War II. Our society is swiftly becoming desensitized to the sanctity of human life.

Any brother in Christ who hates another brother is a murderer. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3:15). The attitude of the hater and the murderer is the same. The only difference between them is that the hater has not yet found an opportunity to fulfill the act, or else he is afraid of the punishment for carrying out his sinful attitude of heart. The murderer will not be in heaven.

5. *Whoremongers*. No fornicator has eternal life abiding in him. The world today, as in New Testament times, is plagued with the sin of fornication. Sexual promiscuity, such as homosexuality and lesbianism, pre-marital sex, adultery (unfaithfulness to one’s marriage partner), incest, and bestiality violate God’s plan for the proper expression of love which is to be fulfilled only within the marriage relationship. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

Paul wrote concerning this sin and stated that those who are guilty of it will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Furthermore, Paul discussed the fact that fornication is a sin against one’s own body. One should realize that any and all sin is against God (Isa. 59:1-2). But, the various sinful activities involved in fornication cause one to sin against “his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Fornication is a sin against the other individual who is involved in the unholy relationship, too. This sin is so difficult to fight that we are simply told to flee from it.

No person is born into this world a sinner. The homosexual claims he was born that way. That is a lie of the Devil! The Bible clearly teaches that babies are born sinless and become sinners later. “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Eze. 28:15; Psa. 106:37-38; Deu. 1:39; Rom. 3:12). Brethren, we are living in modern-day Sodom!

Fornication in its many forms is a threat to the purity and holiness of the church. God’s attitude toward fornication is seen in the message of the church at Thyatira, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds” (Rev. 2:20-23). The sin of adultery is tearing asunder the homes of our land. Churches are being weakened because of it. And, a nation once strong and proud is being brought to desolation. Those who marry when they have no scriptural right to marry are guilty of fornication and will not go to heaven. The Bible still states that the only cause for divorce and remarriage is when one puts away his or her marriage partner for the cause of fornication (Mat. 19:9). People need to decide that they want to go to heaven, then cultivate that desire over the desire to have an illicit sexual relationship. The fornicator or whoremonger is not going to

heaven.

6. *Another group of people not found in heaven will be Sorcerers.* In New Testament days, these were people involved in magical arts who used drugs to practice in the field of the occult. Such practitioners exercised great power over their disciples. To follow a sorcerer would involve exalting a witch or sorcerer to the position of a god and; thus, rejecting the power of Almighty God. The modern-day prophets (both religious and secular), crystal ball gazers, faith-healers, astrologers, horoscope writers and others often wield the same influence over the lives of their disciples as the ancient sorcerers. Israel was warned against such activities. “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood *shall be upon them*” (Lev. 20:27). “There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah” (Deu. 18:10-12—ASV). The minds of men become enthralled and entrapped by these curious arts and are so deceived thereby that faith in men and their methods is substituted for faith in God.

7. *Idolaters will not go to heaven.* God describes and condemns the idolater. “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 1:22-25). New Testament Christians are commanded to keep themselves from idols (Acts 15:20; 21:25). When Paul and his company arrived in Ephesus (Acts 19) there was much opposition to the gospel because of the influence of idolatry, and from those whose livelihoods depended upon the making of silver shrines to Diana, goddess of the Ephesians. It is sad when men think they must make a “god” from material things. The Creator of the universe cannot be revered in objects made of silver, gold, wood, or precious stones. Nor can He be enshrined with four walls. God is not flesh and blood, but Spirit (John 4:24; Acts 17:24-26). He is to be enshrined in our hearts for He dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17; 1 John 4:12-13, 15). The True God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Paul stated that covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). People today have made the accumulating of this world’s goods the major theme of their lives. Some will stop at nothing to acquire “things.” Idolatry has many forms. One may worship or honor his lands, houses, family, job, recreation, or bank account above God, the kingdom of heaven and righteous living. When one does that, he is guilty of idolatry. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

8. *All Liars are going to Hell.* A man once stated that of all the people in the world whom he despised, the liar was the most despised. He reasoned that if one was skillful in lying he could deceive almost any one and get away with almost any thing. Lies emanate from Satan. Jesus called Satan the father of lies (John 8:44). Lies are diametrically opposed to all that God is and for which He stands. Jesus stated that He is the truth (John 14:6). God is truth and in Him is no lie at all. The Bible refers to the deception practiced by Abraham toward Pharaoh and Abimelech (Gen. 12:11-20; 20). It tells of the lie of Gehazi (2 Kin, 5:20-27), and of the lie told by Ananias and Sapphira in the New Testament (Acts 5:1-11). Lies helped condemn and crucify the Son of God (Mat. 26:59-62; Mark 15:3). The final abode of the liar will be with his father, Satan, in Hell. Heaven will not be tainted with people who practice deception.

14835 Carrollton Drive; St. Louis, MO 63044

Editor’s note: The foregoing is an excerpt from the excellent chapter, “Some Things Not Found In Heaven,” which Steve wrote for the 1989 Bellview Lectureship Book. Brother Waller will speak in the Bellview Lectures on Friday, May 12, at 9:30 A.M. You will certainly want to hear this important lesson from God’s Word delivered by such a fine and well-prepared gospel preacher.

1989 Bellview Lectures

“In Hope of Eternal Life”

May 10-14, 1989

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526

Wednesday, May 10

7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	There Is A God In Heaven	Joe Gilmore
8:00 PM	How Beautiful Heaven Must Be	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

Thursday, May 11

9:30 AM	The Angels Of God In Heaven	Alton Hayes
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part One)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	Hated Hindrances To A Home In Heaven	Noah Hackworth
1:15 PM	The Origin, Personality And Work Of Satan	Guss Eoff
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part One—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	A Study Of Heaven And Hell In The Original Languages	H. Daniel Denham
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Sing To Me Of Heaven	Harrell Davidson
8:00 PM	Will Heaven Cost Too Much?	Foy Smith

Friday, May 12

9:30 AM	Some Things Not Found In Heaven	Steven Waller
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Two)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
11:00 AM	The Eternal Kingdom	Joe Gilmore
1:15 PM	In Hope Of Eternal Life	Foy Smith
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Two—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Shall Only Those In The Church Of Christ Be In Heaven?	Ronnie Hayes
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Holy Spirit Of God And The New Testament Church	Roger Jackson
8:00 PM	The Boundaries Of Fellowship—Now And Eternally	Andrew Connally

Saturday, May 13

9:30 AM	Shall We Know One Another In Heaven?	Jerri Manasco
10:15 AM	New Doctrines In The Church—From Heaven Or Men? (Part Three)	H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
10:50 AM	In The Beginning Was The Word	Ross Gallaher
1:15 PM	The Lord Formeth The Spirit Of Man Within Him	Gary Anderson
1:50 PM	Christ Is Coming (Part Three—1 Thessalonians)	Winfred Clark
2:25 PM	Eternal Principles Of Worship	B. C. Carr
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	Has Any Brought Back Word From Heaven?	Curtis A. Cates
8:00 PM	Is Hell Real?	William S. Cline

Sunday, May 14

9:00 AM	The Doorway To Another Life	Bobby Liddell
10:00 AM	Do We Really Want To Go To Heaven?	Jerry Martin
7:00 PM	Singing	
7:15 PM	The Last Enemy That Shall Be Destroyed	Ray Peters
8:00 PM	Are You Ready?	Guss Eoff

Do We Dare to Dance?

Allen Webster

“Dancing consists in the rhythmical movement of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme of individual or concentrated action which is expressive of emotions or ideas.” This article is specifically dealing with the modern dance—whether the close embrace or the wild and deeply suggestive bodily movements—enjoyed and defended by many. Those who have made a study of the modern dance say that it had its inception in a house of prostitution in Paris, France. Dancing has much appeal to the youth of today and sincere Christian young people are pressured to “join the crowd.”

What Does the Bible Say? Galatians 5:19-21 lists the “sins of the flesh” and gives a three-fold condemnation to the modern dance. Notice three words from the inspired pen of Paul: (1) “LASCIVIOUSNESS.” This word means “filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste [not pure] handling of males and females” (Thayer, p. 79), and “conduct which excites lust”. The New Testament uses this word in connection with sexual sins and activities (Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Pet. 4:1-6; 2 Pet. 2:7). The drawing power of the dance is sex appeal which is often admitted even by its defenders. If this is doubted, why do boys and girls always dance together and never separate? Simply because dancing is “the only amusement that depends solely upon the mingling of the sexes for its existence.”

Christians cannot dance and also deny themselves ungodliness and worldly lusts (Tit. 2:11-12). Paul said, “But flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22), and “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18), which cannot be obeyed when placing one’s self in a position of inviting impure thoughts. Eighty percent of young men surveyed **admitted** to having lustful thoughts while dancing. An overwhelming majority of unwed pregnant girls admit that dancing played a major role in their sin. Dancing has a history of paving the way to dark places where fornication is committed. Is this doubted by any? Certainly not! Remember to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

(2) “**Revellings.**” This word means “an occasion of merry making or noisy festivity with dancing, masking, etc.” Even the atmosphere of dancing is sinful! “Modern rock music with its musical beat raises the pulse rate, and the heart beats faster; more adrenalin and sex hormones are released into the blood stream creating excessive energy and stimulating sexual desire. The body movement increases sexual arousal, and can easily set the stage for fornication.” This should awake many who say, “Well, I will go but not dance.” Christians should not place themselves in a position where they will be tempted and their influence hurt (Rom. 14:21). Saints are to be: the light of the world (Mat. 5:16); a separated people (2 Cor. 6:17); a peculiar people (1 Pet. 2:9); holy (1 Pet. 1:15); lovers of God, and not of the world (Rom. 12:2; Jam. 4:4; 1 John 2:15). Therefore, Christians have no business compromising their faith at a dance or prom.

(3) “**Such like.**” Paul, by inspiration, includes these two words to show that anything closely related to the above mentioned sins should be left alone by the Christian. He also said, “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9). Peter wrote of the Christian, “Let him eschew [turn away from] evil, and do good” (1 Pet. 3:11). Children of God are to keep themselves unspotted from the world (Jam. 1:27), and should do nothing that would cause another to stumble (1 Cor. 8:13; Jam. 1:14-15). The importance of a Christian’s influence cannot be over-estimated and therefore the Christian should do nothing to put his good name in jeopardy.

Now, do we dare to dance?

Route 1 Box 9 Williston, TN 38076

Correspondence

“I would like very much to receive your publication THE DEFENDER.”

Debbie Rose, Mammoth Springs, AR

“Please add my name to your mailing list for THE DEFENDER. Thank you so much.”

Sandra Carraway, Highlands, TX

“I am presently enrolled in Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, DC. I feel that your DEFENDER has some good information which should be shared and I am sure that the faculty at Howard would also appreciate

receiving the DEFENDER.”

Alonzo A. Ford, Woodbridge, VA

“I just received the current issue of DEFENDER and I truly enjoyed it...Your secretary, Judy Peters, also sent me several back issues which was just the pick-me-up that I needed at the end of a long hard day. Well, just to let you know that ‘My mama raised me right’: THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! I have enclosed a small check to help pay for publication costs for the DEFENDER. Again, thank you for your kind letter and please extend a special thanks to Judy Peters for those back issues.”

Glenda Johnson, Louisville, MS

“We appreciate the good work that you and Bellview are doing. I have enjoyed the DEFENDER. Would you add the attached list to your mailing list? Thanks. I have passed out most of my copies of Wayne Coats’ book on the Boston movement that I purchased from you recently.”

Dewayne Lanham, Tequesta, FL

“I would like to be added to your mailing list to receive a copy of your publica- tion.”

Rod Summers, Huntsville, AL

“Keep up the good work. We are grateful for the stand that Bellview church and the DEFENDER have for the truth.”

K.D. McKee

“I would like to be on your mailing list.”

Robert M. McKnight, Murfreesboro, TN

Important Information for Those Coming to the Bellview Lectures

Bellview Lecture Housing

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a “first come, first served” basis (call 904/455-7595 or write the church office). The following Motels are available nearby and are providing special rates (tax not included) for those attending the Bellview Lectures. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway)—\$32.50 for 1-4 people per room; includes free breakfast; children stay free. Their number is 904/453-3333. Rodeway Inn (I-10 at Pine Forest Road)—\$28.00 for 1-4 per room; includes free breakfast; children stay free. Their number is 904/477-9150.

When checking into either of the above motels, show them this advertisement for these special rates, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the Bellview Lectures.

Bellview Lecture Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch from Thursday through Saturday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at registration.

Bellview Lecture Nursery

An attended nursery will be provided during all lectures (**not during meal breaks of unscheduled hours**) for children up to school age.

Bellview Lecture Exhibits

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of Bellview elders and available space.

Bellview Lecture Audio and Video Tapes

All lectures will be recorded on audio tapes and on video tapes and may be obtained during the lectures or by mail. Order blanks and price information will be available during the lectures or by mail. If making your own recordings, please keep the pulpit area free and consult with one of our sound technicians.

Bellview Lecture Books

Everyone will want to purchase copies of the 1989 and 1988 lectureship books for themselves and perhaps for gifts. See below for more information.

Bellview Lecture Transportation

For free transportation from the airport, please call or write our office.

Pre-Publication Book Offer

Save \$8.40 off regular price by ordering SPECIALLY PRICED SETS

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST
4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526
Brethren:

Date _____
(Offer expires May 15, 1989)

Enclosed please find a check or money order for \$ _____. Please send:

- _____ **1989** Lectureship books, **“In Hope Of Eternal Life”** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **1988** Lectureship books, **“Are We Moving Away From The Cross Of Christ”** at \$10.00 for each book ordered plus \$1.00 for postage, **\$11.00 total**.
- _____ **SPECIALLY PRICED SETS** of **TWO** books (**ONE** 1989 Lectureship book and **ONE** 1988 Lectureship book) at **\$20.00 total** (includes postage).

TO: Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

I understand my book(s) will be shipped by the 30th of May. I also understand that all orders received after the 15th of May will be billed at the regular price of \$12.95 per book plus \$1.25 shipping and handling.

Signed _____

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

June 1989

Number 6

Will Heaven Cost Too Much?

Foy Smith

What did Moses think about the cost of going to heaven? He had enough to discourage the average person. He was not allowed to enter into the promised land with those he had led. He disobeyed God by smiting the rock when God told him to speak to it. Seemingly a small act of disobedience we say, but the consequences were great. As the result of this act of disobedience God said, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12). This seems like such a small act of disobedience, why should God keep Moses from going into the land with the people he had led this far? God was forever establishing the importance of doing exactly what He says do when a specific command is given. The world today as a whole refuses to believe this. "Do whatever you wish just as long as you are honest and sincere," the religionists today cry. But it is not a matter of what today's religious leaders say, it is wholly and solely a matter of what God says. Now did Moses give up because of this Word from God? No, he went on doing his best. Finally, God took Moses up to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, and "shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan" (Deu. 34:1). Moses looked over the land and then died. God buried him in a valley, "but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deu. 34:6). Though Moses did not enter that physical Canaan, we know his reward was great for he appeared with Elias in the transfiguration of Jesus (Mat. 17). Yes, when we get to heaven, Moses will be there and we will meet him face to face. He did not get discouraged and give up. He kept on and the Lord rewarded him. Evidently, he thought heaven was worth whatever it cost to get there.

Next, did Job think the cost of going to heaven was too great? Not for a minute. He suffered like few earthlings have ever suffered, but he knew that in heaven he would be free of such sufferings. Listen to his determination to please God: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). And listen further: "I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25,26). Job did not doubt—he knew that his Redeemer lived—he knew he would come to the earth, to this world and do his work of redemption, and, best of all, he knew there would be a bodily resurrection in the last day. Paul, centuries later said, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53). The change will be fast—so fast perhaps that no human invention can detect it, but a change from the earthly to the heavenly there will be. Job of old looked forward to it and rejoiced in the fact that he would have hope beyond this life. The cost for him was not too much.

Let us call upon David next: What did he think about the future life? Did he believe in it? When the baby was born and died, the king arose, refreshed himself and took nourishment. When asked why his change of attitude, he said, "can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

The blessed hope that the "sweet singer of Israel" had is the hope we have, only ours is perhaps even greater. Jesus had not been manifested in the flesh at that time, but David knew he would come and the final victory would belong to the righteous. If this is not enough then go back and read that immortal Shepherd Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Notice the highlights of that glorious Psalm: "green pastures...he leadeth me beside the still waters...restoreth my soul...through the valley of the shadow of death...a table before me in the presence of mine enemies...goodness and mercy shall follow me...I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." Now you reach the conclusion, did David think the cost was too much?

