

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

"WHY SLEEP YE?" (LUKE 22:46)

David B. Watson

It is my assignment to deal with the great New Testament question: "Why sleep ye?" (Luke 22:46). According to *Webster's Dictionary*, *sleep* (as a noun) can mean: "any state of inactivity thought of as like sleep, as death, unconsciousness, hibernation, etc." The same source says that *sleep* (as a verb) can mean: "to be in state of inactivity like sleep, as that of death, quiescence, hibernation, inattention, etc." The title to my lesson is taken from the text of scripture found in Luke 22:39-46:

And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

THE CONGRESS IS SLEEPING

On Thursday February 12, 2004, United States Senator Zell Miller (D-GA) delivered a twelve-minute speech on the floor of the Senate concerning a "Deficit of Decency" in America. He quoted from the Old Testament prophet Amos concerning a famine in the land:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will

send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it (8:11-12).

He also quoted from "Arnold Toynbee who wrote the acclaimed 12 volume, *A Study of History*, saying that: "Of the 22 civilizations that have appeared in history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today." Miller then pointed out that:

Toynbee died in 1975, before seeing the worst that was yet to come. Yes, Arnold Toynbee saw the famine. The "famine of hearing the words of the Lord." Whether it is removing a display of the Ten Commandments from a Courthouse or the Nativity Scene from a city square. Whether it is eliminating prayer in schools or eliminating "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Whether it is making a mockery of the sacred institution of marriage between a man and woman or, yes, telecasting around the world made-in-the-USA filth masquerading as entertainment.

THE STINK

He asked: "How many of you have ever run over a skunk with your car? I have many times, and I can tell you, the stink stays around for a long time." He next stated: "So the scent of this event [The Super Bowl half-time show] will long linger in the nostrils of America." He went on to challenge Congress, saying:

The desire and will of this Congress to meaningfully do anything about any of these so-called social issues is non-existent and embarrassingly disgraceful.

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
jbrow@charter.net

Michael Light, Assistant Editor
mclight@bwoodtx.com

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published monthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...

MAC AND ROY DEAVER ON THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

MAC DEAVER DECLARES HIMSELF ON THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In his 2004 special issue of *Biblical Notes Quarterly* (hereafter *BNQ*), Mac Deaver (hereafter M. Deaver) wrote:

The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 entails two elements: water and Spirit. It is no more rightly described as two baptisms than being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit would correctly be described as being baptized into fellowship with three gods (pages 14, 15).

In continuing with the same idea as set out in the preceding quote M. Deaver also wrote,

But Jesus' authorized baptism would be different from John's in that something **in addition** to water would be the element! And if you did not receive the Lord's baptism that was to come that was to be distinguishable from John's, then you would receive fire that was to come...the very thing that was to distinguish the Lord's authorized baptism from John's baptism was that there was something about it that was more than the element of water. That something was another element, the Holy Spirit. That element would be in its function what the water element was in its function (page 15; Bolded words are M. Deaver's—Editor).

M. Deaver concludes with: "if the New Testament does teach that those who become Christians are baptized in water and in Spirit" then the following is the case: "Baptism in the Spirit (since all Christians are baptized in water and Spirit **without** any miraculous element, but **with** supernatural non-miraculous help (Acts 2:38; Acts 5:32; I Thessalonians 4:8; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Philippians 1:19; Ephesians 3:14-21)" [Bolded words are M. Deaver's—Editor].

ROY C. DEAVER DECLARES HIS POSITION ON THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In 1974 Roy C. Deaver (hereafter R. Deaver) wrote the following material in *The Spiritual Sword* under the title of "Water Baptism – Not Holy Spirit – Is The One Baptism", Ed. **Thomas B. Warren** [hereafter Warren] (Vol. 5, No. 3, April, 1974), pp. 29-33). Near the end of his article R. Deaver wrote:

...If the baptism of the Great Commission is baptism in water, and if water baptism is to be preached and practiced till the end of time, and if there is ONE baptism – then it is abundantly clear that there is no such thing

today as Holy Spirit baptism....

...If it is the case that there is ONE baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism, and if it is the case that the baptism of the Great Commission is for all time – from Pentecost of Acts 2 to the end of time – then (1) it is the case that the one baptism (of Eph. 4:5) is WATER baptism, and (2) **it is the case that there is now no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism** (Bold mine—DPB).

In the January 28, 1986 issue of the *Firm Foundation*, Vol. 103, No. 2, pages 1, 4 and 5 R. Deaver wrote an article entitled “The Right Baptism.” On page 4 he wrote the following regarding Holy Spirit baptism.

...II. Second, let us consider the right element of baptism. There are many who claim that the baptism by which one is saved in (sic) Holy Spirit baptism. It is certainly true that in the early days of New Testament Christianity there was such a thing as Holy Spirit baptism. In fact, we have two recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism—one in Acts 2, relating to the apostles, and one in Acts 10, relating to Cornelius and his household. Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2 was designed to convince the Jews that the Jewish dispensation was past, and the Jews (as well as Gentiles) were obligated to obey the gospel of the Christ. Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 was designed to convince the Gentiles that the Patriarchal dispensation was over, and that Gentiles (as well as Jews) were obligated to obey the gospel of Christ.

May we note here these certain facts about Holy Spirit baptism. (1) It was promised by the Lord to the apostles (John 14; John 16; Mark 16:17-20; Acts 1:5). (2) In fulfillment of prophecy, it was given to Jews (that is, to the apostles) in Acts 2, and to Gentiles in Acts 10. (3) Only the Lord himself—not men—could administer Holy Spirit baptism (Cf. Mat. 3:11). (4) It had nothing to do with remission of alien sins (one’s salvation). The Holy Spirit, in baptismal form, did not come upon Cornelius and his household to save them. (5) Holy Spirit baptism related to the miraculous element characteristic of the early church, and never did have anything to do with man’s salvation from sin.

Following the preceding quotes from the *Firm Foundation* article about Holy Spirit baptism, R. Deaver declared: “The baptism by which one is saved is the baptism of the Great Commission.” Also, after several comments regarding the baptism of the Great Commission and citing Paul’s statement that there is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5), R. Deaver concluded with, “If there is now any such thing as Holy Spirit baptism, and if there is now water baptism, then there are two baptisms. But, Paul declares that there is one baptism!”