We next call upon Stephen. The hope of eternal life cost him the supreme price—his life (Acts 7:54-60). We need

to read the entire seventh chapter to get the entire picture. Read his sermon, the longest recorded sermon in the New Testament. It is quite an historical account from the call of Abraham through the death of Jesus. The people hated what they heard for they all stood condemned and knew it. They were “cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth” (Acts 7:54). They stoned him, and in his dying moments he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and his last words were, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and “lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:59-60). With this, he fell asleep and went to be with the Lord forever. Did this grand prize cost him too much? Ask him when you see him in heaven and hear what he says!

We can consult the apostle Paul and find if what he paid was too great a price. Perhaps none other among the chosen ones suffered as much as did this apostle. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 and determine for yourself if Paul thought he paid too much. After all these sufferings, he still praised the name of the Lord and expressed his predominant desire to go and be with him forever (Phi. 1:23).

After consulting Paul, consult the great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11:33-40. They faced torments like few ever faced in this life. The world was “not worthy of them,” but heaven was. No, they did not pay too much.

Finally, though we could call upon many others if space permitted, we call upon the greatest one of all—Jesus. He paid the supreme price in a way that no others did. He laid down His life freely for our sins (Heb. 2:9). He “tasted death for every man.” In His extreme agony on the cross He even felt forsaken of His Father (Mat. 27:46). Jesus had to stand the test for the salvation of the whole world. Everything depended upon His response to the cross, the very cruelest of deaths. There was a curse attached to dying on a cross: “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). Jesus died freely and He would do it all over again if it took it for our salvation. Evidently He did not think the cost too great. Now this brings us to our last question: What does it cost us today?

It costs us self-denial and this is the hardest thing we can do, deny self. It is not hard to deny others but when it comes to denying self; well, that’s different. But this is the cost we must pay (Mat. 16:24). Look at a selfish brotherhood today—multimillion dollar buildings, not for the glory of God but for the satisfaction of the vanity of many of our own brethren. “Oh, look how they must love the Lord!” some exclaim as they pass by our Cathedral-like edifices. It should rather be, “Look at how they love themselves!” Now we all love nice, even beautiful edifices in which to meet, but we have gone far too far and any sober thinking person will have to admit it. Self-denial is not much in evidence when we meet in buildings that literally cost millions upon millions of dollars!

Sometimes going to heaven costs us those we love much in this world, members of our own families. Sometimes we have to “deny” family to follow Jesus (Luke 14; 16; 17). We are often hated by those round about (Luke 6:22). These are not little prices to pay. Are we up to paying them if we have to?

Going to heaven costs us obedience (Rom. 1:16; 10:16-17; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22-23). We will be called “legalists” when we obey the Lord and command others to do the same. Can we take their criticisms? Is heaven worth it? Going to heaven demands total dedication (Mat. 12:30; Luke 9:62). This means we will have to forego many personal pleasures at times. Are we willing to do it? “But, what about the majority?” comes from every side, it seems. Just one response to that: so what? The majority cannot obey for us, live for us, or go to heaven for us.

Now we come to the conclusion by asking again, is heaven worth what it costs? Is being with the saved of all ages worthwhile? Is being with loved ones in the Lord again worthwhile? Is being with heavenly hosts worthwhile? Is being happy forever worthwhile? It is believed by some that the most beautiful part of the entire Bible is the last part of John 14:3: “that where I am, *there* ye may be also.” To be with Jesus, our Savior, our elder brother, forever—think of it!

Yes, the only conclusion we can sensibly reach is, whatever it takes to go to heaven, the cost is small indeed to what the believer receives in return. Thank God for this heavenly home far beyond the skies, yet so near to the true believer. And I tell you this for sure: as for me, I plan to go there!

P.O. Box 2351, Riverside, CA

Editor’s Note: This is an excerpt from the excellent chapter by the same name in the 1989 Bellview Lectureship Book. Thanks to brother Smith for such a fine manuscript and for encouraging us all to pay whatever the cost that Heaven may be our eternal home.

Free Bible Correspondence Course

For a **free** non-denominational course to enhance your Bible knowledge, write to:

Bible Correspondence Course

% Harold Maxey

20 Emory Drive, Pensacola, FL 32526

Correspondence

“Thank you for your continued publication of this fine paper. I am now working with the Wynnum church in Brisbane, Australia.”

Ken Ford, Birkdale, Old, Australia 4159

“I thoroughly enjoy reading the DEFENDER and would like very much to receive it.”

David Baker, Mathis, TX

“Please send me the address of brother Leon D. Stancliff. I want to send him a copy of my book on GENESIS AND A SCIENTIFIC TEST.”

James D. Bales, Searcy, AR

“Enclosed is ten dollars to cover operational expenses for publication of DEFENDER. Please begin sending DEFENDER to....”

David Hardin, Marianna, FL

“I enjoy reading and keeping up with what is going on in other churches.”

Mayme D. Shivers, Trenton, TN

“I would like to start receiving the DEFENDER. Thank you.”

Nancy Swain, Louisville, MS

“I wish to receive the DEFENDER once again. I received it for some time, but moved to a new location and work and allowed my contact to cease.”

Robert Curry, Duncan, SC

“I would very much like to be put on your mailing list to receive your paper, the DEFENDER.”

J.W. Guice, Jr., Kemmerer, WY

“I enjoy receiving your sound gospel journal, DEFENDER, each month.”

Bruce Ligon, Gracemont, OK

“Please add me to your mailing list for the DEFENDER. I received a copy from a friend and really enjoyed reading it.”

Luell McCutcheon, Flippin, AR

“Please take us off your mailing list.”

Brad Price, Fort Wayne, IN

“The DEFENDER continues to be a joy to receive and digest. I guess I can say, I'M GLAD THERE IS A CHRISTIAN THERE TO READ MY LETTER. I WANT YOU TO CONTINUE SENDING ME THE DEFENDER. IT IS DEFENSIVE OF THE TRUTH. I truly appreciate your efforts. You, and the Bellview elders and congregation are always in our prayers.”

Marilyn Sollars, OH

“Would you please send the DEFENDER to the following homes. It is a very good paper and we need more truth in the homes.”

Richard Snider, Sundance, WY

Honesty—the Best Policy

Eddie Helms

Honesty is always the best policy. We have often heard this statement and many of us have taught it to our children. It is right and good. To follow it is to follow the statement of the Lord in Matthew 7:12. “All things

therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (ASV). We want to be treated in a fair, honest and just way, so we make this rule a part of our lives to treat others in this fashion.

We certainly need to be honest in our thinking and our dealing with others! The devil has taught a dishonest and devious doctrine today. This doctrine permeates the thinking of many in the church today. It is sold to brethren in the name of compassion and love. Since this doctrine has been sold with such a cover many have bought this doctrine of the devil.

What is it? It is the doctrine of broadmindedness. It is a doctrine of accepting one "as he is." It is the doctrine of "agreeing to disagree" on doctrinal issues. It is the doctrine of several levels of fellowship. It is the doctrine that teaches, "The Bible doesn't say not to." This doctrine "lovingly" accepts those who have split congregations of the Lord's church over their false doctrine. The adherents of this doctrine welcome into their fellowship those who have fellowshiped error. They sometimes accept erring brethren based upon the sincerity of the brother even though in the wrong. Many of these tenets of the devil's doctrine are accepted by some in the Lord's church despite the clear verses in Holy Writ which denounce such (Pro. 14:12; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 John 9-11; 1 Pet. 4:11; Heb. 7:14; Eph. 5:11, 19; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 The. 3:6, 14).

Do you know what is so sickeningly inconsistent about those who adhere to this doctrine? Out of "love and compassion" they condone nearly everyone and everything from A to Z. But, when a faithful servant of the cross points out the error taught or accepted, is the same "love and compassion" expressed? No sir! The one who loves God, His Word and the souls of lost men and women and shows that godly love by preaching the Word, reproving, rebuking and exhorting is condemned, labeled a troublemaker and is called a knucklehead (Cf. 1 Kin. 18:17; 21:20; Acts 26:24). Now, remember these words are from folks who are "compassionate, loving and broadminded" enough to accept the aforementioned tenets. The height of inconsistency! Are these brethren really being honest in their thinking and conduct? I think not!

The Bible speaks of this dishonest thinking man. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah" (Pro. 17:15—ASV).

Brethren, God's estimation of this dishonesty in thought and action has not changed! Despite God's condemnation upon those who would engage in such actions the righteous are still punished and the noble man is still smited (Pro. 17:26).

Why does this doctrine of the devil run rampant in the church today? Could it be some are striving for acceptance by their religious neighbors? Are some acceptive of an ecumenical spirit that dwells in the denominational world? Those are but symptoms of the real problem. Many are feeding upon false philosophy and manmade theology. Preachers and leaders seem to know what the latest method is but fail to know what The Book says! Brethren, we need to read, study and digest what God desires of His people and read and study to see what God hates...**sin**. God's Word gives man direction that he might become more God-like (2 Pet. 1:3-4). Brethren, let us get back to the Book that teaches perfect hatred for sin, error and falsehood and perfect love for God, His truth and our fellow men (Psa. 97:10; 119:104, 128, 163; 139:22; Pro. 8:13)!

Honesty is the best policy...it is the Godly policy to follow in action and in our thinking. Dear reader...will you not accept this policy?

212 East Cedar, Livingston, TN 38570

Needed: Probing Questions

Weldon Langfield

One of the saddest things to witness is a congregation which, having been a stalwart defender of the truth for years, suddenly becomes liberal. Many good churches have gone that route overnight, it seems. Behind every congregational apostasy, of course, is at least one false teacher. They are, tragically, an inevitable part of the one true church. Peter wrote, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers" (2 Pet. 2:1). In order to avoid falling under their influence, Christians are to be very cautious. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15).

It seems that one reason sound congregations are led astray is the failure of leadership to ask a potential preacher probing questions and demanding straight answers. As this writer was leaving a congregation without elders for another congregation some time ago, he was invited to a men's business meeting in which a possible "successor" would be interviewed. The interviewee had formerly preached for the Christian Church but said he had been "converted" because of the growing liberalism of that body. The men asked the preacher almost apologetically what his attitude was toward instrumental music. His lengthy, vague response did not appear to answer the question at all. Finally this writer asked the minister pointedly, "Do you believe it's sinful to worship while accompanied by a musical instrument?" He reluctantly answered that he believed it was a matter of judgement, and consequently wasn't offered the work.

Likewise those who have "something to hide" doctrinally speaking often react to plain questions with anger, double talk or circumlocution. Sound gospel preachers, on the other hand, are not afraid to "give an answer to every man that asketh" (1 Pet. 3:15). N. B. Hardeman, for example, is remembered by many as one who could state his position on an issue of his day "on a postcard." When brethren agree to support a preacher they will either be advancing God's doctrines or Satan's and they have a right to know which one "going in." A "must" in the effort to separate the wolves from the sheep is the asking of probing, worded questions and insisting on straight answers.

Exacting interrogatories are not enough to weed out the "bad apples." References must be meticulously checked and Bible knowledge must be evaluated. Posing discriminating queries, however, will help brethren go a long way toward separating sheep from wolves.

2913 Brock Way Bakersfield, CA 93306

Correspondence

"Enclosed is a contribution toward the work you do with the BEACON and DEFENDER. If these people are not on your mailing lists, please add them."

Gerold Bohm, Amherst, WI

"Herein find a check for \$100. Please send the DEFENDER to the following addresses."

A.C. Knight, San Angelo, TX

"The other day while at the Memphis School of Preaching, I picked up a copy of the DEFENDER. I would very much like to begin receiving it."

Stephen Wiggins

"I appreciate the great work you are doing."

Larry D. Mathis, Parkersburg, WV

"We really enjoyed this issue and want to have all those to follow. Here's a check to help cover cost of same."

Herman and Catherine Carter, MI

"Enclosed is a check to help defray the cost of the DEFENDER! I have received it for many years and find it refreshing to know there are still some who are not afraid of the truth and are willing to speak out in defense of same."

William Mickelson, Louisville, TN

"Please put me on your mailing list for the DEFENDER."

Charles R. Cobb, Stockton, CA

"I am interested in receiving your publication...Could you add my name to your mailing list? I look forward to receiving your journal."

Kerry Anderson, Tompkinsville, KY

A Recipe for Real Religion

From "The Cleburne Christian" Cleburne, Texas, February, 1923

Let us (1) do away with "speculative theology;" (2) discard all sectarian names and phrases; (3) abandon all doctrines and practices of human origin; (4) accept by faith, "the things that are revealed" (Deu. 29:29); (5) wear only such religious names, individually and congregationally, as may be found in the Bible; (6) "contend earnestly

for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), and “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (Tit. 2:10).

Formal Confession of Faith—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Mat. 16:16):

Worship and Government—Let the worship be simple and spiritual, not elaborate and worldly, eliminating that which merely entertains or “makes a show.” In government, acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only “head of the body, the church;” accept the Word of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit as the only rule of faith and practice; preserve the unity and independence of each local congregation “with the overseers and deacons” thereof.

Unity and Union—The Bible idea of unity and union of believers is not that of a “federation of churches,” nor a “religious trust;” but it is the spiritual unity of each believer with Christ in God (see John 17), and such practicable and practical union as may be necessary to “worship God in the beauty of holiness” and to “maintain good works”—charitable, moral, and missionary—at home and abroad (see 1 Cor. 10:17).

Editor’s Note: The preceding article was taken from “The Cleburne Christian,” Volume II, Number 4, a monthly paper published by G. C. Brewer and C. A. Buchanan. The price for the twelve page paper was fifty cents a year. How different, today, are the beliefs and practices of so many, even of some who are “Christians”—from Kip McKean’s one-man rule to the “unity in diversity” movement and the entertainment “to attract” ideas.

What Is a Dead Congregation?

Jimmy Clark

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev. 3:1).

The reputation which the congregation at Sardis had among men was that of greatness. However, such was not the Lord’s evaluation. It is often the case that men do not see things like the Lord does. What some may call a thriving congregation may in actuality be dying or already dead. At the same time what some may call dead could actually be alive and well. Therefore, what constitutes a dead congregation? One can see some of the meaning from the church at Sardis, but consider also some elements from other passages.

Error Is Allowed. The complaint against the church at Sardis was “I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent” (Rev. 3:2-3). Some were complemented in that they had not “defiled their garments” (Rev. 3:4). Error had evidently entered into that congregation with only a few standing against it. There is no doubt that error produces dead congregations. Sin brings death. “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. 2:13). Jude wrote of false teachers, “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots” (Jude 12). Jesus spake concerning those who would not follow him, “Let the dead bury their dead” (Luke 9:60). If a congregation’s activity is the promotion of error, it is dead in the eyes of the Lord.

Expressions of Faith Are Absent. James wrote, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jam. 2:20). This principle would apply to congregations as well as to individuals. A congregation may not house error but still be dead if faith is not expressed accordingly. Congregations that talk a good game are nothing in the eyes of God. John wrote, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). A congregation that sings “Christ for the World We Sing” and never does what the song says is a dead congregation. A congregation that prays for the destitute but does nothing for them is equally as dead. God is not interested in words alone, but the walk that follows from the words.

Entertainment Abounds. Paul wrote concerning the widow who gives herself to delicate living, “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Tim. 5:6). While the prodigal son was wasting his substance with riotous living, in reality he was dead. The father said after he came home, “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:32). Today’s society longs to be entertained. Some congregations have catered to such desires little realizing that pleasure

suppliers produce perishing souls. What is alive outwardly may be a coverup to what is dead inwardly (Cf. Mat. 23:27-28).

He Keeps You from Falling!

Jerri Manasco

Jude in a most remarkable passage, affirms that God “is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). What a wonderful prospect Jude offers the Christian! God is able to keep you from falling! Of course, this promise (as with many such promises) is frequently ripped out of context and forced to teach something that it does not teach at all.

This verse does not teach the unconditional preservation and perseverance of the saints! It is remarkable that Bible students can be so shallow in their thinking as to suppose that the Christian is given some sort of blanket coverage for his sins and that nothing can prevent his being eternally saved. There is not a scripture anywhere in God’s sacred writ that offers anything even remotely resembling the doctrine of unconditional preservation. The Scripture under study is no exception.

“But,” says one, “doesn’t Jude say plainly that God is able to keep you from falling?” Indeed he does say that very thing, but suppose there are other passages at our disposal to assist in greater understanding of this statement? We must see that doctrine in its proper light if we would appreciate the full impact of it. Are there avenues through which the promise in Jude 24 is carried out? Let us see.

God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34,35), so he will not do for one what he won’t do for another! Does God in a direct way prevent the Christian from sin? If so, then why does John affirm the existence of **sins** in the Christian’s life (1 John 1:8-10)? Why does Paul warn brethren against falling (1 Cor. 9:24-27; Gal. 6:1-9; Heb. 3:12-13; etc.)? Why does Peter teach that a child of God can fall from his own steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:17)? These passages teach that a Christian can sin, fall and depart from his steadfastness! How then is it that God keeps him from falling as Jude teaches??