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GUIDED BY THE SAME SPIRIT?

At different times and on different occasions M. Deaver has stated that R. Deaver and Warren believed the Holy Spirit personally, directly and immediately dwells in and directly operates on the inward man (heart, spirit) of the Christian. M. Deaver states that this must happen to the Christian's inward man for the purpose of directly imparting divine strength to the Christian to aid him/her in resisting temptation, to infuse direct divine wisdom into the Christian's mind and to create the component parts of the singular fruit of the Spirit. If what M. Deaver reports is true concerning Warren and R. Deaver, may we not rightfully conclude that these two brethren had direct divine help in the formation of their beliefs whatever they may have been? *And, that being the case, should not Warren, R. Deaver and M. Deaver be speaking the same things on Holy Spirit Baptism?*

THE LATE THOMAS B. WARREN AND HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

In the August 2002 issue of *CFTF*, pages 17-20, we pointed out from charts, drawn by Warren for **David Lipe** in his debate with the United Pentecostal Church's preacher **Billy Lewis**, what he (Warren) believed about Holy Spirit baptism. Warren's position was exactly the same as R. Deaver's position on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, Warren and R. Deaver differ from M. Deaver on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Warren and R. Deaver declare that Holy Spirit Baptism had ceased by A. D. 62. Mac says it continues on in a non-miraculous format.

Now if Warren, R. Deaver and M. Deaver receive direct divine guidance, wisdom and strength from the personal indwelling and direct work of the Spirit on their spirits, then why the discrepancies in Warren and R. Deaver's views on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit from those of M. Deaver on the same baptism? Is the Holy Spirit divided? And, please remember if what M. Deaver stated about Warren and R. Deaver is true regarding their belief in the personal direct indwelling and direct work of the Holy Spirit to do the things to the inward man of the Christian that we have previously listed, then why did not Warren and R. Deaver attain to the knowledge concerning Holy Spirit Baptism to which the Spirit has directly led M. Deaver long before (pre-1994) M. Deaver embraced their doctrine?

Please remember M. Deaver is advocating a direct work of the Holy Spirit on the

inward man of the Christian because, he declares, it fills a void that exists in the Christian's life. He declares that without such an indwelling and direct work the Christian is at least weakened and at worse killed spiritually. Thus, this alleged work of the Spirit on the Christian's inward man is a very practical work of the Spirit involving every second, minute, hour, day, week, month and year of the Christian's life. Hence, those who have such direct divine influence from the Holy Spirit on their spirit, heart or inward man must evidence such by the fruit born out in them—in their beliefs, decisions and activities. But, in the case of Warren, R. Deaver and M. Deaver regarding Holy Spirit Baptism there is division—M. Deaver versus Warren and R. Deaver's views as to what the Bible teaches on Holy Spirit Baptism. Therefore, whatever the Holy Spirit was doing directly to the spirit of Warren's and R. Deaver concerning answering their prayers to help them better understand the scriptures relative to what they teach concerning Holy Spirit baptism, they did not receive it, it was not supplied to them, or (and surely this would not be the case), they ignored it. But M. Deaver (a Johnny-come-lately to the long held belief of Warren and R. Deaver) received it.

THE PROOF OF THE PROPOSITION IS IN ITS DEMONSTRATION

The proof of M. Deaver's proposition is in its demonstration. And, in the case of Warren, R. Deaver and M. Deaver relative to their differing beliefs on Holy Spirit Baptism, such a demonstration is woefully lacking. In fact, in practical day-to-day Christian living when all is said and done by M. Deaver in advocating and defending his doctrine, he has no more to offer in practical demonstration of his direct power, wisdom, and strength he claims to have from the Holy Spirit's personal indwelling and direct work on his heart than do those who deny his position.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN LIVING

Men and women seeking to find and please the God of the Bible must be willing to follow the messages contained therein. Although dealing with brotherhood issues and false doctrines is necessary and commendable, teaching the wonderful plan through which God saves men must not be neglected (Jude 3; Romans 1:16). We would call upon all men everywhere to search the scriptures pertaining to the subject of salvation (Acts 17:11).

The Bible is completely sufficient to direct man from earth to heaven (II Timothy 3:16, 17). The Book of books instructs us pertaining to the manner in which we become Christians. We are to: (1) Hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), (2) Believe the message (John 3:16; 8:24), (3) Repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), (4) Confess faith in Christ (Romans 10:10), (5) Be baptized (Acts 2:38).

After our conversion to Christ we are to remain faithful. In I Corinthians 15:58 we read, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”** Unfortunately, Satan has been successful in convincing many in the religious world that it is impossible to fall from grace. This doctrine is patently false. Notice Romans 11:22, **“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”** This passage clearly sets forth a condition for receiving God’s goodness. They were to continue in God’s goodness; I Corinthians 15:58.

A similar passage found in Galatians 5:4 states, **“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”** This passage specifically teaches that one can fall from grace. We could read the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation, noting the warnings from the Lord to the churches of Asia and the threats to remove their candlesticks. Most of these congregations were in danger of apostatizing (falling away).

There are some 2,500 warnings in the Bible

against falling away. But the above should be sufficient to show that it is indeed possible. The remainder of our space shall be used noting what the Bible teaches in regard to the need to remain faithful. I truly believe that faithful Christian living is the greatest and most challenging life a person can live. The New Testament puts many duties before the child of God.

God expects us to grow in knowledge of his word. We cannot be satisfied with what we know at the time of our conversion. Unfortunately, there are some members of the Lord’s body, who never mature beyond their teenage years, spiritually speaking. It is a shame and a disgrace to grow old and yet remain ignorant of the basic tenants of the Bible. God expects us to move from the milk of the word to the meat of the word. He also expects us to grow in such a way as to be able to teach others the saving gospel of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:12).

We must develop, and cultivate, a mindset that strives to serve the Lord every day. In Philippians 3:13f the Apostle Paul writes, **“Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended... and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”** We can never become complacent. Many live as if they are totally satisfied with where they are in their spiritual development. If we are unwilling to be actively involved in the work of the church, we are not living the faithful life. The parable of the talents should remind us that God will not accept us if we do not use our abilities in his service. Let us not forget that Jesus taught us to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (Matthew 22:37).

We should have Christ reigning on the throne of our hearts. Philippians 1:21 states, **“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** We must live a Christ-centered life. As we read Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, this point is stressed repeatedly by Jesus. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). In fact, as he sums up this point, in verse sixteen he concludes, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they**

may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.” This verse sets out a great truth concerning the Christian life. Our lives are on display before all men with whom we have contact. We should be living in such a way that men will notice something different about us (they should see Christ living in us) and give God the glory.

Living faithfully also includes a recognition of our responsibility to stand firm for the truth. There is a great aversion in our day to opposing people’s religious views. Our culture is saturated with the “It’s not what’s right, it’s what’s right for you” mentality. There are more than a few who really seem to think there is no right way, therefore, it really does not matter what you believe. For many years there has been a growing number in the Lord’s church who have gravitated to this same philosophy. It has been years in some places since the preacher mounted the pulpit and opposed a false religious idea. Each and every individual member has an obligation to contend for the faith (Jude 3). We are taught to search the scriptures to make sure that what we are being taught (and believe) is indeed true (Acts 17:11). We are to try (test) the spirits (teachers), because many false teachers have gone out into the world (I John 4:1).

Sometimes we will hear some brother or sister bemoaning the marking of a false teacher or congregation as being mean spirited or unchristian. Such is completely without biblical justification. If a preacher is teaching false doctrines, we are commanded to mark that man. Notice the words of the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul, **“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”** (Romans 16:17). He goes on to condemn them for their deceptive work. When a false doctrine is allowed to go unchallenged souls are endangered. The faithful of God must be willing to oppose those who propagate false doctrines. Unfortunately, all false teachers are not outside of the Lord’s church. From time to time we must oppose a brother who has left the truth. If we love Christ supremely, we will put him first in all things. Although it is never pleasant to mark false teachers, the faithful child of God will do his duty in this area of life.

The faithful child of God will worship God scripturally. Again the pervasive view is that whatever you want to call worship is acceptable, but such is not the case. In John 4:24 we read, **“God is a**

Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” The Old Testament contains several examples of God not accepting just any old thing as worship. In the story of Nadab and Abihu, we see God kill two men who offered a fire which he had not authorized (Leviticus 10:1, 2). In I Chronicles 13, we read of David’s attempt to move the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem. David failed to read the scriptures to determine what instructions God had given concerning moving the ark. Due to this failure, Uzzah was killed for touching the ark. The people in this story were sincere in their effort. They were singing and playing before the Lord with all their might. The point is, regardless of how sincere people are, unauthorized worship has never, and will never, be acceptable to God.

In the New Testament we find five acts mentioned as worship toward God. They are: (1) singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-28), (3) praying (Acts 2:42), (4) teaching (Acts 2:42), (5) giving (I Corinthians 16:1, 2). The scripture sets out how we are to fulfill each of these actions. The mode and the manner of heart for each are also described. To add to or take away from biblical worship is to be guilty of sin (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18,19).

Concerning the faithful Christian life, we have noted: (1) that the Bible is all sufficient in directing us in all areas of our lives; (2) that the Bible calls upon us to remain faithful (true to God); (3) that we must grow in knowledge of God’s word; (4) that we are to use our God given talents in the service of the Lord; (5) that we must allow Christ to reign in our hearts, (6) that we are obligated to defend the truth and oppose false doctrines and false teachers; and, (7) that we must worship God scripturally. The Lord is our Shepherd and he will lead us all the way to glory if we will but follow. We must be totally dedicated to him. We must be willing to remain faithful. As we read Romans 8:31-39, we discover that nothing can separate us from Christ, except ourselves. If you will determine to stay with him, you can know assuredly that he will stay with you.

—Michael Light, Assistant Editor

"Why Sleep Ye?"

(Continued From Page 1)

The American people are waiting and growing impatient with us. They want something done.

THE SILENCE

He then asked and answered a question, saying: So, if I am asked why—with all the pressing problems this nation faces today—why am I pushing these social issues and taking the Senate's valuable time? I will answer: Because, it is of the highest importance. Yes, there's a deficit to be concerned about in this country, a deficit of decency.

He concluded his remarks by saying:

So, as the sand empties through my hourglass at warp speed—and with my time running out in this Senate and on this earth, I feel compelled to speak out. For I truly believe that at times like this, silence is not golden. It is yellow.

Sadly, Congress was silently sleeping.

THE SCRIPTURES

The wise man spoke concerning national leaders: **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34). For this reason the **"king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame"** (14:35).

Those that direct should be directed by Deity. **"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will"** (21:1).

Authorities should not be an abomination but should rule righteously. **"It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness"** (16:12).

The pronouncements of politicians should be righteous. **"A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment"** (16:10). **"Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right"** (16:13). **"Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince"** (17:7).

Rulers should not rebuke the righteous but the wicked. **"He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them"** (24:24-25).

Superiors should scatter the wicked away. **"A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes"** (20:8). **"A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the**

wheel over them" (20:26).

Thrones are established by truth. **"Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy"** (20:28). **"Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness"** (25:5).

Righteous rulers cause rejoicing. **"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn"** (29:2).

Congress, **"Why sleep ye?"**

THE COURTS ARE SLEEPING

Wayne Jackson wrote an article titled "America—A Nation Out Of Control" (July 28, 1999). In the article he dealt with "The Judicial System" of our nation and had this to say:

Another symptom of a nation out of control is the manner in which our judicial system has decomposed over the past half-century. A very significant book arrested the public's attention recently. It is titled, **Guilty: The Collapse of Criminal Justice** (1996, Random House). The author was the late **Harold J. Rothwax**, a judge who presided over criminal cases in New York City for the past twenty-five years. Apparently Judge Rothwax was not conservatively oriented. He stated that in his early life his hero was Clarence Darrow (the atheist who argued for evolution in the famous Scopes trial). Too, in his younger lawyering years, Rothwax was a card-carrying member of the A.C.L.U. I mention these things to emphasize that this judge was not out of a strait-laced background.