The **Word** of His grace is able to keep us from falling (Acts 20:32). The Christian will not fall **if** he pays attention to his life (2 Pet. 1:5-11). God keeps the Christian **through faith** (1 Pet. 1:3-5). Hence, he whose heart is full of the revealed Word and who walks in it is the steadfast one! Don’t separate God’s power from God’s Word! God’s power to save (and keep us) is in the Bible!

“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but *he that is* perverse in his ways despiseth him” Proverbs 14:1,2

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

July 1989

Number 7

Man's "Think So" Does Not Equal God's "Say So"

Goebel Music

In a day and age when secular humanism (along with various other "isms") has convinced so many that there are no absolutes, no objective standard, man is to do his own thing, as the "highest" goal is man, etc., it is not surprising to hear what many people spurt, spout, and shoot out of their mouth relative to God's Word. However, I'm "still shocked" when I hear my brethren burst forth with some sayings like, "In my view," "In my opinion," "I am not convinced," "I take issue with," "I don't believe in logic," and "It seems to me."

An Example of Man's "Think So"

The following "current" statement serves well to "identify" man's popular, prevalent and prevailing attitude.

"It is distressing to me that there are learned men among us who will write the words penned in a recent editorial. That is, '...the churches of Christ use vocal music not necessarily because it sounds better, but rather because we are convinced that it is the only acceptable form of musical worship for the public assembly of the saints...It is a matter of biblical principle.'

"'We' are **not all** convinced that a **cappella** music is the only acceptable form.... I take issue with the definition of biblical principle. I find such things as a loving God, loving one's neighbor, justice and mercy to be biblical principles. A vague inference as to whether God prefers this type of music or not is not a biblical principle, but is at best a studied opinion, and more likely pure speculation" (Greg D. Coldeway, San Antonio, Texas, *Christian Chronicle*, January, 1989, "A cappella Music," p. 23).

It is "not mine" in this brief article to "examine" completely and thoroughly this statement, but just note an item or two, such as:

1. **We are not all convinced.** Just because a man is "not convinced," does not make an item either right or wrong. Many today are "not convinced" of the one New Testament Church, that baptism is for remission of sins and that it must be a burial, that denominationalism is wrong, etc. So What? From almost the beginning of time we know that many have "not been convinced" that God means what he has revealed unto his people.

2. **I take issue with.** This is nothing "new." Truth has been the "battle ground" for a long time, as men have "seemingly" always "taken issue with" God's Word either in his "explicit" or his "implicit" statements and "just what" constitutes "what."

3. **I find such things.** My, Oh, My! It seems that this writer "thinks" that "other biblical principles" would "exclude" (and he names some) "this" biblical principle. What is the law of hermeneutics that teaches this? Do "his findings" rule out others?

4. **A vague inference.** The word "vague" means obscure, nebulous, fuzzy, unfocused, abstract, confused, wishy-washy, veiled, imprecise, indefinite, etc., etc. I would suggest a study of the verb, infer, or the noun, inference, and how they relate to logic, deduction, understanding and "what it all adds up to." How can any thing be "vague" that is listed at least ten times and the words in the passage are not "generic" but "specific"?

5. **A studied opinion.** An "opinion" is not "always" a bad word, as it may mean "belief, judgment, conviction, way of thinking, doctrine, principle, deduction, conclusion," etc. I just believe that a man "must study" to ever be "approved" of God and "ready to give an answer" (cf., 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15). One thing for sure, if any man "will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or" (John 7:17). This writer must have had "something"

of “an opinion” to state, “...at best a studied opinion.” Wonder if his could be wrong? Wonder why he is “not convinced.”

6. **More likely pure speculation.** I certainly realize that there are various ways “speculation” might be employed, but from the context its meaning seems to be that of “guess, shot in the dark, assumption, conjecture, hunch,” etc. The clarity of the words used in the New Testament leave no room for “guesswork.”

Matthew 26:30, “they had **sung** a hymn.”

Mark 14:26, “they had **sung** a hymn.”

Acts 16:25, “and **singing** hymns.”

Romans 15:9, “**sing** unto thy name.”

1 Corinthians 14:15, “I will **sing**.”

Ephesians 5:19, “**singing** and making melody.”

Colossians 3:16, “**singing** with grace in your hearts.”

Hebrews 2:12, “I **sing** thy praise.”

Hebrews 13:15, “the **fruit of the lips** which make.”

James 5:13, “let him **sing** praise.”

Since our “admonition” is “not to go beyond the things which are written” (cf., 1 Cor. 4:6—ASV), as that is what will “judge us” (John 12:48), we need to “find out” what “is written” about “music in our worship.” The text is “sung, singing, sing and fruit of the lips” and that is “what is written.” Call it “more likely pure speculation” if you like, but I prefer to call it “that which is written” and “that which will judge us.”

Man’s “Think So”

The Bible is our evidence, biblically speaking, that this type reasoning (?) has been around a long time. It is “nothing new” to hear what we are hearing today.

1. “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, **Behold, I thought**” (2 Kin. 5:11).

2. “I verily **thought with myself** that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

These two are “classic” examples of people “reasoning without God,” however, much is said in both the Old and New Testaments about such. Sometimes it is “I said in my heart,” “walk ...after their own thoughts,” “reasoned with himself,” “supposed,” etc. Such declares that man’s “think so” is certainly not to be on the par of God’s “say so.” I wonder if this is how Cain thought, or how Nadab and Abihu functioned?

God’s “Say So”

To our most “enlightened” (?) minds of “today,” the following do not “hold the meaning” they should, but let us notice some of “what is written” in **the Book**.

1. “dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, **according to the saying of the man of God**” (2 Kin. 5:14).

2. “Thus did Noah; **according to all that God commanded him**, so did he” (Gen. 6:22).

3. “Thus did Moses: **according to all that Jehovah commanded him**, so did he” (Exo. 40:16).

4. “**Hold the pattern of sound words** which thou hast heard from me” (2 Tim. 1:13).

5. “Whosoever goeth onward and **abideth not in the teaching of Christ**, hath not God...**If any one** cometh unto you, and **bringeth not this teaching**...partaketh in his evil works” (2 John 9-11).

6. “And **the things** which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, **the same commit thou to faithful men**” (2 Tim. 2:2).

7. “**If any man thinketh himself** to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the **things which I write** unto you, that they are **the commandment** of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37).

God’s “Thoughts” must Be “Our Thoughts”

Isaiah well spoke about “God’s thoughts” and “our thoughts,” when he wrote the warning found in Isaiah 55:8-9. However, still today we have those “uncertain sounds” (cf., 1 Cor. 14:7ff) among us. These need a genuine reminder of:

1. “The Lord **knoweth the reasonings of the wise** that they **are vain**” (1 Cor. 3:20).

2. “hath not God made foolish **the wisdom of the world**?...the foolishness of God is wiser than men” (cf., 1 Cor. 1:20ff).

3. **"I thought on my ways, And turned my feet unto thy testimonies"** (Psa. 119:59).
4. **"Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me, and know my thoughts"** (Psa. 139:23).
5. **"casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"** (2 Cor. 10:5).
6. **"And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus"** (Col. 3:17).
7. **"who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church"** (1 Cor. 4:17).

I am convinced, like Belshazzar, that "our thoughts" ought to be "troubling" us (Dan. 5:6, 10). No wonder we have so many who are "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men" (cf., Eph. 4:14); God's thoughts are not "their thoughts!" This is why we have "perverse things" taught (Acts 20:30) and why the gospel has become "perverted" (Gal. 1:7). We perhaps need, like Simon, to pray that "the thoughts" of our heart be forgiven us! If our thoughts are not God's thoughts; that is, based on God's Word, then we will have "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (cf., Jud. 17:6; 21:25). There is absolutely no way that **man's "think so" can equal God's "say so!"**

5114 Montclair; Colleyville, TX 76034

The Need for Intelligent Men

Jerri Manasco

It is not at all uncommon for people to believe that a preacher is a pretty good fellow, but that he is probably a little naive and not too bright! He preaches because (bless his heart) he can't do anything else. As a youth he is observed by his parents' friends and is considered a young man of great promise. His teachers from grade school on up, seeing him as an intelligent young man, are dismayed that he turned out to be a preacher! Why, he could have been a doctor, lawyer, a scientist, a chief executive in some great corporation, or any number of other excellent things. But he became a preacher!?? Sadly, this impression of preachers is all too common in the Lord's church among otherwise good people. Too many parents in the Lord's church do not want their sons to preach, or at least they won't encourage them to preach; instead they inform their sons that they can follow a much more respectable and lucrative occupation! How tragic.

Parents should **rejoice** when their sons express the desire to become gospel preachers. Neighbors should be glad that the boy next door has chosen to give his life to the full time work of proclaiming the gospel. While others have chosen the more lucrative and "successful" (?) professions, along with the dangers and challenges to faith that they bring, they should be glad that **someone** has chosen a life work that can help them keep their feet on the ground.

There is a need for preaching and preachers. Preaching is divinely ordered (1 Cor. 1:21). Jesus set forth the Great Commission as the order for His people (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). How can members of the Lord's church be sarcastic and appear to be so shocked that some fine young man with great intelligence has selected the work of an evangelist? How can there be such sarcastic talk about the young man who wants to preach, **when the Lord Himself** was a preacher??? How can there be sarcasm toward something that has eternal consequences? There should be no regret or embarrassment just because your son has chosen to preach the gospel full time. Many a parent has probably regretted having discouraged their son or sons from becoming preachers and then watched as their son chose a worldly occupation with good pay and grand social benefits instead of the spiritual satisfaction of presenting the message of Jesus Christ.

One common objection to encouraging their son to preach is the idea that "my son has a brilliant mind and he can do a lot more with it than preach!" How ignorant is that shallow observation. The implication is that the youth who chooses to become a preacher simply does not have the mental capacity for a more challenging occupation. **I contend otherwise!! Preaching demands intelligent people to get the job done right!** Men preach, not because they can't do anything else, but because they want to use their God-given intelligence to further the cause of Christ! In a world where intelligent people are living in corruption, there is a need for equally intelligent people to combat such wickedness.

Was Paul the apostle a man of low intelligence? Is that why he became a preacher? Read his epistles and you will

see that he was a man of great brilliance. Note how he quoted from the common literature of his day (Acts 17:28; Tit. 1:12). Consider how he was conversant with the philosophical notions of his time (1 Cor. 15:32). Note how skilled he was in the art of rhetoric, that is, constructing arguments and questions that clearly demolished the errors he encountered (cf., Rom. 3:3-8ff). Ponder how he could reason with the notable “thinkers” of his day (Acts 17:22-31). Mark well how he outlined the essential weakness of first century humanism (Rom. 1:18-32). Anyone who can and will accept the task of correctly expounding these holy truths and meeting the errors contradicted by these truths; anyone who will accept the challenge of contending with modern materialists and skeptics, is not an ignoramus!!

We need **intelligent young men** who will discipline themselves to the hours of study and reflection that is required to prepare logical lessons and redeeming sermons. One must have a **mind** to digest all the reading he will be doing to properly equip himself for the pulpit and the public. The truly effective preacher is not one who simply “gets up a lesson” but he is one who **prepares** with effort, time, and diligent application, a **message** for a spiritually starving audience. This work is not for lazy men; it is not for a limited mind. The preacher is a **workman** for God (2 Tim. 2:15). Let him not be ashamed or embarrassed by what he does!

The gospel preacher must be prepared for countless and often unexpected circumstances that will arise. He will be speaking regularly, week after week, to a broad spectrum of people. His audience will consist of school teachers, businessmen, farmers, children, parents, unemployed people, sick and dying people, husbands, wives, all of whose needs he is going to have to somehow address at some point along the way. He must be a student of human nature as well as a student of the divine Book! He must become an organizer, an administrator, a clerk, a typist, a filing expert, a sounding board for others’ problems when he often has no sounding board of his own, etc., etc., etc. **All of this** he must do in the face of sarcasm and very tasteless jokes directed toward his “easy desk job.” Does this sound like a job for a “poor, mindless young man who just can’t get a job doing something else”?

Brethren, now of all times is the time that we **must have** intelligent young men who will train themselves for the most important work in all the world! We need parents who will wake up to the need and get behind their sons who want to preach and encourage them all the way. We need young men who will not feel ashamed to introduce themselves as preachers! We need men of good mind, sound initiative, and high caliber character who will assume the work of an evangelist. Our ignorant world can use the enlightenment such men can bring to it.

Route 5 Box 224, Boaz, AL 35957

“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:15).

The 1989 Bellview Lecture

Bobby Liddell

(Due to my going overseas in a missionary effort the week after the lectures, this report is one month later than it would have been). The 1989 Bellview Lectures held May 10-14, 1989, on the theme, *In Hope Of Eternal Life* were characterized by exceptionally good attendance and interest. Many remarked that this was the best lectureship ever. Some visitors were even so kind as to say that these were the best lectures that they had ever been to anywhere. To God be the praise, honor and glory.

Each of the speakers was well prepared and spoke forth the Word without compromise. To them, we and the brotherhood owe a debt of gratitude for their stand for the right. Each of these men was chosen because of their godly lives, powerful preaching and proven track record. It is our hope that the lessons presented by such dedicated servants of God will be of benefit for many years to come.

What a joy it was to be able to come together and have fellowship with brethren of “like precious faith” from all over the country and from out of the country. To be able to sit down together and open God’s Word in study of eternal truths concerning eternal life brought much needed instruction and encouragement. Sadly, too many do not preach powerful sermons on such interesting and much needed subjects. In some places, a generation has arisen which has not heard plain lessons on Heaven, Hell, Death, Christ’s Coming, Angels, Satan, etc.

Those unable to attend can still benefit from the tremendous lectures presented. The manuscripts of the lectures are printed in a hardbound book of over 300 pages, and the actual lectures delivered are recorded on audio and video tape. Several of the speakers have called the book a “classic” and “the best lectureship book” which they have ever seen. It is our hope that the books and tapes shall receive wide distribution and that, through them, souls shall be saved and God glorified for many, many years to come.

Generic Religion

LaMar Wade Nester

“*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” (Eph. 4:4-6).

If there were no other passages in the Bible teaching on the oneness of God, the faith, baptism, the Lord, and His church, Ephesians 4:4-6 would suffice. These verses teach that there is only one God, only one Lord, only one faith, and only one body—the body being the church of our Savior Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18).

There are many today who would have us believe that one can be a member of any denomination and it be acceptable to God. They believe that it doesn’t matter what church you are a member of; that one church is as good as another. Friends, this teaching is not found in Holy Writ. This doctrine is not from God. This teaching began in the mind of man. This is a man-made doctrine. The doctrines of men will not save an individual. God’s Divine Word plainly teaches that the worship of those who teach man-made doctrines is useless. Matthew 15:9 says, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.” Therefore, it does matter what body (church) of which one is a member. We must be members of the church that obeys the doctrine of Christ and none other for only in the teachings of Christ is there salvation (Rom. 1:16; Acts 4:12).

There are more than two hundred and fifty different doctrines being preached in our country today, one differing from another either in belief or practice. How can they all be right when their teachings differ? Is just any doctrine alright? What about the doctrine of the Satan church? My friends, Jesus has only one doctrine not two hundred and fifty.

In God’s Word, the church is referred to as the body of Christ. The words “church” and “body” are used interchangeably. Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” Ephesians 1:22-23 says, “And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body” Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Notice that evangelists, pastors (i.e. elders) and teachers are in the body of Christ. Colossians 1:18 says, “And he is the head of the body, the church.” The fact that the church is the body of Christ should be unequivocal to all!

As one studies the Bible relative to the body of Christ, he will find that Christ had only one body (1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Cor. 12:12). The beloved apostle Paul tells us that Christians are members of Christ’s body. First Corinthians 12:27 says, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” There is only one body that is acceptable to God—the body of his Son Jesus Christ. Can we not conclude that since Christians are in the body of Christ and Christ has only one body that we today can only be members of the body (church) of Christ in order to be in the right relationship with God? If not, why not!

The only time you will hear one making the comment “it doesn’t make any difference” is when he is talking about churches. Would one believe “it doesn’t make any difference” regarding the choosing of a mate? Would one believe “it doesn’t make any difference” in regard to the medicine given to his child burning with a fever? Of course not. Therefore, it does make a difference. The same is true in religion. We must not be “generic” when it comes to religion!

The Bible tells us that Jesus established His church and none other. Matthew 16:18 says, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Notice that Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against it (singular). Jesus came not to establish many churches but His church; and His people are members of that church (Acts 2:47).

May we teach this fundamental truth to those who are members of bodies founded by men so they too can be members of Christ's body when He comes again.

1108 Sarah Drive Kennett, MO 63857

The Elevation of Equivocation

Steve Gunter

A majority of modern ministers in the churches of Christ, I fear, stand the very great danger of waffling the Word rather than preaching it as Paul directs in 2 Timothy 4:1-5. The Word of God says, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" (Rom. 16:17). The wafflers among us evade the necessary and useful practice of indentifying and avoiding false teachers, consequently the false flourish and brethren fall to every wind of doctrine blowing across the land.

Modernist ministers equivocate, which is to say they hold contrary doctrines and elevate equivocation as the very hallmark of Christian love. Our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Our liberal brethren say sanctity them by ignoring their error and fellowship everybody who says Lord, Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ demanded more than lip service (Mat. 15:8), "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me."

The age of apostasy looms upon us all. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

A plurality of perverted error-infiltrated Bibles, a poorly informed and often apathetic membership, elders "out of the loop" in regard to error and false doctrine are the fruitful fields upon which the Devil sows malignant seed and reaps ruin within the body of Christ.

The value of debate, the worth of the lectureships, the vital task of the sound schools of preaching lies in building an impregnable bulwark, immediately, against the immense forces of liberalism at work in the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1202 Royal Drive Bentonville, AR 72712

A Message from Satan to Young People

Curtis Cates

Dear young person:

Do you at times feel neglected, that no one is interested in you? Please do not ever feel that way again. I am keenly interested in you, for I realize that you are most impressionable in your youth. I cannot reach many of your "old fogey," "know it all," "set in their ways" parents. Consequently, perhaps most of my most valuable time, attractive "tactics," and smooth conversion "techniques" are spent on you.

Yes, you can count on me to be your "friend." Let me give you some "fatherly" advice.

One, do not spend much time in studying the Bible. I want to help you make vital decisions, those which will affect you for a lifetime, even for eternity. However, those who meditate upon the Word of God find themselves not desiring to listen to me. Do not feel that you need to quote scriptures, like Christ when He was tempted.

Two, please do not really think that you need to attend every worship service. Just look at the examples of many so-called Christians who are grown; when you grow up, you will be able to forsake the assembly also. You see, you too will learn that other things are more important.

Three, it is vital to remember that you are young only once. My, everybody has the "right" to sow his wild oats, does he not? Have you not observed that religion is really for old folks? Besides, do you wish to give the impression to your friends that you are a coward, that you are not the master of your own life, that you cannot think for yourself?

Four, expect the church to entertain you. Do you not have every right to expect the same excitement within and without the worship of the church that you receive from television, the movies, at the ball park, etc? If they do not

have a comedian in the pulpit and a ministry of recreation, be loud in your complaints.

If this fails, show your disapproval by staying home or by seeking out a church which is “really interested” in young people. Remember, “ask not what you can do for the Lord, but rather what He and the church can do for you”!

Five, demand a Bible that reads like a comic book. No one should expect you young people to study hard to understand God’s will for your lives. It is just so frustrating not to have a “Bible” that you can understand. Certainly, that old archaic Icing James Version and even the American Standard Version are just beyond your ability to grasp.

Six, do not let anyone tell you how to live your life. Anyway, how can one really “know the truth” from a Bible so full of contradictions? Oh, have you been told you can trust the Bible? Do not believe it! Your guess as to what the Bible teaches is as good as that of anyone else. Besides, have you not heard? It is the age of “do your own thing.” Have you not learned by now that certain things are “wrong” only in certain situations? What was “wrong” when your parents came along (dancing, drinking, smoking, immodest dress, gambling, sex outside of marriage, drugs, etc.) is not wrong now. They warn you of these “forbidden pleasures” only because they do not want you to have a good time.

If any of your friends need to feel “loved,” pass my letter on to them. However, if your parents, the elders, or the preacher see it, they may not be impressed. I am interested in having you spend eternity with me, also.

Your friend (?), Satan

The Third Annual Greater Kanawha Valley Lectureship

August 8-11, 1989 the Washington Street Church of Christ in St. Albans, West Virginia, will host Lectures with the theme, *Perfecting The Saints...* (Eph. 4:12). Speakers will be Gary Colley, Andrew Connally, Wirt Cook, Maurice Davis, Frank Higginbotham, F. H. “Buddy” Martin, Goebel Music, Johnny Ramsey, Terry Varner and Thomas Warren.

For a brochure or additional information, contact Donald Mash (304) 727-0761, 7222333, or Don Lemley at (304) 768-4658.

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

August 1989

Number 8

The Pillars of Christian Maturity

Shan Jackson

The simplest way to ascertain the true strength of something is to examine the foundation upon which it is built. In an examination of a physical structure we would consider the soil, the blocks, or the slab upon which it rests. In the case of a non-physical attribute or idea one would need to consider the thought process and the authority of the bearer.

Such is our need when we consider Christian maturity. A good starting place would be with the beginning of the Christian concept as recorded in Acts 2. Specifically in verse 42 we read, "And they [Christians] continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Here we find the nonphysical attribute and idea we call "maturity" discussed in relation to Christianity. This passage records the practice of Christians nearly 2,000 years ago but still through all their joy and emotion they displayed the Christian maturity that the Lord desired. This maturity, along with love and dedication, was to serve as the foundation of the early church's success. Maturity, love, and dedication served as bedrock stones for the church then and must likewise serve the church today.

Maturity, as seen in steadfastness to doctrine, is as essential to the success of the church today as it was in Acts 2. The adage, "a rolling stone gathers no moss" would apply to our thinking here. Christians, unstable in doctrine, do not show the maturity Christ demands. So simply yet so powerfully Jesus pleaded, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Another translation renders it, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (ASV). This plea of the Savior demonstrates that steadfastness in doctrine is an essential to Christian maturity. The sense of falling has brought many an air-traveler much discomfort but the fear of spiritually falling brings discomfort to any who are "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." Christian maturity is realized in a Christian's desire to remain steadfast to Christ's commandments. In this desire we demonstrate our dedication and devotion to the Lord and His cause. "Continued stedfastly" is an unfolding of the Greek word for strength. When applied to men this shows strength that comes by reason of giving constant attention to something. Thus maturity is seen even again. The early church was strong because they were steadfast and steadfast because they were strong. Let us seek this continued application.

The second pillar of maturity mentioned in Acts 2 is fellowship. Much is said today concerning fellowship. Some try to capitalize our thinking into another realm of thought but the simplest response we need to make concerning fellowship is in reference to the prayer of the Master. For what did Jesus pray? "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). Christian maturity requires fellowship just as fellowship requires maturity. This bond called fellowship does not overthrow individual characteristics but rather forces Christians to alter their ego and opinions for the sake of Christ's cause. Maturity in fellowship unites particles into a design of oneness of life and purpose that, as in a grafted plant, produce uniformity and good fruit. Let us seek also this continued application. As the inspired penman suggested, "Let us all speak the same thing."

The third pillar of maturity as indicated in Acts revolves around the "breaking of bread." Within the confines of the Lord's Supper we find the very heartbeat of Christianity. It embodies the life principle of Christian steadfastness and fellowship. Just as bread is seen as the staff of life so Christ's sacrificial deed is seen as the staff of eternity. However, maturity is required to appreciate the meaning of this meaningful experience. To "eat and drink unworthily" is to bring condemnation to the soul and spirit.

The final pillar of maturity as seen in Acts 2:42 is simply called, "prayer." Prayer, as described by some, is the overflow of common need. And truly, prayer is often a spontaneous outburst of the human heart. But regardless of the emotional stimulation prayer must be anchored to the human heart with maturity. Like the germ of life as found in vessels of ancient grain the maturity of prayer will never die.

Thus upon these four pillars rests the essence of Christian maturity. Beside them runs almost 2,000 years of Christian love and reflection. Upon them must every Christian stand in the face of danger and with them he must, as did Paul, "fight the good fight of faith."

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, TX 77465

Problems

Bobby Liddell

"Oh, that is the place where they have had all those problems." Have you ever heard that before? A member of a congregation which had problems in the past recently said, "The church here is in the best shape that it has been in the twenty years I have been here." The reason he gave was that the problem causers were gone and those who remained were faithful to the Lord. What a refreshing comment. Would that those who, through their unchristian conduct, caused such problems had repented. Since they would not, the church is infinitely better off without their divisive leaven. I have often said that I would rather preach where there were thirty who were faithful to the Lord than where there were three hundred or three thousand who were unfaithful. Numbers do not ensure faithfulness.

Problems, of one degree or another, have been in the church since the first congregation in Jerusalem (Acts 5, 6, 15). As long as there are people in the church there shall be problems. There are some problems which arise due simply to the imperfections of men. These are minor (at least at the beginning) and can be handled effectively if all involved desire to do so (Mat. 18:15-17). Maturity, patience, kindness and brotherly love go a long way in these problem areas.

There are some problems which are of a greater magnitude yet which could be avoided if men would live for Christ instead of self. These problems usually center around pride, personalities and priorities. Such problem causing men put their own desires above everything else in the world even to the point of splitting churches. Their wicked deeds shall ensure their reservation in the torment of Hell. Sadly, many others are usually drawn away by following such men instead of Christ.

There are also problems which come from false doctrine. The answer to these problems is for every Christian to get back to a serious and dedicated study of God's Word. By so doing, false doctrine can be detected early and dealt with before it can destroy a congregation. An "uncertain sound" should be cause for alarm. A sound congregation will demand a sound eldership and sound preaching.

Some people look for problems and even find "problems" where there are none. There are those who have manifested a distinct pleasure in detecting the problems (real or supposed) of others and sowing their reports to the four winds. Should real problems not be exposed? Yes, but Christians do not find pleasure in such. No more than a doctor rejoices in informing his patient he has detected cancer. Even a garbled rumor has been enough for some to compass earth with a fiery denunciation of a "problem" of some brother or congregation. Repeated often enough and to enough people, that hateful lie about a "problem" which did not really exist becomes believed. Then there is a real problem.

There are others who can see no problems at all even when there are real and serious problems present. Such men are on the downward spiral to apostasy. Their self-deceit does not solve problems nor even make them lesser. Real problems must be faced squarely and resolved according to the will of God. To do otherwise only leads to bigger problems.

What can an individual or a congregation do when they have had a problem? They must seek to resolve it according to God's will. What about one whose reputation has become stained by a false accusation—when the whole earth seems to refer to them as that one or that church, "which has had problems in the past"? They must live a life above reproach, use opportunities to prove themselves and patiently allow time (and eternity) to show the truth.

“One Body” (And Indigestion)

Robin. Haley

“Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psa. 133:1). How many times have sincere, honest brethren quoted or otherwise referred to this beautiful statement?

Countless, I suppose. How many misguided (though sincere), compromising brethren, holding hands with digressive and apostate brethren, have together quoted or otherwise appealed to this verse for support of their “unity in diversity”? More and more, it seems!

I have just finished digesting the national tabloid published to promote compromise entitled *One Body*. Each issue is filled with bolder and more denominational leanings than the previous one. The following language helps to illustrate what I mean: “The Open Forum, not to be confused with the Restoration Forums, is a **strictly unofficial** [my emphasis—RH] gathering of independents who meet annually to discuss Christian unity. This year they decided to talk to someone besides themselves. Contact was made with the Church of God, International, and the historic meeting was announced” (p. 2 under “News”). Lest anyone think me to be against teaching the souls of those who are members of the Church of God denomination, and bringing them to the truth, God forbid! But, any “open forum” called to discuss “Christian unity” with those who are not even Christians is not in my mind “historic.”

I would like this present article to serve as a simple summary of the fare to which we as readers are continually treated. I do so with the full understanding that these are to be taken as my “cherished convictions” (p. 7), and are thus my own “opinions (matters of faith)” (ibid.). Thus, with such language I hope to avoid any incitement of anger or resentment from my “stronger brethren,” so-called. Though I shall probably be labeled a “rabid, self-righteous sectarian” (an appellation I have already been awarded, of which I am not afraid), I press on.

As usual, we were told that the “anti-instrumentalists” were of a judgmental character and thus in sin for “breaking fellowship with our instrumental friends in St. Louis last century.” It seems to me that readers of *One Body* would get awfully tired of reading the same charges issue after issue. It seems rather apparent to me that *One Body* does its best to demean and ridicule estranged brethren who will not 1) uphold an unscriptural practice; nor 2) compromise and agree to disagree by letting unscriptural practices go by without challenge.

The editor, publisher and various writers of *One Body* are very bold to bring charges of judgmentalism and sin, etc....but slower than molasses in January to back up their charges when challenged to defend them. I speak of two “Christian Church” people in particular. When this writer questioned and challenged some of their allegations and positions, I was told “read my book!” (Seems Solomon was right, Ecc. 12:12). I would love to share with you how one “Christian Church” preacher answered my scriptural questions and arguments against his book (Rich Carper, *Music, The Hidden Talent*), but he has forbidden me to publish our exchange! “Read my book” is all he will say, “And do not question it!” Yet we of the Lord’s church are told that our “traditional” stand is in great need of questioning! Even our own (weak) brethren are saying such. It is not fair! Now, I wonder how truly “meaningful” is all this “dialogue” that has gone on for six forums?!?

Guess who’s coming to the Forum? Here is a list of some of those who will be a part of the next “Unity Forum” who identify themselves with the “Church of Christ”: Norman Bales, Randy Mayeau, Randy Fenter, Monroe Hawley, Milton Jones, and Marvin Phillips. How’s that for a fine representation of the Lord’s church? The sad part is, thousands of brethren will continue to believe and be persuaded that a change is needed and we ought to cooperate with these Christian Church folk. What is the matter with people, anyway?

Regarding such cooperation, the editor asked brother Joe Schubert to write an article explaining what he is doing with Eastern European Missions. The editor’s note read: “Surely this is an area where we can cooperate!” I for one would not want sectarian support to do the Lord’s work. But then, this is what happens when some people are more concerned about “restoring the Restoration Movement” (Reuel Lemmons), rather than simple New Testament Christianity in the name of Jesus!

Next we are told that the church of Christ really cannot be divided! Cecil Hook tells us that we may be alienated from each other, but the Christian Church and “Church of Christ” cannot unite for they are already in one Body. If

true, why the publication *One Body*? Seems perhaps brother Hook has not read First Corinthians or First John in a while.

There are various references to “the branches of the Restoration Movement,” with perhaps the most inane being a reference to “the Restoration Movement of the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ non-denominational denomination” (!). How can readers take this kind of foolishness serious? By the way, that was part of a letter from Texas with the name withheld by request. What cowardice! (Perhaps I would not be so proud of such a ridiculous statement either).

As is typical, someone had to do a piece on “Hermeneutics.” Bill Swetmon did his best to convince us that 2 John verse nine “applies specifically to a doctrinal problem peculiar to that time concerning the deity of Christ.” Thus, it was not surprising to be told by Bill Hallsted that “worship” is the daily lifestyle of Christianity. With this kind of “scholarship” and understanding of hermeneutics, no wonder brother Lemmons encouraged us not to “bind upon him [any brother—RH] any teaching further than I can convince him it is the truth of God’s word. Any other binding would subject him to slavery—to my views rather than to the Lord.” Watch now, if we cannot bind upon a man any more than what we can convince him, we shall have to start allowing every stripe and color of false doctrine and teacher to have fellowship and free run in the churches. (I wonder, has Robert Shank or Max King ever been convinced about the truth in God’s word regarding the kingdom and the church)??

In summary, we are seeing more and more articles like that from Dan Rogers, a man who “labors and worships with antiinstrumental brethren,” though he says “I am not anti-instrumental!” Brother Rogers tells us he is “completely committed to a course of full and open fellowship with my instrumental brethren.” He concludes his article with these not so surprising words: (in reference to instrumental and non-instrumental congregations coming together to form one new congregation) “At least, I certainly hope!” What an aspiration! With such “preachers” as this and “elders” as Tom Spoons, who served with brother Reuel Lemmons at Westover Hills church of Christ in Austin, TX (who wrote a “Special Letter” to the editor, Victor Knowles, speaking of his great appreciation for *One Body* and encouraging him to “please keep up the good work”), it will not be too much longer until many members of the Lord’s church will go “out from us...for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us” (1 John 2:19). Anyone who says “division is coming” has his head in the sand. Brethren, it is already here!

P.O. Box 153 Scott City, KS 67871

A Critique of *How Christianity Grows in the City*

In 1985, Alvin Jennings mailed over 15,000 copies of the book, *How Christianity Grows In The City* to churches of Christ, in which he espoused a humanly-devised plan of church organization and evangelism. The book, outlining a modified Roman Catholic plan of organization with a Crossroads plan of evangelism, was dedicated to the infamous Boston Church of Christ holding them up as a “model to all the believers.”