The thesis of the Judge's book is this: The American justice system is in a state of moral collapse. He writes: "We have formalism and technicalities but little common sense. It's about time America wakes up to the fact that we're in the fight of our lives." This prominent jurist further stresses: "The bottom line is that criminals are going free." He notes: "There is no respect for the truth, and without truth, there can be no justice." Rothwax charges that "our system is a carefully crafted maze, constructed of elaborate and impenetrable barriers to the truth."

THE SITUATION

Jackson then summarized the situation by citing two examples to illustrate the problem with our system of justice.

On Christmas Eve of 1968, ten-year-old **Pamela Powers** was attending an event with her parents at the YMCA in Des Moines, Iowa. She went to the rest room and was never seen alive again. A few days afterward, a car was discovered in Davenport (160 miles away) containing some of her clothes. Two days later, **Robert Williams**, owner of the car, surrendered to Davenport police. Officials in Des Moines dispatched two policemen to transport Williams back to the site of the abduction. They were strictly charged not to question

him en route. Along the way, one of the officers commented that it was Christmas time, and it would be wonderful if the Powers family could at least recover the body of Pamela and give it a “Christian burial.” Sometime later Williams spoke up: “Okay, let me take you to the body.”

He directed the officers to the place where he had buried little Pamela in a ditch. Subsequent tests revealed that she had been raped and smothered to death. Robert Williams was convicted of murder. However, the conviction was overturned in federal court. When the U.S. Supreme court finally ruled on the matter, the majority opinion, written by Justice Potter Stewart, stated that Williams’ “rights” had been violated by the police officer’s “Christian burial” speech.

Here is the second example brother Jackson gave. At 2 a.m. on November 20, 1990, Leonardo Turriago was pulled over by two state troopers for speeding. The officers asked if they could look into his van; Tumago said they could. Inside, the troopers saw a trunk and asked Turriago about it. He sprang open its lock, then ran away. Opening the trunk, the troopers found the body of a man shot five times. Turriago was caught quickly.

In his apartment, police found eleven pounds of cocaine and guns. The suspect told them where to find the murder weapon. Turriago was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to forty-five years to life. The defense appealed, arguing that the troopers had no right to search the van. On June 6, 1996, Turriago’s conviction was overturned. A New York appellate court ruled that the police search had been coercive.

THE SEPARATION

Zell Miller (in his Senate speech quoted from previously) also spoke about our judiciary system saying: I stand shoulder to shoulder...with our Founding Fathers in the conception of religious liberty and the terribly wrong direction our modern judiciary has taken us in.

Everyone today seems to think that the U.S. Constitution expressly provides for separation of church and state. Ask any ten people if that’s not so. And I’ll bet you most of them will say “Well, sure.” And some will point out, “it’s in the First Amendment.”

Wrong! Read it! It says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Where is the word “separate”? Where are the words “church” or “state.”

They are not there. Never have been. Never intended to be. Read the Congressional Records during that four-month period in 1789 when the amendment was being framed in Congress. Clearly their intent was to prohibit a single denomination in exclusion of all others, whether it was Anglican or Catholic or some other.

It was Alexander Hamilton who pointed out that “judges should be bound down by strict rules and precedents, which serve to define and point out their duty.” Bound down! That is exactly what is needed to be done. There was not a single precedent cited when school prayer was struck down in 1962.

These judges who legislate instead of adjudicate, do it without being responsible to one single solitary voter for their actions.

This is why, even when voters voice their objections, the judges seem to be sleeping.

THE SCRIPTURES

The Judge of all sets judges in the land. **“And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city”** (II Chronicles 19:5). Judges are to render rulings for Jehovah. **“And [Jehovah] said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment”** (19:6). The law of the Lord is to fear him. **“Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts”** (19:7). Judges are to render just judgment. **“Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment”** (Deuteronomy 16:18). The judicial process should not be perverted by judges being blinded by bribes. **“Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous”** (16:19). The judgments of judges determine the destiny of the land in which we all live. **“That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee”** (16:20). Judges, “Why sleep ye?”

[The preceding article is used by permission. It is an excerpt from David B. Watson’s lecture entitled, “Why Sleep Ye?—Luke 22:46” It comes from the 2004 Bellview Church of Christ Pensacola, Florida, lecture book, pages 203-220. We have edited the article only to the extent of putting it into our format. The book is entitled, Great New Testament Questions. Michael Hatcher, director. We urge our readers to purchase this book to get the rest of the article along with the other great material in the book.—Editor]

—912 East Teresa Avenue
Sapulpa, Oklahoma 74066-5844

“Which Is The Great Commandment In The Law?” (Matthew 22:36)

Loy Hardesty

[The following article is used by permission. It is an excerpt from Loy Hardesty's lecture entitled, “Which Is The Great Commandment In The Law?” It comes from the 2004 Bellview Church of Christ Pensacola, Florida, lecture book, pages 101-109. We have edited the article only to the extent of putting it into our format. The book is entitled, Great New Testament Questions. Michael Hatcher, director. We urge our readers to purchase this book to get the rest of the article along with the other great material in the book.—Editor]

In our text, this lawyer of the Pharisees tested Jesus by asking: “**Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**” Jesus replies by stating, “**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind**” (Matthew 22:36-37).

This is the very foundation upon which our faith is built. The multitudes of people say “I love God,” but what is it to love God? Several years ago, when I was preaching for the brethren in Velma, Oklahoma, one of the high school teachers invited all of the local preachers to speak to her class about the Bible and life in general. Only two preachers showed up that morning, the Methodist preacher and this scribe. The Methodist preacher spoke first. He spoke about love—that if you love God and your neighbor, and live a good moral life, those actions are all that are necessary. He taught that it made no difference what you believed just so you loved God.

I was glad I was the second speaker and had the opportunity to respond to some of the things the Methodist had to say. When properly understood, love is man's proper response to God. Jesus says, “**If ye love me, keep my commandments**” (John 14:15). However, more often than not, love is misrepresented. This Methodist preacher fairly represented the philosophy of ninety-nine percent of the religious world, including our liberal preachers today, in teaching that it makes no difference what you believe and practice, just so long as you *love* God. Is that what it truly means to love God? Is loving God simply saying so?

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD

your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).

Moses clearly sets forth the path upon which we are to walk if we truly love God.

IF WE LOVE GOD: WE WILL LOVE THE TRUTH

There are many today as there were in the first century who do not love the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10). The Psalmist declared, “**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee**” (Psalms 119:11). Paul wrote:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Jesus says, “**It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God**” (Luke 4:4). John wrote:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:30-31).

In the early seventies a preacher stood in the pulpit of the University church in Abilene during their annual lectureship and declared that we can not know the truth! Since that time we have seen a host of preachers chime in and promote this great lie. Jesus still says, “**And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**” (John 8:32). James wrote, “**Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls**” (James 1:21). If we believe the truth of God's word, then we will stand up for it. We will “**earnestly contend for the faith**” (Jude 3). Loving the

truth (that which is good and right) implies abhorring that which is evil. Paul wrote, “**Let ye be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good**” (Romans 12:9). We are also instructed by the psalmist: “**Ye that love the LORD, hate evil**” (Psalms 97:10; see also Proverbs 6:16-19). Yes, if we love God, we will love his word; we will love the truth!

**IF WE LOVE GOD:
WE WILL LOVE HIS CHURCH**

Curtis Shelburne, a preacher in Muleshoe, Texas, writes a weekly column in the local newspaper. In one of his articles he wrote about how he loved the church, but he has never once defined or identified the Lord’s church. The following are excerpts from later editions of his column [The excerpts quoted from Shelburne’s newspaper articles appeared in about 1996. —Editor].

“I spent some time in Lubbock this week attending some wonderful meetings and being reminded of what a priceless thing Christian unity really is.”

He referred to a Restoration meeting at the non-Sunday school Quaker Avenue Church of Christ. In this Restoration meeting there were individuals from the Christian Church Denomination, “Anti” groups, the Broadway Church of Christ, and many others. He continues:

Thank God that all of God’s children are one! On our better days, I hope we like it, but we’re brothers and sisters whether we like it or not! We’re family whether you praise the Lord with a pitch pipe or an 80-piece orchestra or a bagpipe solo! Our Father is bigger than that. I can’t believe God cares how He is praised, just as long as he is! We’re family whether you are premillennial, amillennial or postmillennial, or panmillennial. It’ll all pan out in the end, and I just want to be with all the family whenever! Our Father is bigger than our end times theology (“Christian Unity”).

In another article he wrote:

When good things happen and God is praised, all believers dunked, sprinkled, or fricasseed; shaken, rattled, or rolled; amillennial, dispensational, or persnicketydoowoplapsiduodenal (??), ought to be happy about it and often working together on it. Otherwise, we’re “Our Own Worst Enemies.” I read that in a magazine. But I think I read it in the Bible first (“Christians Can Avoid”).

Again in a different article, he wrote:
I made a donation yesterday. Yes, indeed, *I* did. I may now be the only Church of Christ preacher in this hemisphere or beyond who actually owns a part of a key of the piano of his community’s First Baptist Church. You see, the good folks at First Baptist are in the process of

raising money to buy a very fine piano. (The sticker price convinces me that we more non-instrumental types are too poor to change our theology much on this issue even though I think it is also poor.)

So I made the donation yesterday in the large amount of \$25.... In any case, the next time Stacy and I trade pulpits....

Anyway, it tickles me pink to think that every time those gleaming new ivories down at the First Baptist Church are tickled, my minor key will be tickled right along with the rest of them. Part of that Baptist piano is now owned by a “Campbellite” (“A Story”).

Will Rogers is supposed to have said, “You can’t believe everything you read in the newspaper.” However, we know that Shelburne wrote the preceding quotes of nonsense because we have his newspaper articles.

Jesus said, “**And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**” (Matthew 16:18). The word “**my**” continues to be possessive, and the word “**church**” is singular. Nothing has changed. Paul wrote:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all* (Ephesians 4:1-6).

“**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, the fulness of him that filleth all in all**” (Ephesians 1:22-23).

“**Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen**” (Ephesians 3:21).

Are we ashamed of Christ, of His church? Brethren, why do we take the name of Christ off our buildings? Jesus loved the church; He purchased it with His own blood. When Paul wrote, “**The churches of Christ salute you**” (Romans 16:16), he was not talking about “The Community Church,” “The Christian Fellowship Church,” or any other denominational Church. How can we reconcile division when Paul plainly states:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ

(Galatians 1:6-7; see also 1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

I was raised in a denominational Church and obeyed the Gospel when I was fifteen years old. If the Tulsa Workshop had been around and my exposure to the church would have been to liberal brethren, I would probably continue to be a member of a denomination.

It breaks our heart to read and hear the error that is being promoted by preachers, professors, and others. These brethren ought to know better. God will judge! Do you love the church?

—P.O. Box 99
Waldron, Arkansas 72958-0099

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY REJECTS THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Russell M. Kline

I have a brilliant idea! Christians in America are wealthier and more influential than ever. If only we could combine our wealth and influence into a single concentrated effort, then there would be no task we could not accomplish. I think that we should form some kind of a society of like-minded Christians for the purpose of combining our resources to do the work of the Lord on an unprecedented scale. Churches could contribute money to the society, and every contributor could have a say in what is done with the money, so that everything is managed properly.

By now, you may be thinking, "That sounds like a good idea, but is there any Bible for it (Colossians 3:17)?" If so, then I would urge you to think about the good that could be accomplished by such an organized effort (Matthew 7:15-20). Also, I would urge you to think about how much less waste of the Lord's money there would be, if it were being handled by a single clearinghouse (Romans 12:11). Finally, I would impress upon you that the matter of how the church accomplishes its mission of evangelism, benevolence, and edification is purely one of expedience, and is not in any way specified by the scriptures (Matthew 28:19; Galatians 6:10; Matthew 28:20). What do you say? Is this a good idea, or what?