In response, brother Wayne Coats has written *A Critique of “How Christianity Grows In The City.”* In 1987, the Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, oversaw the mailing of some 15,000 copies of brother Coats’ book to congregations worldwide. In an effort to inform brethren as to the true nature of the Crossroads/Boston movement, this much needed volume (235 pages) is now available in lots of 12 or more for only \$1.00 per copy (plus \$2.50 postage per dozen). **Orders must be for at least 12 copies.** For orders above 12 copies, add .20 per copy for postage. Send orders to: Bellview Church of Christ; 4850 Sauflay Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526.

Two Great Dangers

Stephen Fishel

Having had the opportunity to travel this great world God has created, I have seen the full spectrum of what this world offers, as have many brethren who have traveled abroad. From love to hate, good times to bad, and even life to death, many of us have been witnesses to these things. As for myself, I feel blessed indeed. Blessed in the fact that through all of this, there is always a lesson to be learned. Of all that I have seen, and of all that I have done, I feel the success and failures of not only myself, but the church as well can be summed up in the confines of two

principles. Should these two fundamental principles be neglected, or ignored, they in themselves represent great danger for the individual in particular, and the church collectively.

First, let us open our eyes to the fact that each and every one of us are Running Out Of Time. We seem to take today and tomorrow for granted. What we don't accomplish (or correct) today, we assume can be dealt with tomorrow. Yet James 4:14 makes it very clear to us that life is a vapor, "that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Over the years I have literally seen hundreds, perhaps thousands of people both in and out of the church who thought they had a tomorrow—but didn't. I also suppose the graves are full of people who thought this. How sad it is when life comes to an end so quickly, like a thief in the night. How much sadder it is when a member of the Lord's church faces this moment with problems in his life that he knew needed corrected today. But he just ran out of time.

What then is the remedy? Is there even a remedy? I believe there is. We must first realize that the suggestion of death as "It'll happen to the other guy, not me," is a product of Satan's influence upon our lives. Attitudes such as this are Satan's way of making us procrastinate, or even cause indecision. This is exactly what Satan wants us to do. First Peter 5:8 describes Satan as a "roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." When will we realize that someday—even this day—the "Other Guy" may be me? How would I stand this moment should I be swept away into eternity? Rest assured that there is an appointed time (Heb. 9:27) and at that moment I must be prepared to give an accounting of this life (2 Cor. 5:10). Brethren, **we're running out of time!** Let us this day convict ourselves to the resolution that all the problems that I have, I will start dealing with them **today**—not tomorrow. Certainly this is sound advice considering that our souls are at stake.

The second great danger we face today is kin to the first one. Simply stated, Mankind has the tendency to let Molehills turn into Mountains. From the individual whose personal problems jeopardizes his relationship with God to the churches ignoring little problems, we can at times see the disease spreading like a cancer. Fleeing from many churches it seems is that Old Time Religion, when the member who normally came forward to be restored just doesn't! His problem is just a little molehill, one like we all have; and since "they haven't corrected their problem, mine isn't so bad in comparison." Fleeing as well are the demands within the church for purity of its members, discipline as needed, and the sometimes necessary purgings. Why do we so readily accept the status quo, when we know Christ won't? When will we ever realize that the problems that I have, the problems that the churches have, need to be addressed before the **molehill becomes a mountain**? You see, we all know that sin causes separation from God (Isa. 59:1-2). You can not be a "little separated from God." Either you are with me or against me are the words of Jesus (Mat. 12:30). However, should I face these molehills now, before they become mountains, I greatly increase my chances of victory (1 John 4:4). Victory over sin and the world—because I faced it now; and I did not face it alone.

What avenues do I have to confront these molehills and mountains? First of all I must admit that sin is real; that it exists in everyone's life including mine (Rom. 3:23). You see, I'm no different than anyone else. All of us have problems. But the avenue that I take to correct my set of problems is clear from the biblical standpoint. I must go to God in prayer (1 The. 5:17). I must ask for forgiveness (Eph. 4:32). Most importantly I must include my brethren whenever possible to help me with my problems just as I would help them with theirs (Jam. 5:16). And last but not least I must address the problem now while there is still time, before my heart becomes hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13).

Let us therefore make the commitment to work on our mountains before they become larger mountains, to work on our molehills while they are still molehills. Let us do as Paul said in Philippians 3:14 when he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Lord, we all pray that we have the sense of urgency we need to have to insure our house is in order today. And Lord, we can have; if only we start today.

520 1st Street Carrollton, IL 62016

Free Bible Correspondence Course

A **Free Bible Correspondence Course** may be yours just for the asking! Lesson One of this non-denominational Bible study course will be sent to you by mail for your inspection. All you need to study and complete the course

is your own Bible. You may complete the Bible study course at your own speed in the privacy of your own home. Following your returning the last lesson, you will receive a beautiful **certificate of completion**. The Bellview Church of Christ sends the Bible Correspondence Course to all those who ask for it and **there is never any charge**. Should you wish to receive Lesson One, simply send your request to this address:

Bible Correspondence Course
% Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32526

Firm Foundation Lectures *The Gospel According to John*

October 8-12, 1989, Ridgedale Church of Christ, 1005 Dodds Avenue, Chattanooga, TN, 37404. Contact Wayne Summers at 615624-4611 or Ken Willis at 615-624-6111.

Little Words *Lynn Blair*

Little words mean so much. I realize that I could be speaking of words of hurt and discouragement, words of love and encouragement, or a little of both. Actually, I was thinking of teaching and instruction. Please allow me to give some examples.

In Job 29, 30, 31, Job sums up the past, present, and future, giving a chapter of each respectively. "How do I know that?" you ask. By noticing little words. In Job 29:2, he uses the term "of old" and proceeds to talk in past tense. In Job 30:1, he uses the term "but now" and proceeds to speak in present tense. (He also uses the term now in verses 9 and 16). Then in chapter 31, Job uses the little word "if" at least 18 times. That word indicates some future act or decision.

In Genesis 2:17, God told Adam and Eve about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (which **was not** an apple tree): "for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The devil, as we well know, will even quote God if it will serve his own evil purpose. He said in Genesis 3:4, "Ye shall **not** surely die." One little word meant the difference between life and death!

In 2 Kings 20:1, the prophet of God, Isaiah, tells King Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and **not** live." What a difference that little three letter word "not" made! You can imagine the relief the king felt when, after prayer, he was told in verse 6 that God would "**add**" fifteen years to his life. Once again, a little three letter word made such a difference!

Surely one of the most complete verses in the Bible concerning our relationship to God as his people is 2 Chronicles 7:14. Notice the first word in that great verse: "**If** my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

That is in the Old Testament, you say. Well, how about a New Testament passage: "But **if** we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Aren't we glad that God uses simple language and small words to instruct us?

484 South Chambers; Giddings, TX 78942

Contributions to *Defender*, 1989

R. A. Simons	10.00	A. C. Knight	25.00
David Hardin	10.00	Gerold Bohm	10.00
Richard McLendon	5.00	Caleb Smith	5.00
Marietta Siesky	25.00	Ann Hammock	15.00
Bennis Thornton	10.00	Ava Burns	5.00
Margaret Wells	5.00	W. J. Farris	50.00
Richard Snider	20.00	Edd Campbell	10.00
Farrell Till	11.00	Austin, Texas	2.50
Larry Mason	5.00		

Correspondence

A small donation inside to help on publishing DEFENDER. I hope to help more in the future. You teach the truth that every home needs.

Ava Burns
Kilmichael, MS

Please send me your paper "The Defender." I understand that a subscription to it is free. Thank you. Keep on "Defending" the truth.

Art Smith
Frederick, OK

Thanks for sending me the DEFENDER. I get many ideas to preach on from your publication. We need more teaching to bring the church back to New Testament teaching.

Caleb Smith
Bell Buckle, TN

Would you please send the DEFENDER to each of the people named on the attached sheet? We appreciate the fine articles and the faithfulness to the truth.

Dean Fugett
Cave City, AR

Brethren, will you please add my name to the DEFENDER mailing list? From what I have seen of your paper, I think it's one of the better ones in the brotherhood.

Darrell Broking
Casa Grande, AZ

I recently read a copy of your paper and would like to receive it regularly.

Ivan Taylor
Kahoka, MO

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

September 1989

Number 9

Watch Thou in All Things

Shan Jackson

Second Timothy 4:2-5 contains the finest advice a Christian can obtain save from the words of the Master. We are told to, among other things, preach Christ's truth regardless of the hearer's desire or aptitude. We are to be both loving and strong as we reprove, rebuke, and exhort because, Paul continues, a time is coming (and now is) when men will not desire or heed Christ's truth but rather will seek to have their ears soothed with smooth and fair speeches. And then he adds this sage advice, "But watch thou in all things" (2 Tim. 4:5).

This sobering instruction, though given to one young Christian, must be applied to the hearts of all concerned followers of the Savior. Salvation is still the same today as it was when Paul penned these encouragements so long ago. And since it is the same now as then, it must also be approached in the same manner. So sad are we who realize that little consideration is given such somber instruction even by men claiming to be Gospel teachers and preachers.

Therefore, the implied question must be asked, "Can the message remain the same when our method has altered so drastically?" Can a world needing the true "bread of life" remain satisfied or find salvation in the pillows and balloons we issue with each sermon? Can the crowds find Christ's burning messages when our pulpits no longer ring with His blessed truth? "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" was enough for one apostle yet our soothing balm of watered-down compromise seems to be the call of the day. The message of the Master, the message His followers gladly taught is the message of the cross and unless we "take up His cross" our empty pews will remain a constant reminder of a job incorrectly done. Preaching "peace" when there is no peace is like the ostrich with its head in the sand. The cross, and its message, is the only hope of the world.

Preachers who have been called by Christ to preach His Word must see their place as an opportunity to serve rather than a position for hire. Our stand must be solid on the "Rock of our salvation" rather than on our name or place of schooling. The popular stand is not always the truthful one and in fact seldom is, but with truth is where Christ stood and so must we. Our strength is not in our tact but in His message and our concern must be for the lost not the suffix attached to our name. To paint with words a beautiful sermon is a talent but to show Christ as He really is, is our challenge. Like modern day poets we might appeal to man's ears but do our words explain the answer to man's most pressing need, "What must I do to be saved?"

Why has the example of our preaching fore-fathers been so obviously ignored? Why instead of following their steadfastness and forthrightness have we cottoned to apathy and compromise? God has always called men to preach His truth and not to design a truth of their own.

Our time is now spent, not in conquering the windmills of man, but rather in re-thinking and re-structuring the battles of our preceding past. Now, instead of challenging the false thinking of the world we find ourselves being handled back to superstition, ignorance, and sectarianism that the men of the Restoration began to battle and the preachers of a generation past, I thought, defeated. A world and a brotherhood of disunity has spawned a new style of preaching; that is, preaching unity where there is no unity and love where there is no understanding. Christ's unity has been rent asunder by man's creed, edicts, and traditions and such can be said also in His church. His love and sacrifice has been hidden by a party-spirited climate and division makers of every ilk.

There is but one way to please the Father and any alteration from His scheme will fail and fall. Unity can not be found by setting aside our religious differences but rather by "searching the scriptures daily to prove those things are so." Such setting aside would only serve to further water down God's word which would naturally lead to a total

dismantling by man of God's heritage. Unity can only be realized by sincerely showing our differences in light of God's Word. Any difference which does not have bearing on His truth is not a difference at all but rather an opinion for personal approval. When truth speaks our opinions cease and until truth is found and accepted nothing is settled.

The plan and message of the New Testament is an unyielding force that cannot change. It is clearly stated and must be clearly presented. And then as all stand before His blessed throne on that faithful day we will all be ready to give an answer to every deed, every word, and every action in accordance with His truth. God's law has never catered to man's whims or fancies, therefore, we must "preach the word" both "in season and out of season", we must "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" with "all longsuffering and doctrine." And we also must "watch in all things" concerning self, the church, and the brotherhood.

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, TX 77465

Finding Life

Bobby Liddell

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Mat. 10:39).

The Preciousness of Life. Life is brief. James said life is "even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jam. 4:14). Man, like the flower, is soon cut down, and like the shadow, continueth not (Job 14:1-2). Our outward man perishes in this moment which we live and while we groan in this earthly tabernacle (1 Cor. 4:16-5:10). Bayard Taylor said, "Our life is scarce the twinkle of a star in God's eternal day." **Life is beautiful.** It is—when we make the most of life by taking advantage of its opportunities. Unlike the line from Shakespeare's Macbeth, life is **not**, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." One who loves the good life may obtain it, even the abundant life (1 Pet. 3:10-11; John 10:10). **Life is bestowed by God.** Paul said, "we are the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). We must be faithful in our stewardship of the great blessing of life (1 Cor. 4:2), for one day soon shall, "the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecc. 12:7).

The Possibilities of Life. Have a good life. Our living should make the world a better place. As we seek to do to men as we would that they do to us (Luke 6:31), we seek to do good unto all (Gal. 6:10). The best life is a life of service. One who so lives shall be great among men (Mat. 20:26-28). **Have a godly life.** "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). William Penn said, "The truest end of life is to know the life that never ends." A godly life demands a living sacrifice of self (Rom. 12:1-2), and love for the Father instead of love for the world (1 John 2:15-17). **Have a giving life.** Paul pointed to the Macedonians as an example of giving. The reason they could give abundantly out of their poverty was that they, "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:1-5). William James said, "The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." Christ, the perfect example in giving, said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

The Priorities of Life. Reach forward. Christians are optimistic, seeking their potential; thus, facing the past without regret and the future without fear. Paul said he forgot those things behind and reached forth unto those things before (Phi. 3:13). **Reach outward.** Christians smile, lift up the weak and seek opportunities to reach out. Truly, none lives to himself and none dies to himself (Rom. 14:7). **Reach upward.** Christians lift up holy hands to the hand of God who saves (1 Tim. 2:8).

The Preparation of Life. Preparation in attitude. From a pure heart, a Christian attitude will make one better in every situation of life (Pro. 23:7). **Preparation in affections.** "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mat. 22:37). **Preparation in aspirations.** "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26). One has well said, "We ought to live such a life that when the preacher has said the last words over our lifeless body, people will not think they have attended the wrong funeral."

Firm Foundation Lectures

The Gospel According to John

October 8-12, 1989, Ridgedale Church of Christ, 1005 Dodds Avenue, Chattanooga, TN, 37404. Call 615-624-4611 or 624-6111.

Who Is the Real Fool?

Robin Haley

In a chapel talk, delivered to the student body of the College of the Bible in 1910, J. W. McGarvey asked the question, "Why do you want to preach?" Within that talk, he offered various answers to his question, one of which was, "Well, in order that you may get rich?" "There is not a man in the country green enough to think that is the way to get rich." Brother McGarvey said that before there was television! Had he seen what we have seen in the past few years or so regarding the Jimmy and Tammy Bakkers, the Oral Roberts and the Jimmy Swaggarts, he might not have said such a thing. Of course, we assume he had in mind those who were legitimate preachers, and not mere charlatans bent on fleecing the people.

It was brother McGarvey's next statement that inspired this article. He said, "And if there was a man thinking that he was going to be a preacher in order to get rich, he is too big a fool to be a preacher." We might add, unless of course he has a product to sell to one who is as much a fool or more so! Consider, anyone who would believe the foolish pleas for money as Oral Roberts has made is indeed a fool! 900 foot Jesus indeed! Demons choking him in his bedroom! Threats from God about being "called home!" My, but some folk are gullible! How about buying shares in a "City of God" or "Village of Freedom" or "Jesus Fellowship Fun-Park," etc., and so on?!? Surely, the real fools are those who "buy" such nonsense as forgiveness over the airwaves, steak-knives and prayer cloths. Actually, people like Bakker, Roberts, and Swaggart are rather shrewd to be able to be so financially successful. So true is the old adage, "A fool and his money are soon parted!"

P.O. Box 153; Scott City, KS 67871

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends" (Pro. 17:9).

Darwinism or Greed?