Actually, the truth is that the preceding "idea," and the justification offered for it, are the basic tenets proposed by those who advocated the establishment of the American Christian Missionary Society in the middle of the nineteenth century. I have written this tongue-in-cheek "proposal" to illustrate the reasoning of men like **Alexander Campbell**, who were honestly seeking bet-

ter ways to do the Lord's work. Through his writing and preaching, Alexander Campbell lobbied passionately for churches to pool their resources into a single entity that could do the work of the local church on a worldwide scale. Through his personal study and experience, Campbell came to realize that there were some aspects of the Lord's work which were too great for individual Christians and local congregations to handle. In 1831, he wrote in the "Millennial Harbinger," urging churches to take aggressive steps toward a greater degree of cooperation:

Agreeably to the reason and nature of things, which must never be lost sight of, and to all that is said or implied in the New Testament, upon this subject, it behooves the churches at this time, to regard their location, as respects states and counties, in their efforts to convert the world....

The only question is, how shall this be done to the best advantage? The New Testament furnishes the principles which call forth our energies, but suggests no plan.... The churches in every country, have from scripture and reason, all authority to bring their combined energies home, they may, and ought to cooperate with their weaker neighbors, in the same state, and so on increasing the circle of their cooperations, as they fill up the interior with all light and goodness, until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the whole earth.

When he was met with opposition, he dropped the idea for a decade, only to pick it back up again, in 1841, when he wrote:

From my spiritual observatory, and by means of the

telescope of faith in history sacred, ecclesiastic, and political; aided, too, by the accumulating lights of experience, observation and biblical developments, I am so deeply penetrated with the necessity of a more intimate organization, union and cooperation than at present existing among us, that I feel myself in duty bound again to invite the attention of the brotherhood, especially of those who are in heart and life devoted to the honor, dignity and influence of Christianity in the world, to a more thorough and profound consideration of the subject than they have ever yet given to it.

Campbell was utterly convicted of the idea that progress in the work of the church on a worldwide scale could not be made, unless there was an organization of churches on a national level. In 1842, he wrote:

Now if Christ's kingdom consists of ten thousand families, or churches—particular, distinct, and independent communities—how are they to act in concert, maintain unity or interests, or cooperate in any system of conservation or enlargement, unless by consultation and systematic cooperation? I affirm it to be, in my humble opinion, and from years of observation and experience impossible.

It was this idealism, which influenced others to form statewide missionary societies, and then the American Christian Bible Society, which led to the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society.

Although its founders may have had the best of intentions, the Missionary Society existed in violation of the scriptures, and it justified its existence by rejecting the authority of the New Testament. Today, there are other organizations, formed by our brethren (Lads to Leaders, Leaderettes, Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, etc.), which reject the authority of the New Testament, just as the Missionary Society did. If we can understand how the Missionary Society rejected New Testament authority, and the weaknesses in their reasoning for doing so, then we can know how to deal with those who advocate the existence of similar organizations, today.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY DID NOT FIT THE NEW TESTAMENT MODEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN CHURCHES

According to precedent in the primitive church, one or more local congregations may contribute to the work of another. In Acts 11:27-30, we find that the church of Christ in Antioch sent money to the church of Christ in Jerusalem to aid them in their efforts to provide relief from a general famine, which was predicted by the prophet Agabus. Furthermore, in Philippians 4:15-16, we find that the church of Christ in Philippi provided financial aid to Paul, while he was conducting his mission work in Macedonia. Therefore,

it may be established that, according to scriptural precedent, churches may contribute to other churches, or to individual Christians who are doing the Lord's work in near or distant places. In this way, Christians may cooperate by pooling their resources and focusing a concentrated effort upon one good work.

Generally speaking, this is the model, which we have followed in the modern church. I have personally been involved in many such efforts. Churches with which I have worked have supported the efforts of other churches and individuals in doing works of benevolence, evangelism, and edification in nearby cities and far away countries. We have sent money, Bibles, biblical literature, food, clothing, and, in some cases, ourselves whenever and wherever there has been a need that we could supply (II Corinthians 8:1-4).

The Missionary Society created a situation in which churches were contributing to a different institution, that was doing the work of the church, on behalf of the church, but was not, in fact, the church. To put in the simplest of terms, the Missionary Society rejected the authority of the New Testament in that it did not fit the New Testament model for cooperation between churches as we have just reviewed it. Since there is no Bible authority for it, we have no choice but to declare it unscriptural. The same thing may be said about modern organizations that are created in the image of the Missionary Society.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY PRESUMED TO DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH EVEN THOUGH IT WAS NOT, IN FACT, THE CHURCH

Most scripturally organized churches are overseen by an eldership, with deacons and other members playing their divinely appointed roles (Philippians 1:1). The Missionary Society, however, was not overseen by an eldership, but by an executive board. According to the 4th and 5th articles, in the Society's charter,

The officers of the Society shall consist of a president, twenty vice-presidents, a treasurer, a corresponding secretary, and a recording secretary, who shall be elected by the members of the Society at its annual meeting.

The Society shall also annually elect twenty-five managers, who together with the officers and life directors of this Society, shall constitute an executive board, to conduct the business of the Society, and shall continue in office until their successors are elected, seven of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The *church* is supposed to do the work of the church, and the scriptural leadership of the church is supposed to decide in which works the congregations

for which they are responsible shall participate (Philippians 2:12,13; I Corinthians 12:27; Hebrews 13:17). This is the essence of the principle of congregational autonomy, and it is utterly rejected by the very existence of the Missionary Society and modern organizations made in its image!

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY TOOK THE LORD'S MONEY FROM THE TREASURIES OF THE LORD'S CHURCH, AND PUT IT INTO THE TREASURY OF AN UNSCRIPTURAL ORGANIZATION

As we have already observed, the Missionary Society was an unscriptural organization and was no more a part of the Lord's church than a utility company or a cleaning service. But, although the church is at liberty to pay utility companies and cleaning services for their products, the church may not subcontract its God-given responsibilities out to any unscriptural organization. But, I suppose that was the appeal of the Missionary Society. Churches that gave their money to the Society did not have to be bothered with details like selecting missionaries, checking on their progress, and making sure that they were teaching the truth. The Society would take care of all of that for them. According to the 7th article in the Society's charter:

The executive board shall... establish such agencies as the interest of the Society may require, appoint agents and missionaries, fix their compensation, direct and instruct them concerning their particular fields and labors, make all appropriations to be paid out of the Treasury, and present to the Society at each annual meeting a full report of their proceedings during the past year.

I suppose that is what continues to be the appeal of modern organizations made in the image of the Missionary Society. For example, churches that give money to the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Corporation no longer have to be bothered with any direct involvement in any benevolent works of the church, outside of their own locality. They just send their money to the institution, and they let it decide how it ought to be spent. I wonder how much longer it will be, until someone forms a Ministerial Society to relieve churches of the burden of hiring and firing their own preachers. Something like this would surely appeal to lazy elders across the brotherhood.

We have observed only a few of the ways in which the Missionary Society rejected the authority of the New Testament. It is equally

important for us to understand some of the arguments that were used in attempts to justify its existence.

THE POTENTIAL FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOOD WAS EMPHASIZED

This is what fueled the drive for the creation of the Missionary Society in the first place. Alexander Campbell wrote an essay on "Church Organization" in which he listed six arguments for a more centralized organization of the church. His first argument was "We can do comparatively nothing in distributing the Bible abroad without cooperation." His second argument was "We can do comparatively but little in the great missionary field of the world either at home or abroad without cooperation." His third argument was "We can do little or nothing to improve and elevate the Christian ministry without cooperation." His fifth argument was "We cannot concentrate the action of the tens of thousands of Israel, in any great Christian effort, but by cooperation." In his sixth argument, he called for the church to organize itself more centrally, in order to accomplish all of the aforementioned good: "We can have no thorough cooperation without a more ample, exten-

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sive, and thorough church organization.”

The problem with all of these good intentions is that the ends do not justify the means (Romans 3:8; Matthew 7:22, 23). There are a great many organizations in the world that do a great deal of good, but that does not automatically make them scriptural. Just as it would be utterly wrong for Christians to support the Salvation Army in their good works, it was wrong for brethren to support the Missionary Society, and it is still wrong to support modern organizations made in its image.

THE EFFICIENCY OF SUCH AN ORGANIZATION WAS EMPHASIZED

Alexander Campbell thought that fraud perpetrated against churches could be checked if there was a central organization. In his essay on “Church Organization,” his fourth argument was “We can do little to check, restrain, and remove the flood of imposture and fraud committed upon the benevolence of the brethren by irresponsible, plausible, and deceptive persons, without cooperation.” Once again, although the intentions of the Society’s founders were good, the means that they employed were unscriptural (Matthew 7:22, 23). It is always foolish for anyone to think that he can improve upon God’s plan (Leviticus 10:1, 2). No matter how efficient it may be, an unscriptural organization is still unscriptural!

IT WAS ARGUED THAT THE WHOLE THING WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCE

Alexander Campbell argued that, since there was no pattern for how the universal church was to accomplish its mission to evangelize the world, the issue was left up to Christians to decide for themselves (like the issue of where and when to assemble for worship on the Lord’s Day). In his essay on “Church Organization,” he argued the point in this way:

In all things pertaining to public interest, not of Christian faith, piety, or morality, the church of Jesus Christ in its aggregate character, is left free and unshackled by any apostolic authority. This is the great point which I assert as of capital importance in any great conventional movement or cooperation in advancing the public interests of a common Christianity and a common salvation. My strong proof for this conclusion is that, while faith, piety, and morality are all divinely established and enacted by special agents—apostles and prophets possessed of plenary verbal inspiration—matters of prudential arrangement for the evangelizing of the world, for the better application of our means and resources, according to the exigencies of society and the ever-varying complexion of things around us, are left without a single law, statute, ordinance, or enactment in the New Testament.

Using this line of reasoning, Campbell believed that he did not need to supply any New Testament authority for the existence of the Missionary Society, because its existence was purely a matter of expedience.

Campbell made the same mistake that many of our modern “anti” brethren make: he tried to distinguish between commandments given to the local church (congregations) and those given to the universal church (individual Christians). Our “anti” brethren use this line of reasoning to argue that, although individual Christians may support children’s homes, congregations of the same Christians may not. Campbell used it to argue that, although the local church may be bound by scriptural precedent, in the matter of cooperation between churches, the universal church is not. The problem with this view is that it creates two churches bound by two sets of standards, when the Bible declares that there is only one (Ephesians 4:4-6). The Missionary Society could not simply exempt itself from the authority of the New Testament, just as modern organizations, made in its image, cannot.

I firmly believe that the people who founded the American Christian Missionary Society did not necessarily have evil motives. They were just looking for a better way to do the work of the Lord. But, although their intentions may have been good, their zeal was misguided (Galatians 4:17, 18). There is an old saying that, which holds that “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.” It seems that people of every religious stripe believe that sincerity can make up for a lack of biblical authority. But, the truth is that good intentions are no substitute for a “**thus saith the Lord**” (Colossians 3:17).

I think that the same holds true for our brethren who have founded modern organizations that are patterned after the Missionary Society (Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes, Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, etc.). I believe that these are brethren who have the best of intentions, and who think that they have discovered a better way to do the Lord’s work. But, just as there was no authority for the existence of the Missionary Society, there is no authority for the existence of these organizations either. Faithful brethren would be wise to follow the New Testament pattern of church cooperation and leave these unscriptural organizations alone.

—1035 N. Main
Madisonville, Kentucky 42431

[This material was delivered orally at the recent Contending for the Faith Lectures at Cane Ridge, Kentucky]

WHEN GOOD MEN DO NOTHING

Tom Moore

Edmund Burke once said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” An inspired penman portrays this same thought in this fashion, **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”** (James 4:17). That is, he is guilty of sin if he does not do it. We should adopt this as a principle of action, “that the ability to do good in any case imposes an obligation to do it.”

Knowledge without practice is imputed to a man as a great and presumptuous sin. Nothing is more injurious to the souls of mankind than wasted impressions. Nothing is more harmful to the Lord’s blood-bought church than for good men to do nothing in the combating of error and evil. Feelings exhaust themselves and evaporate, if not embodied in the practice of fighting for right. As we will not act except we feel, so if we will not act out our feelings of right, we shall soon cease to feel.

John said, **“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness”** (I John 5:19). Paul declared:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (I Timothy 4:1-3).

Thus, there are many errors in our day that need to be addressed by good and faithful men of God.