Robin Haley

An excellent article published in the *Firm Foundation* (Vol. 105:4, Mar. 28, 1989), written by H. Daniel Denham and entitled, "Darwin, Nazism and Genocide" gave a brief and apparently accurate account of the rise of the SS squad, overseen by Adolph Hitler. Brother Denham outlines for us how contributions from the various philosophies of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Hegel and Wagner, coupled with the acceptance of Social Darwinism and power of the German Nazi Party led to the evil onslaught against the Jews and other perceived "inferior races" in the vain attempt to purge the "weak" and increase the strength of the Aryan/Nordic German race. If today's humanistically oriented sociologists were truly consistent, they would have to give their vote of approval to what Nazi Germany tried. Thank God that in the 1940s, America had not yet succumbed to the false religion of Humanism. Truly, the "weakness" of Germany in the 30s and 40s was in her morality and refusal to acknowledge the God of Heaven and His acceptance of "in every nation he that feareth him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Brother Denham gives a correct and timely warning in the last paragraph of his article. America had better wake up and be careful not to fall into the same disposition which produced the atrocities of Germany a generation ago (Rom. 2:1-3). After citing a number of ungodly traits and movements within our beloved country, brother Denham says, "The basic underlying philosophy driving these movements is Humanism, whose tap-root is Atheism and stalk, organic evolution." We must add here a hearty **Amen!**

Though significant inroads have been made into our society, government and educational system by Humanism, we hasten to point out that neither Humanism nor Social Darwinism are the real perpetrators of evil in our world...nor was it in the world of the 30s and 40s. The **real** evil is now, and was then, what Heinrich Himmler advocated: "world mastery" (as quoted by Heinz Hoehne in his book, *The Order of the Death's Head*, pp. 300-301). World mastery is but another name of **greed**! This has been the bane of man-kind since the Garden. Note what was said of our mother Eve in Genesis 3:6, "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Though we believe pride was the devil's major failing, we also point out that likely greed accompanied it (Jude 6). What was one of the temptations thrust before the pure eyes of our Lord while fasting in the desert? "All the kingdoms of the world" (Mat. 4:8). To what was the devil trying to appeal? Greed. What is one of the three categories into which **all** sin can be filed? "Lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16).

Reader, the lustful desire for more and more is only sin ever catalogued with the God-denying sin of idolatry: "covetousness...is idolatry...a covetous man...is an idolater" (Co1. 3:5; Eph. 5:5). Yes, the false religion of Humanism is sinful, but the underlying root of even this sin is very basic: **greed**! Let us all pray to refrain from covetousness and greed, "For the love of money [and any form of materialism..."having it all"] is the root of **all** evils" (1 Tim.6:10).

P.O. Box 153 Scott City, KS 67871

Free Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson One of this non-denominational Bible study course will be sent to you by mail for your inspection. All you need to study and complete the course is your own Bible. The Bellview Church of Christ sends this study material to all those who ask for it and **there is never any charge**. To receive Lesson One, write to:

Bible Correspondence Course
% Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32526

Firm Foundation Lectureship

The Gospel According To John

"These Things Are Written That Ye Might Believe"

October 8-12, 1989

Lectureship Location:

Ridgedale Church of Christ • 1005 Dodds Avenue • Chattanooga, Tennessee

Sunday, October 8

9:30 AM	The Work of John The Baptist	Roy Deaver
10:30 AM	Judge Righteous judgments	Ray Peters
7:00 PM	Singing	Paul Hicks
7:30 PM	Religious Hirelings	Curtis A. Cates
8:15 PM	Grace, Law, And The Gospel	George DeHoff

Monday, October 9

9:00 AM	All Men Must Practice Personal Evangelism	Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
9:45 AM	Never A Man So Spake	Waymon Summers
10:30 AM	Ye Must Be Born Again	Weldon Langfield
11:15 AM	The Vine And The Branches	Ken Willis

Lunch Break 12:00 - 1:30

1:30 PM Jesus And The Woman At The Well Al Brown

2:15 PM The Incarnation Of Christ Jack Burch

Dinner Break 3:00 - 7:00

7:00 PM Singing Bill Greer

7:30 PM These Things Are Written That Ye Might Believe Andrew Connally

8:15 PM Ye Are Of Your Father The Devil H. A.(Buster) Dobbs

Tuesday, October 10

9:00 AM The Misunderstood Christ M. L. Sexton

9:45 AM Search The Scriptures Gary Colley

10:30 AM Seeking Christ For the Wrong Reasons Carl Hecker

11:15 AM That By Which We Are Comforted Winfred Clark

Lunch Break 12:00 - 1:30

1:30 PM The Demands Of Discipleship Terry Harndon

2:15 PM Miracles Of Christ Contrasted With Fake Healing Today H. Daniel Denham

Dinner Break 3:00 - 7:00

7:00 PM Singing Truman Smith

7:30 PM Is A Man, Once Saved, Always Saved? Joe Gilmore

For further information, write or call either of the sponsoring congregations.

Eastdale Church of Christ
3417 Wilcox Road
Chattanooga, TN 37411
Ken Willis, Evangelist
(615) 624-6111

Ridgedale Church of Christ
1005 Dodds Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37404
Waymon Summers, Evangelist
(615) 624-4611

Back To Basics

Weldon Langfield

A great deal has been said and written about how the American educational system is failing, in many cases, to teach our children basic skills. There indeed does seem to be a failure in training the youth of our nation in the “three r’s”—reading, writing and arithmetic. At the same time, studies have repeatedly shown that these skills are essential to success. Some recent research, for example, indicated that one’s vocabulary directly correlates with his earnings. Just as our nation is suffering from a lack of “basic training,” so the church is failing, in some quarters, to get “basic training” in the Word of God. Because of an apparent weariness with the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16), and a desire to appear worldly wise, some preachers have virtually eliminated the teaching of fundamental truths from their repertoire. Some elders sit idly by doing nothing to correct the situation, or worse yet, even encourage such subtle departures from the truth.

This writer was in a Wednesday night service of a church of Christ recently when the minister announced that a film series on the home by two very well-known brethren was scheduled to be shown. Not once in his rather lengthy announcement did this gospel preacher refer to these men as Christians or members of the Lord’s church. What he did say was that the series would be beneficial because the men were “adherents to the Judeo-Christian heritage.” In some congregations, one can learn about anything—tax preparation, aerobics, sex education, the danger of drugs, and the latest theological jargon—anything but the basics of the Bible.

There are times when the teachings of the word of God need to be applied to the more contemporary problems of our society. Yet much time should be devoted to addressing the basic teachings of Scripture—the nature of baptism, the church, the reasons for the non-use of instrumental music, etc. A young person may be dissuaded from addicting himself to cocaine by a class on its dangers, but a discussion of the horrors of hell can be awfully

compelling, too. As Paul wrote, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11).

Let us ask ourselves, when was the last time we heard a sermon on the one true church, the necessity of baptism or the nature of hell? When was the last time our children attended Bible class and were taught that communion must be taken once a week, or that one must scrupulously obey to go to heaven? When have our teenagers last gone to a class and been instructed that it is sinful to use instrumental music in worship? If these basics are no longer being presented regularly and aggressively, then why not?

It makes perfect sense that a generation that is not taught vigorously in school to read and write will lack this knowledge as it enters the work force. By the same token, a generation of Christians not taught the basics can not know them, either. Hosea rightly proclaimed, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6).

1000 Highland Road Brentwood, TN 37027

The Christian's Adornment

Eddie Helms

We are creatures who love to decorate, to garnish and put ornaments about our homes. We do this to make our homes pleasing to our senses and pleasing in the sight of others who may come to visit. The Bible declares that the Christian should decorate his life, adorn his life or well arrange his life that God may be pleased and others may see a living example of the beauty of a well-ordered Christian life. With what is the Christian to adorn himself?

The Christian is to adorn the doctrine of God (Tit. 2:10). God's teaching instructs one to live soberly, righteously and godly (Tit. 2:12). “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). This simply means one abstains from worldly lusts and living. When one fills his mind with God's Word and makes the application thereof it can be said that he is adorning, embellishing, garnishing or decorating his life with the doctrine of God. God will be well pleased and others will see a beautifully decorated life.

One who has adorned himself with the doctrine of God will also have adorned the inner man with divine decorations (1 Pet. 3:1-6). One will not emphasize the physical things of life, the outward adorning of the body, but will seek to decorate the inward man (1 Pet. 3:3-4). Certainly this inward apparel will manifest itself in godly behavior. Solomon wrote, “a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies” (Pro. 31:10, 25a). These ornaments of godliness will motivate many to become children of God themselves (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

The Christian will be adorned in modest apparel (1 Tim. 2:9). Several words and terms in the context of 1 Timothy 2:8-10 will reveal the type of clothing with which the Christian (male or female) should adorn himself. The first word is the word modest which means to be well ordered, orderly and decent and is close in its meaning to the word which describes the harmonious arrangement of the universe (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 761). Is one's dress in harmony with what he claims to be? The next word is shamefacedness (KJV) or shamefastness (ASV). This word means having a sense of shame, showing modesty and reverence (*Thayer's Greek English Lexicon*, p. 14). Tight fitting clothing, short shorts and much of the summertime apparel of today encourages lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19). That is, dear reader, this type of dress promotes lust and unlawful sexual desires (Mat. 5:28). This type of dress declares to God and man that one has no sense of shame and modesty. Certainly one would not want to provoke another to entertain ungodly desires by wearing apparel which one could have avoided wearing. One's clothing should be that which becometh or professes godliness (1 Tim. 2:10). The children of Israel had become such that they had no sense of shame, no sense of modesty about them when they committed sin (Jer. 8:12). Unless one fills his life with God's standards of decency he will soon find himself in the same condition of ancient Israel. One will not blush at the clothes he wears, the speech in which he engages nor be ashamed of himself for appearing in places a Christian ought not to be.

Let us encourage each other to adorn our hearts with godliness, to adorn our lives with godliness and to adorn our bodies with clothing that bespeaks the adornment of our inner man. May our speech, our activities and the places we go be indications of whose children we are. May we ever be garnished with godliness and divinely decorated that we may give glory to the great God we serve (Mat. 5:13-16)!

212 E. Cedar St; Livingston, TN 38570

Denton Lectures

The **Eighth Annual Denton Lectures** are scheduled for November 12-16, 1989, at the Pearl Street Church of Christ building at 312 Pearl Street, Denton, Texas 76201.

A wide variety of material from *2 Corinthians* will be covered in 35 lectures by 35 speakers from all parts of the nation. A daily "Discussion Forum" (Monday-Thursday) will deal with assigned subjects of controversy; i.e., "The Power Is Of God And Not From Ourselves," "We Must Be Obedient In All Things," "We Must Both Fear And Love God," and "The Meaning Of Biblical Faith."

The aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental and sound biblical teaching to edify all who attend and who will have access to the lectures through audio and video tapes and the lectureship book. Another major aim of the lectures is to help combat and expose religious error both within and without the church.

A lectureship book of approximately 500 pages will equal those of previous years. Limited housing in the homes of local Christians is available. Several major hotels are in Denton. Hookups for travel trailers and motor homes are provided by advance registration.

For further information you may write to: Church of Christ, 312 Pearl Street, Denton, TX 76201, or phone: (817) 3873531.

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

October 1989

Number 10

Reasons for Discipline

William S. Cline

Church discipline has long been a misunderstood and neglected practice in the Lord's church. Many churches have never studied the subject and some are so ignorant to the teaching of the New Testament to think that discipline is not to be practiced by the church today. It is this writer's conviction that in order for the church of Christ to be the New Testament church, it must practice the doctrine of the New Testament! How long will the church persist in the disobedience to one of the plainest doctrines of the New Testament? This becomes a question of eternal magnitude; for no church can disobey Jehovah and remain in His favor!

Discipline is vital in the **home** for parents must train their children to obey proper authority (Pro. 22:6). If children do not obey, it is God's plan that they be corrected. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to *himself* bringeth his mother to shame" (Pro. 29:15). If a child has not been trained to respect authority at home, he will not respect it elsewhere.

Discipline is vital in the **society** of our community for the strong arm of the law is a most powerful restraint in favor of decency and order. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:4).

Discipline is vital in the Lord's **church** for there is a standard of behavior for all children of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and those who do not behave properly are to be externally corrected by teaching (Acts 18:26), warning (1 The. 4:6); rebuking (1 Tim. 5:20), and withdrawing fellowship (2 The. 3:6).

This writer has worked with a congregation for nearly six years that follows the Lord's way in disciplining the disorderly. It is a blessing to work under elders who believe in following the Word of God. Yet, he has heard many discussions with regard to discipline and whether it should be practiced or not. Brethren discuss this subject as if they have a choice! They may as well discuss "baptism for the remission of sins" and whether to practice such as to discuss whether they are going to practice discipline. Generally there were more "again" withdrawal than there were for it in the discussions which this writer listened to. There were those who were afraid others in the family might quit the church. Some feared that there were those in the church who were so "dead set" against withdrawal that they would quit in protest. Others were certain that attendance and contribution would go down and usually that was the argument that won, for many in the church feel the whole duty of the leadership is to **count heads and dollars**. But one argument that was always produced with much vigor was the one which brought up those who had been withdrawn from who never came back to the church. If nothing else put the lid on the subject this one did! The consensus was, "We withdraw to save the person but if it doesn't work why withdraw?" Thus withdrawal was not practiced and the persistent in sin were allowed to continue to enjoy the fellowship of the church. Brethren, **God's way is right** and it works! If the person withdrawn from does not repent it is not the fault of God's way!

It is felt that if brethren properly understood the reasons for discipline then discipline would be more prevalent among the church that is seeking to do Bible things in Bible ways and to be nothing more or less than the New Testament church.

To Obey God

Should one live to be as old as Methuselah and as wise as Solomon he would never find a better reason for practicing discipline than "**God said do it.**" In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Paul wrote, "Now we command you, brethren,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” Romans 16:17 reads, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

In 1 Corinthians 5:11 Paul wrote, “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” It becomes rather inconsistent for one to quote Acts 2:38 and demand upon the authority of that passage that one seeking remission of sins repent and be baptized and at the same time observe the “passover” when he comes to such passages as quoted above! Our **inconsistency becomes appalling** and a **stumbling** block to those we seek to teach and convince that “we go by the Bible—nothing more, nothing less.” Brethren have turned their **rebellious nose** up at God’s teaching on discipline but one day they will learn that God cannot be treated that way for He cannot be mocked (Gal. 6:7).

One would just as well stand before God in the judgment as one that had shook his fist in God’s face and refused to be baptized as to stand before Him as one who had refused to obey His teaching about discipline.

To Save the World

The church has the responsibility to take the gospel to the world, but the world is not going to listen if those who carry that message do not practice discipline among themselves. Never let us underestimate the power of our **influence** over the world. The world will not listen to a church that tolerates habitual sinners, who will not repent of their wrong deeds. Christians are the light of the world. The world is to see our good works and glorify God (Mat. 5:14-16). Paul wrote, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phi. 2:14-15).

He wrote to Titus that Christians were to properly conduct themselves so that “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit. 2:1-8). Peter plainly said, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:12).

Brethren, it is high time for the church of Christ to conduct herself as the New Testament church! We need to let our light shine in this perverse world. It is understandable that the world says, “I can’t hear what you say, for what you do sounds too loudly in my ears.”

To Keep the Church Pure

Sin is the worst disease that has ever blighted mankind. It is more contagious and deadly than any physical disease known to man. If a man gets typhoid fever, he is isolated. If a finger gets blood poison or gangrene that can not be controlled by our modern drugs, the doctor will remove the finger for the purpose of saving the life of the person. If a bushel of apples gets a rotten one in it, the rotten one will be removed because it will affect the entire bushel. And so it is with the church. After all the spiritual know how is applied to a diseased member of the body and it can be seen that this has been to no avail, the only thing that can be done is to remove it from the fellowship. Certainly it is better to sever one soul that is lost than to endanger the souls of others and the entire church. Paul said, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven” (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

Sin attracts sin and the unrighteous are not satisfied until they have partners in their unrighteousness; therefore, it is imperative that we are careful not to let sin run “foot-loose” in the church of our Lord.

To Deter Wrong Doing

God has always used discipline (punishment) to deter wrong doing. Reflect for moment on some of the Old Testament examples such as: the sin of Achan, (Jos. 7); Nadab and Abihu, (Lev. 10); the young prophet, (1 Kin. 13); Uzzah, (2 Sam. 6); and a host of others. In order that they might learn to do right, God’s face has always been set against those who did evil.

In the Christian dispensation we see God’s discipline and the end results as recorded in Acts 5. A husband and wife lied about their giving and God struck both of them dead. The closing comment in verse 11 reads, “And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” In 1 Timothy 5:20 we read, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” When a rational person sees one being punished for some wrong doing he will strive to not be guilty of that wrong. God knows this and uses punishment to deter wrong doing. Throughout the pages of Sacred History, Romans 11:22 is demonstrated time and again. “Behold therefore the goodness and

severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

If the church would do things God’s way and **punish** the sinner (withdrawal is called punishment, “Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many”—2 Cor. 2:6), there would be less sin in the church.

To Save the Soul of the Sinner

In speaking of the sinner in the Corinthian church who had his father’s wife, Paul said, “deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5). The purpose of delivering him to Satan is to save his soul in the day of the Lord. When people learned who he really served (the devil and not the Lord) he would be ashamed and repent. Nothing will bring a person to his knees quicker than to cast him out of the fellowship of the church and let the world know he is a hypocrite. If there is any good left in the man that can be touched, this should bring him back.

However, if withdrawal is not fully effected and fellowship continues to be offered by some in the church, the proper results will not be realized. But when Christians will have nothing to do with the sinner and if he has any good left in him, it will cause him to be ashamed and repent (2 The. 3:14).

Conclusion

Thus, we can see that there are at least **five** reasons for practicing discipline. When the brother argues that the church should not withdraw because he knows of some who were disciplined and did not repent, he should be reminded that salvation of the sinner is only one of the many reasons for withdrawal.

When discipline is practiced properly and the sinner does not repent, then the church has still done right!! and victory has been achieved in four out of five areas. Let’s never be guilty of refusing to do what God has said because in the church there are some so **faithless** as to try to reason around the teachings of the Bible.

Food for Thought

In 1 Timothy 4:2, Paul speaks of those who have a conscience seared with a hot iron; In Ephesians 4:17-19, he speaks of those who were past feeling; and in Hebrews 6:4-6, we read of the impossibility of restoring some. Could it be that the reason for some of the disciplined failing to be restored falls upon the ones who administered the discipline? Perhaps in many cases we are so slow in doing what God has said that the sinner becomes hardened. His conscience becomes seared, his emotions become past feeling and thus it is impossible to renew him to repentance.

Brethren, discipline is a serious matter! It is a doctrine of the New Testament, and if the church of Christ is going to be the true New Testament church, and if you and I are going to save our souls, we best practice what the New Testament teaches with regard to this matter of eternal importance.

*(Editor’s Note: This excellent article on “Reasons For Discipline,” is reprinted from the January 31, 1974, issue of **Defender**. These powerful truths need to be proclaimed today wherever saints meet. We commend it to you for your serious consideration).*

Angry Men

Bobby Liddell

“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: ²⁵Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Pro. 22:24-25).

An Angry Man Is a Man out of Control. An angry man faces the danger of lost control of his tongue (or pen), his actions and his life for he has lost control of his spirit. Do you want to learn such ways and get a snare to your soul? Do you desire friends like that? “Be not deceived: evil communications [companionships—ASV] corrupt good manners [morals—ASV]” (1 Cor. 15:33).

May one boast of his unrighteous anger and please God? Certainly not. The wise man, by inspiration said, “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and *it is* his glory to pass over a transgression” (Pro. 19:11). Again, “*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*” (Pro. 16:32). One that is slow to anger is a wise and respected man.

Notice, again from the pen of wisdom, the reason and the effect. The reason is anger and the effect is strife and

abundant transgression. “An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression” (Pro. 29:22). Pry up the stumblingstone of strife and oftentimes found lurking underneath are angry men.

An Angry Man Is a Foolish Man. “*He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated*” (Pro. 14:17). “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecc. 7:9). “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (Jam. 1:19-20).

One cannot be level headed, calm under fire and act wisely while enraged in unrighteous anger. Blustering, intimidation and threatening with reprisal are common tactics of angry men. Such is folly. Irrational ignorant behavior is not overlooked by God and cannot be masked under the guise of doing right.

How can one claim to be a follower of Christ while manifesting malicious hatred and uncontrolled wrath toward any fellow human? Notice the example of Christ, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:22-23).

Avoid Anger and Angry Men. The Psalmist said, “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil” (Psa. 37:8). Unrighteous anger and wrath are evil: That men should be angry (righteously indignant) over sin is true. Psalm 7:11 says, “God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.” That men must not be unrighteously angry is also true. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26).

Jesus said, “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Mat. 5:22). Hear Ephesians 4:31-32: “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Avoid anger that leads to wrath, strife, malice and many other sins. Avoid angry men whose tumultuous lives leave trails of bitterness and broken souls. By avoiding anger and angry men, one shall avoid the snare of sin and sorrow. “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul” (Pro. 22:24-25).

“Have a Nice Day”

Roger Jackson

In my visits to hospitals, like all gospel preachers, I often come across tracts that people deliberately drop in conspicuous places such as elevators, restrooms and waiting rooms. I pick them up and file them in my “error” file back at the office to keep someone from being exposed to false doctrine. I have found a few tracts placed by my brethren and I do not remove them.

It came as no surprise to me when I got on an elevator in a Decatur, Alabama, hospital last week and found a very small tract hanging on the railing. The little piece of paper had a smiling face on the front, that announced the greeting, “Have A Nice Day.” Inside was the same false doctrine they all teach. The author, who lives in California, informs us that he expects to have a nice day, but the only thing that could ruin it is for the reader to be lost. That would ruin anyone’s nice day! Thus, the author undertook the task of informing people how to be saved and how simple it is not to miss having a “nice day.” His plan is: (1) Answer his (Jesus’) knock, and (2) say, “Come into my heart Lord, and be my Saviour.”

The sectarian world has long been prone to find ways to offend gospel preachers and ridicule sound doctrine regarding God’s plan of salvation. They refer to those who teach hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized, as “five steppers.” They had much rather ridicule it than try to challenge it. To this day, I have never talked to a one of them, or read a one of their little tracts on salvation that did not reject God’s plan of salvation and then turn right around and give one of their own in its place. It never seems to occur to them that every requirement they cite is a “step.” In the little tract, the author’s “steps” are, answering the knock (step one), and repeating the phrase, “Come into my heart Lord, and be my Savior.” Now, why doesn’t that make him a “two stepper”? The first step is

found in Revelation 3:20 and has nothing to do with an alien sinner's response. It was written to Christians in the Laodicean congregation. You cannot find the little phrase in the Bible to save your life. No one ever did such a thing and no one was ever told to do such a thing in order to have past sins forgiven. So where did it come from? And then those people who peddle such false doctrine want us to believe they are conservative, Bible believing, "Christians." They do not even know how to become a Christian. If the author is going to require some statement of the penitent believer, just what is wrong with the one God gave? "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). We are too smart for our own good when our word becomes better than God's.

When I teach faith, repentance, confession and baptism, I can point to a passage of Scripture that requires every one of them (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:16). The false teacher who wrote the tract has not got a drop of Scripture for his "nice day" formula. Men ought to be careful what they make fun of, because God just might be behind it. We ought not to hate such men, but feel sorry for them. They are lost and are causing many more to be lost too. If they only knew the truth their nice day would be full of tears. We do not have to be vengeful, God will take care of it. They are leading millions down the primrose path to hell under the sheep's clothing of cordiality and concern. After all, he just wants you to "Have a nice day." The Bible warns us about such persons and their mannerisms (Rom. 16:17-18).

A long time ago people like this tract's author spread the word that debating was unchristian and sinful, and they refused to enter an honorable public discussion of such topics as the tract addresses. They do not believe it is sinful and wrong nearly as much as they believe that their doctrine would be crushed under the hammer of truth. They learned better than to try and defend it because they lose members every time they do. They will even come up with week-long busy work for their members, in short order to keep them from attending gospel meetings where they know their doctrines will be exposed. They want to remain free to distribute such "stuff" without opposition. If a single voice is raised against it, they put out the word that such a person is contentious and ostracize him in the community and among his brethren. And some of his brethren help them! Well, I raise my voice against it anyway. People are being deceived and lost and I care enough to suffer the consequences of speaking out. Let the man who thinks he can take his Bible and defend it say so. Let us both stand before an intelligent audience and see what is right. It is much easier to drop a tract and flee, is it not? The doctrine cannot be defended and the devil has not made a man yet who can do it. I do not think there is one in my neck of the woods who will try it.

You do what God says instead of men, and you will have a nice day and an even better eternity.

Route 3, Box 882 Somerville, AL 35670

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

Denton Lectures

The **Eighth Annual Denton Lectures** are scheduled for November 12-16, 1989, at the Pearl Street Church of Christ building at 312 Pearl Street, Denton, Texas 76201.

A wide variety of material from 2 *Corinthians* will be covered in 35 lectures by 35 speakers from all parts of the nation. A lectureship book of approximately 500 pages is being printed. Limited housing in the homes of local Christians is available. Hookups are available by advance registration.

For further information write to: Church of Christ, 312 Pearl Street, Denton, TX 76201, or phone: (817) 387-3531.

Free Bible Correspondence Course

A **Free Bible Correspondence Course** may be yours just for the asking! Lesson One of this non-denominational Bible study course will be sent to you by mail for your inspection. All you need to study and complete the course is your own Bible. You may complete the Bible study course at your own speed in the privacy of your own home. Following your returning the last lesson, you will receive a beautiful **certificate of completion**. The Bellview Church of Christ sends the Bible Correspondence Course to all those who ask for it and **there is never any charge**. Should you wish to receive Lesson One, simply send your request to this address:

Bible Correspondence Course
% Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32526

A Critique Of *How Christianity Grows In The City*

In 1985, over 15,000 copies of *How Christianity Grows In The City* were mailed to churches of Christ. In it was espoused a humanly-devised plan of church organization and evangelism. The book, outlining a modified Roman Catholic plan of organization with a Crossroads plan of evangelism, was dedicated to the infamous Boston Church of Christ holding them up as a "model to all the believers."

In response, brother Wayne Coats has written *A Critique of "How Christianity Grows In The City."* In an effort to inform brethren as to the true nature of the Crossroads/Boston movement, this much needed volume (235 pages) is now available in lots of 12 or more for only \$1.00 per copy (plus \$2.50 postage per dozen).

Orders must be for at least 12 copies. For orders above 12 copies, add .20 per copy for postage. Send orders to:

Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Road
Pensacola, Florida 32506.

1990 Bellview Lectures

"What Does God Authorize In Worship?"

May 9-13, 1990
Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Road
Pensacola, Florida 32526

Address Changes

Thanks to all who are so good to send in their address changes. By so doing, you save us the expense of postal department charges. Each week, we pay several dollars in postage for returned mail because of people changing address without notifying us.

May we suggest that when your address changes you:

1. Notify us in advance of the change.
2. Be sure to tell us the date the change becomes effective.
3. Include your old address and zip code (necessary for our computerized mailing program).
Sometimes people will send in a new address but will not include their old address. Please include BOTH.
4. Simply drop us a note or use one of the change of address forms provided by the post office.
5. Should you not desire to receive our publication(s), a note stating such will suffice. Please be sure to include your complete address.

We are happy to send out *Beacon*, *Defender*, and *Far East/World Evangelism* free of charge. Your help in keeping our mailing expenses down is very much appreciated.

Jackson-wade Debate

Speakers

Roger Jackson, Somerville Alabama

Ronny Wade, Springfield, Missouri

At

Sandusky Church of Christ building

Birmingham, Alabama

November 22-25, 1989, 7:00 P.M. Nightly

Topics

Nov. 22-23, Wade affirms use of one cup (drinking vessel) in the Lord's supper.

Nov. 24-25, Jackson affirms teaching by Bible classes, some of which may be taught by women.

The Bible Takes the Back Seat

Steve Gunter

Recent headlines atop the religious page of the nation's daily papers announced the "Bible's Place" as resolved by delegates of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in assembly convened. It seems a member of the denomination (see 1 Corinthians 1:10 wherein all such division is condemned) had the audacity to propose a resolution which affirmed the Bible as "the highest authority" in matters of faith and worship.

The "Rev." John Walker (who seems not to know the inspired injunction of Psalm 111:9, nor the words of Christ, recorded in Matthew 23:9: "Call no **man** your Father," which oppose the use of religious titles) says, "I prefer not to place the Bible before Jesus Christ." That being the case, surely Johnny Walker will place the Word of God exactly where Christ has commanded him to put it. The Savior said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth**" (John 17:17).

The Disciples long ago abandoned the authority of Scripture. They place preeminence in the reason of men, the experiences of flesh, and their own parochial traditions against the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Jesus warns all men, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat. 15:9).

Scripture never takes the back seat in our work and worship for the Lord. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) remains the marching order of faithful Christian soldiers today.

1202 Royal Drive Bentonville, AR 72712

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" (Psa. 119:33-36).

DEFENDER

Volume XVIII

November 1989

Number 11

The Third Missionary Trip

Ray W. Peters

Southeast Asia is a section of the world where nearly 3 billion people live! That is mind boggling! It is a part of the world where it is difficult to “be alone” because of the population. The 3 billion are not just numbers, they are souls. Most of the countries in this part of the world (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.) are considered Third World countries; that is, countries that are not economically developed. Hence, they are not as materialistically minded and more open to the Truth. The only big obstacle is in the countries where they are mainly Muslim, and there we have to just strengthen the brethren so they can teach the Muslims. The apostle Paul stated, “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries” (1 Cor. 16:9). This is the way I feel about my work in Southeast Asia.

This past May-August I made my third mission trip into the Southeast Asia area. I had been on lectureships in Singapore and the Philippines in 1986 and 1987. It was on my first trip to the Philippines and Singapore in 1986 that I fell in love with the people and my “eyes were opened” that I saw the “door and effectual” that was truly “open.” I decided then, after much prayer and consideration, to give myself to the work in that part of the world. So, in April of 1987 I started working toward raising funds for my family and me to engage in this work full time. I moved my family to Pensacola, my home town, to use that as my home base. My first trip over was for a month, June, 1988, and this year I have made two trips, January-March, and May-August. Therefore, I have now made three missionary trips.

Before I get into what was accomplished on this last missionary trip, I want to address the question, “Why not move over there and save the money that is spent going back and forth?” This is in the mind of many brethren and needs to be answered. This is best answered by a statement made by a Chinese brother, who is a dentist, in Klang, Malaysia, when he said, “We do not want you Americans coming over here to **do the work for us. Just teach and encourage us** and we will do the work.” That brethren, is in sum and substance, what I try to do. I go two times a year, maybe one time depending on the situation, for two or three months at a time to strengthen and train the brethren. There are other brethren who have found that this approach is most advantageous. For example, the Panama work supported by Forest Park in Valdosta, Georgia, has three men doing what I am doing. That is not to say that it is not good to have a family or two to move and live in a place on location, but I am saying that there is a need and a place for the task I am trying to accomplish. When back in the States, I travel reporting about the work and trying to draw attention to the needs and opportunities in Southeast Asia. Plus, I raise funds for some opportunities that need to be met, which could not be done if I stayed over there full time. Many of the brethren **assume** many things about mission work. They assume that we have thousands of missionaries from the U.S. In reality, if we are generous in counting “liberals” and “antis,” there are only 450 on foreign soil. I point this out and try and encourage the young people to think about being missionaries. If they want to be a chemical engineer, fine, but go into Southeast Asia, and live for 3-5 years and do mission work. That is what Judy and Don Waggoner have done for 9 years in Indonesia and they have done a tremendous work! I believe it is vital to inform brethren of the needs and opportunities in the mission field and that is what I try and do when I am back in the States. I report to the congregations that support me and to my sponsoring congregation, Cartersville, Georgia, which also has a big part in helping me financially. What better way to illustrate what I do than to tell you about my last mission trip.

It was on May 22 that I, along with Bobby Liddell, left Pensacola for Manila, Philippines. We arrived on May

24, after losing a day in crossing the International Date line, and started a joint Gospel Meeting at Metro Manila congregation in Quexon City. We each took turns speaking and then had a question and answer period. The crowds and interest were very good. The meeting lasted until Sunday, May 28. Then from Tuesday, May 30, through Friday, June 2, the Second Annual Manila Lectureship was held in the Admiral Hotel. The attendance averaged around 140 in number. It was very good lectureship that met some issues head on and went a long way to correcting and answering some problems. There were several Philippino brethren on the program who did a masterful job in preaching. The fellowship and comraderie during the lectures is something to behold and is a big part of what is sought to be accomplished.

The Philippines is an area that seems to have been abandoned by faithful brethren and hence many of the false brethren, i.e., Crossroads/ Boston, have flooded into the area. The lectureships held there the last couple of years have opened the eyes of many of the brethren and encouraged the others to "Stand Fast." Manuel Pelayo was the host and did a good job.

The entourage of Ira Y. Rice, Dub McClish, Eddie Whitten, Shan Jackson, Bobby Liddell, Ashgar Ali (from Pakistan), Edward Lee Davis, and myself, flew to Singapore, June 3. Landing at the beautiful Changi Airport and being greeted by Eddie Ee, David Chew, Philip Tang, and Baby Tan, was very enjoyable. The lectureship was conducted at the Jurong church building, where Eddie Ee is the preacher, from June 4-8. The lectureship, the theme of which was "Lessons From I Timothy" was a tremendous success. This was the First Annual Four Seas College Lectureship. David Chew, president of Four Seas College, was the coordinator and handled the task well. The crowds and interest were better than expected, especially during the day sessions. It was on June 10 that most of the group left for Hong Kong and the New Territories area. Dub McClish stayed behind for a Meeting in Singapore and Eddie Whitten went up into Malaysia to preach. I stayed behind to begin my teaching at Four Seas College.

Four Seas College of Bible and Missions was started by Ira Y. Rice Jr. in 1965 in order to train men in Southeast Asia area to go and evangelize that area of the world. It has turned out over a hundred preachers, who have gone from its walls and preached in areas Americans could not go. The school has had, and continues to have, a tremendous impact on the spread of the Gospel in Southeast Asia. A couple of cases to illustrate: every member of the faculty in the Bible College in Indonesia, started by my good friend Barry Hatcher, is a graduate of Four Seas Bible College. Ashgar Ali, whom we mentioned earlier; and who has worked for twenty years in Pakistan, was one of the first graduates. He has taught many Muslims whom we could not approach.

I taught three courses, from June 12 to August 4, in the Four Seas College: Ethics, Hermeneutics, and Apologetics. During this time I also made trips into Malaysia and Indonesia to preach in Gospel Meetings. The weekend of July 21-23, I went by train, a six hour trip, to Malacca, Malaysia and preached and encouraged the brethren. The location where the brethren meet is right next to a Muslim Mosque and I had to preach over the chants coming through a loud speaker. The dates of August 5-9 found me in Indonesia. Barry Hatcher and I left by train very early on Sunday, August 6 and spent the day preaching and teaching in Bandung, Indonesia. Bandung is up in the mountains and is a three hour ride. A question and answer period, which we have found is one of the best methods in teaching there, was conducted that afternoon for two hours. We returned to Jakarta and conducted a Gospel Meeting and question and answer period at Bekasi, on the edge of Jakarta, on Monday and Tuesday nights, August 7-8. The congregation there is only two years old and was started by Tommy Sihombing. There was a problem in the area of the "preacher and his work" and the congregations relationship to the preacher. Just recently I received Barry Hatcher's newsletter and he reported that Tommy had called and that he and the whole congregation had repented of the problem. Praise God for the power of His Word! That illustrates well the attitude of the brethren there and the work that can be done.

I was back in Singapore for one day before traveling back into Malaysia by train. This time I went to Klang, Malaysia, August 11-13 for a Gospel Meeting. The congregation in Klang is large by Southeast Asia standards, being about 150 in attendance. It is a very lively and dedicated group of Christians and the singing is beautiful. The building there houses an extension of the Memphis School of Preaching. While there I was asked to perform a wedding ceremony for a Chinese couple, which I did. I left Singapore on August 15 and arrived home on August 15 (I gained the day I had lost on the trip over).

My work has previously included the Samoan Islands and work in Baguio City, Philippines. There are many opportunities and needs that to be met. There are trips that are planned for next year, but at the present I am traveling

around the States reporting and raising money for further work in Southeast Asia. A group is being assembled to go to Singapore and Hong Kong the latter part of June, 1990. If you desire to know more about it please write me at:

Ray Peters
4852 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526

This paper is called the *Defender* and has been “set for the defense of the Gospel” through the years. We need to be “set for the defense” of the Truth, to keep it pure, but then we need to take that “pure Gospel” to a world lost in sin.

Therefore, let each of us be “set to take the Gospel to the whole world” and good brethren, Southeast Asia, with its 3 billion people is a “big part” of the world! May the Lord help us to “lift up our eyes unto the fields” of Southeast Asia and enter the “doors of opportunity” that are opened. While it is true that there are areas in the States that need to be evangelized (and we are not saying they, or any other area, should not be) but in these Third World countries of Southeast Asia, the situation of worldliness and indifference is not the obstacle that it is in the U.S. I covet your prayers and help in this great task.

4852 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, Florida 32526

Forgiven

Bobby Liddell

“Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Rom. 4:7).

Forgiveness dries the bitter tears of the soul so wracked by sin. It lifts the burdens from the heart bowed down with sorrow. It brings peace to the inner man whose distress seemed to know no bounds. The forgiven one walks on the higher plane far above the depths of depravity where once he struggled. From the deepest darkness forgiveness brings the brightest light. Separation is replaced by family and fellowship. Hope supplants despair. From death springs forth one alive again. The sweet sleep of security displaces the tossing and turning of trouble and dread for the one forgiven in Christ fears neither death nor Christ’s coming. Yes, “Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”

Forgiveness means that those sins forgiven are forgotten forever. God will never bring them to mind again: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12).

The forgiven man may recoil at the thought of his sinful past. His heart may quicken and his brow furrow to think of his former rebellion and the resultant undone and doomed condition. Thoughts of the eternal destiny that was his then makes him shudder, but he rejoices when he realizes that he is *forgiven* and that, unlike himself, God will never bring those sins to remembrance again.

As one who has stood atop the snow covered peaks to view the beauty of God’s earth below and breathe the cool clear air knows that which others know not, so the man forgiven of his sins knows the beauty and blessing which those content to live in sin can never know. Sad, indeed, is the case of those who do not even realize that there is a better life—the forgiven life now and eternally.

Is there any man who can not be forgiven? Yes. There are men who can never be forgiven. Those who will not turn from sin and submit themselves to the Living God can never be forgiven. Those who reject Christ and his way can never be forgiven. Those who would rather enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season and face eternity unprepared can never be forgiven. One says, “Well, they can turn from sin and Satan’s service and seek forgiveness in accordance with God’s will and God *will* forgive them.” Yes, but *until* and *unless* they do so, they can *never* be forgiven.

Consider the foolish souls who forfeit forgiveness. The man too proud to say, “I have sinned.” The one who thinks time will take care of transgression. The young person who intends to do right “someday.” The older person who, now unfaithful, rests on having done right at some distant time in the past. The deluded soul who thinks God’s love promises salvation even to the disobedient and rebellious. The man who worships and serves according to the decrees and doctrines of men. The one who refuses baptism claiming salvation some other way. The man who bows

before an image made by hands of men. The church “member” converted to a doctrine or a practice, but not to Christ. How foolish to forfeit forgiveness.

Almost two thousand years ago, Jesus told a man sick of the palsy, “be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mat. 9:2). Today, he offers to man, sin-sick and soul-weary, the healing, cleansing and burden lifting blessing of forgiveness. Seek forgiveness according to God’s way, then, you too can “be of good cheer.” Like the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) and the Philippian jailor (Acts 16), you can go on your way rejoicing—**forgiven!**

BELLVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST ANNOUNCES:

Bellview Lectures

The **Fifteenth Annual Bellview Lectures** are scheduled for May 9-13, 1990, at the Bellview Church of Christ building at 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, Florida 32526. Lectures are nightly Wednesday through Sunday at 7:00 P.M., Thursday through Saturday all day beginning at 9:00 A.M., and Sunday at 9:00 A.M.

The theme for the 1990 lectures is “*What Does God Authorize in Worship?*” Thirty lectures will be given by sound capable men from all parts of the nation. Hear lectures on “Ascertaining Bible Authority For Acceptable Worship”; “Has God Authorized Different Roles For Men And For Women In Christian Worship?”; “Should Our Desire Be To Worship God Or To Entertain Men?”; “Attitudes Toward Worship In The Book Of Acts”; “The Restoration Of Worship According To God’s Pattern”; “Is It Possible For A Christian To Worship Acceptably With Or In A Denomination?”; “The History And Growth Of Satan Worship”, and other notable topics.

Audio and video tapes and a hardbound lectureship book of approximately 320 pages will be available. Limited housing will be provided in the homes of local Christians. Hookups are available by advance registration.

“Miracle Workers” an Example of a Lack of Faith

Weldon Langfield

While watching a television evangelist on a local station performing so-called “healings,” it was interesting to note how he stressed belief. He must have mentioned the word “faith” and its vital role in his perceived healing process every thirty seconds. Clearly, he portrayed it as the most important factor in healing. As the afflicted in the audience one by one closed their eyes while engaging in what appeared to be ecstatic mumbling, this supposed “miracle worker” touched their foreheads and they, seemingly cured of their afflictions, fell into the hands of attendants.

Another nationally known TV preacher in a broadcast stressed faith as the key to wealth. He advised his audience that, upon seeing a desirable house or piece of business property, they were by faith to “station angels at each corner of the building” to preserve it until an offer could be made.

It seems like every time we see or hear one of these characters, they are stressing “faith” as a panacea. Belief is certainly important to the Christian life. The writer of Hebrews indicated, “Without faith it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6). Yet, ironically, the charismatics who emphasize faith severely lack faith themselves. Let’s consider some areas in which a lack of faith on the part of such “miracle workers” is evident.

They Lack Faith in the Bible Teachings Concerning the Purpose of Miracles

The Word of God clearly teaches that miracles had a specific function: to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20). Jesus Christ, the apostles and early preachers delivered the truth orally—it was not then distilled into the New Testament. In order to set them apart from false teachers and philosophers declaring various theories, God put the divine stamp of approval on their messages by enabling these early preachers to work supernatural feats.

Nicodemus recognized this principle when he declared that Christ’s miracle working was evidence of His divinity (John 3:2). The written record of these events still confirms the word today. John said of the recorded accounts of the signs of Christ, “these are written, that ye might believe” (John 20:31). Yet, when charismatics reject the truth that miracles confirm the Word, they reject the miracles of the Bible. Every time a Pentecostal works a so-called miracle, he is saying two things. First, he declares, “I don’t have faith in the Bible teaching that miracles were simply a tool of the early church to confirm the word.” Second, he says, “I don’t believe the record of miracles in the Bible is sufficient to confirm the Word of God today.” What a lack of faith!

They Lack Faith in the Bible in General

While many charismatics believe that Christ is God's son, they in many ways ruthlessly reject Bible teachings. Pentecostal-type preachers allow themselves to be guided by subjective feelings which they believe to be the Holy Spirit. The result is that the words **known** to be those of the Spirit, words "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), are rejected when conflicting with these feelings. The Bible plainly teaches women are not to be preachers (1 Cor. 14:34), yet many Pentecostals feel that certain women are "called to preach." That Bible teaching is cast aside. The Bible teaches that all fund raising for the church is to be through freewill contributions (1 Cor. 16:2). Many charismatics believe that just about any way to get money for religious purposes is acceptable. That Bible teaching is cast aside. The Bible teaches Christ's church is to be organized with elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:4-9). Pentecostals feel that local churches being under "pastors," who themselves report to a denominational council, is acceptable. Thus, that Bible teaching is thrust aside. On and on we could go. If every passage of scripture which these "purveyors of faith" have chosen not to believe in were "penknifed" out of the New Testament, very little of the sacred message would be left.

They Lack Faith in Their Own Power

New Testament healers were not afraid of circumstances which openly tested their ability. Christ's raising Lazarus (John 11:43), and Peter's healing of the lame beggar at the temple gate (Acts 3:4-10) are examples. On the other hand, the modern faith healer will do almost anything to avoid a situation in which he may have to perform a "miracle" in a verifiable way. Additionally, if a "miracle worker" fails to bring about a supposed change in one's health, he upbraids the poor soul for lacking belief.

Faith healers have consistently refused to go to hospitals or cemeteries to ply their trade. If God has actually blessed them with healing ability, where could it better be used to serve mankind than in a hospital? Oral Roberts' construction of a massive medical facility is nothing less than a tacit admission that his "gift" is at best very incomplete and limited. The early healers--the real ones--had no such limitations. Those who came to Peter, "were healed everyone" (Acts 5:16). Clearly faith healers have deep-seated doubts about their own supposedly miraculous abilities. They even lack faith in themselves.

CONCLUSION

Let's avoid the errors of these self-deceived "miracle workers" by first realizing the New Testament is God's final revelation. God "hath spoken in these last days by his son" (Heb. 1:2). Second, let's accept the fact that all of the words of God are authoritative. "Every word" (Mat. 4:4) carries the divine imprimatur. Finally, let's rejoice in the absoluteness of a complete revelation. The finality of the Bible is not a divine handcuff stifling spiritual freedom; it is "an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19). We can always know where we stand, what is expected of us and what our future will be by studying its pages. In so doing, we will develop faith (Rom. 10:17); faith that the so-called "healers" severely lack.

1000 Highland Road Brentwood, Tennessee 37027

Free Bible Correspondence Course

A **Free Bible Correspondence Course** may be yours just for the asking! Lesson One of this non-denominational Bible study course will be sent to you by mail for your inspection. All you need to study and complete the course is your own Bible.

You may complete the Bible study course at your own speed in the privacy of your own home. Following your returning the last lesson, you will receive a beautiful **certificate of completion**. The Bellview Church of Christ sends the Bible Correspondence Course to all those who ask for it and **there is never any charge**. Should you wish to receive Lesson One, simply send your request to this address:

Bible Correspondence Course
% Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, Florida 32526

The Value of Wisdom

Shan Jackson

Someone has truly said, “We are living in an age of indifference, weak conviction, and apathy as distinguished from belief, truth, and established views.” To this, we must agree. The most popular stance today for our so called “Thinkers” is that of Agnosticism. The word itself is significant. Agnosticism is the Greek equivalent to the Latin word of ignorance. A Greek agnostic would therefore, in plain Latin, be an *ignoramus*. Such is a fitting description indeed.

Some people in our society seem to place a high value on ignorance. A famous agnostic writer of a generation past once said, “We know nothing, not even that we know nothing.” That is not the scriptural view. Solomon, for instance, did not say it was impossible to know, nor of little value to know. He never ridiculed wisdom, rather, he charged us to get it. “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget *it* not” (Pro. 4:5). “Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Pro. 4:7).

Wisdom is a very valuable thing and we should esteem it as so. Wisdom is also attainable. It is seldom as easily attainable as some would like to think it can be had. Wisdom is to be striven for, searched for, and sought for. “With all thy getting get understanding.” “Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pro. 23:23). Buy it at any cost and once received, never allow its escape. My friends, it is possible to have knowledge of spiritual things. Spiritual knowledge and understanding is not an unattainable thing as some would have us believe.

“The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Pro. 1:7). We, as his children, can know the Father. Man has a faculty, a spiritual sense, that relates him to God and makes God knowable. Just as a scientist can turn a spectroscope toward a heavenly body and find traces of nitrogen or sodium, so can man turn his heart toward God and find oceans of love and concern. Maybe, we cannot truly comprehend the greatness of the Father, but our hearts and minds can apprehend his majesty in spirit and in truth.

The attaining of wisdom is a primary duty. We are to use every means to this end. We are to study. We are to seek. We are to buy. We are to ask. Often, asking is the last thing we think of when, in reality, it should be the first. Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Mat. 7:7). Also, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jam. 1:5).

Wisdom is the main thing and yet how little attention people often give and how ‘little effort they often put forth to obtain it. Once, Diogenes was discoursing of virtue and philosophy when he noticed that no one was listening. Abruptly, he fell into singing a comic song. To his anguish, at this singing the crowds gathered round to listen. Instantly, he stopped, exclaiming, “How much more is folly admired than wisdom.” Such is too evident today as well. “The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun” (Ecc. 1:9).

Let us esteem wisdom as we should. “The fear of the Lord” is still “the beginning of wisdom.” Let us bow down at his mercy seat and pray God for an understanding heart. God is never far from any of us and is always near to all of us. “The kingdom of God is within you.” We cannot take into our lungs all of the atmosphere, but we can take enough in to sustain our existence. We cannot drink the oceans dry in one swallow, but we can “drink of the waters of life freely.” “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psa. 42:1).

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, Texas 77465

Address Changes

May we suggest that when your address changes you:

1. Notify us in advance of the change.
2. Note the effective date.
3. Include old address and zip code.

Jackson-wade Debate

A debate between Roger Jackson, Somerville Alabama, and Ronny Wade, Springfield, Missouri, will be conducted at Sandusky Church of Christ building, Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 22-25, 1989, 7:00 P.M. nightly.

Nov. 22-23, Wade affirms: "The Scriptures teach that a congregation of the church of Christ, for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine."

Nov. 24-25, Jackson affirms: "The Bible teaches that a congregation of the church of Christ may teach the Bible by arranging into Bible classes, some of which may be taught by women."

Correspondence

"Please use the balance ...to help pay for the paper DEFENDER which I prize highly. It is so encouraging to read something so truthful and positive."

Orvin W. Conner, Vinita, OR

"Thank you so much for sending the DEFENDER. Can't hardly wait for the next copy. I always hand them on to other of the church ...Keep up the good writings."

Grace Jones, Salem, IL

"I appreciate your efforts to spread God's word and I look forward to receiving DEFENDER on a regular basis."

Jonathan S. Lovelady, Crossville, TN

"Keep up the good work and may God bless you."

Gus Munden, Fallon, NV

"I have enjoyed the DEFENDER I have been getting from the church. I enjoy reading them."

Earlean Thomas, Woodbury, TN