Will we sit idly by while liberalism creeps into the church, or will we “stand in the gap.” **“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none”** (Ezekiel 22:30). Will the Lord find such a man among us? Will the Almighty find a man that will stand in the gap and hold his ground on truth—and the truth alone? Will we **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”** (II Timothy 4:2)?

Will good men **“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3)? Will good men stop the mouths of those **“who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”**

(Titus 1:11)? Will good men **“rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith”** (Titus 1:13)? Will good men speak **“the things which become sound doctrine”** (Titus 2:1)? Will good men in all things show themselves to be **“a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity”** (Titus 2:7-8)? Paul said, **“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority! Let no man despise thee”** (Titus 2:15), and to **“speak the truth in love”** (Ephesians 4:15).

We must **“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses”** (I Timothy 6:12). Will good men like Paul be able to say,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Timothy 4:7-8)?

Again, **“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”** (James 4:17). Fellow soldiers, we have been warned. Now the truth has been placed before our eyes—we are without excuse. Remember, “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” What will you do?

—2406 Main
Malvern, Arkansas 72104

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TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR

B. Dean Beard

Luke the eighth chapter records Jesus' parable of the soils. You are familiar with the parable: the sower went out with a bag of seed and broadcast it out over the entire field. Some of the seed fell on the "way-side" ground, and merely lying on top, was soon eaten by birds. Some fell among rocks, and even though it germinated, it withered when the sun became hot and the soil dried out. Some fell among thorns, and though it too came up, competition from the thorns stunted its growth so that it did not produce any fruit. Then, there was the good ground where the seed sprouted and the plants thrived and produced an abundant crop. At the end of the parable, Jesus announced, "**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear**" (Luke 8:8), and later said, "**Take heed therefore how ye hear.**" The soils maybe described at the various types of hearts found in men, or they may be described as different types of hearers.

The same person may be a different kind of hearer at different times. Every mother knows when a child is lying on his stomach watching TV that he may be completely oblivious to any outside communications. He is a way-side hearer. People often listen to (sit through) a sermon, daydreaming of many other things. Temporarily, at least, they are way-side hearers. The condition can be more permanent as well, where a person simply shuts out any message with which he is not interested.

Rocky-ground hearers and thorny-ground hearers are similar in that they do hear, for a while. External influences—temptation to sin, persecution—redirect the mind of the one and the hearer loses interest. Internal influences such as demands of job, school, emergencies, and time crowd out what the other has heard and it is placed on the back burner.

What Jesus said about taking heed to how we hear shows that we are responsible for the way we receive the teaching of God. "Oh, I'm sorry! I was watching this captivating TV program about pencil leads and I just didn't hear you" may not be a sufficient excuse. The technician at the nuclear plant ought to be expected to hear the warning. We should distinguish the message of God above any other noises reaching our ears.

We should take heed to not be forgetful hearers. They hear but forget to do. James 1:22, "**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.**" We should take heed to not be dull-ear-hearers who have heard so many times we no longer are impressed with the message. Jesus said,

For this people heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them (Matthew 13:15).

Almost everyone has a tendency to be an itching-ear-hearer. We all want to hear favorable news. We just need to be sure that what we hear and believe is the truth. II Timothy 4:3-4 says,

For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables.

Even with souls at stake, people still prefer to hear what they want.

The people who heard Stephen preaching became so angry with him that, Acts 7:57-58 says

they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

It is extremely hard to listen objectively when angry.

Opposite to all these, we should learn to be good hearers. Obedient-ear-hearers are so eager to obey they even appreciate correction, "**As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, So is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear.**" (Proverbs 25:12). If a person does not listen to obey, why listen at all?

Proverbs 5:13: "**Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!**" and Jeremiah 7:24, "**But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.**" These two passages speak negatively of the failure to listen attentively. Inclining the ear is leaning towards the speaker to catch every word. The hand goes behind the ear that not a sound escape.

James 1:19 instructs, "**Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.**" A person who is swift to hear is ready and unhesitating to obey the will of God. The examples of conversion in the book of Acts all impress that there was not a long period of time between hearing and believing (obeying). Three thousand

seemed to not hesitate to be baptized. Cornelius, acting on the command of the angel, immediately (Acts 10:33, KJV) sent for Peter to hear all things commanded. The Ethiopian did not wait to get home before he was baptized. The jailor in Acts 16:33 **“took them the same**

hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.” We should take heed to hear “dressed and ready to go.”

—105 Memorial Dr.
Piedmont, Alabama 36272

Sermons or Suggestions

Geoff Litke

Preach the word! So was the young preacher exhorted. His charge was to do this without regard to the reactions of the people upon hearing the divine message. It was an authoritative message from God. **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”** (II Timothy 4:2). The word was the only thing he had authority to preach. In fact he was to charge others to teach nothing else, **“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,”** (I Timothy 1:3).

Gone are the days when preachers preached. Sermons are no more, but “messages” and “talks”. This is the result of a wholesale rejection of authority in current culture. Even when the preachers do not bow down and forsake preaching with all authority (II Timothy 3:16-17), their hearers do not regard the sermon as a lesson from God’s word. Instead; they are interesting new perspectives to be considered in light of the almighty “I think”.

The only thing surprising is that some are surprised by this trend. Even in the context Paul told Timothy,

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. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (II Timothy 4:3-5).

Leaders do not challenge people to conform their lives to the teaching which goes on under their authority.

The remedy for this is quite simple.

1. Exalt the doctrine in your mind and life. Be VERY concerned about doctrine, **“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them:**

for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (I Timothy 4:16).

2. Speak out (do not keep quiet about it) and do so with authority. Titus, like Timothy, was told; **“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”** (Titus 2:15).

3. Let no man despise thee. Just as in Titus’ exhortation, do not allow your self to be discounted. People WILL despise the message and take it out on you, but do not be the excuse. Old preachers are told they are outdated for standing for the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16). Young preachers are told they are too young to understand. Those in the middle are just considered kooks. In all these examples it is not the man being rejected but God (I Samuel 8:7). Therefore, do not let such petty and immature criticisms stop the spread of the Gospel. Paul also told Timothy, **“These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”** (I Timothy 4:11-12).

Multitudes will lay awake long hours into the night striving to concoct new reasons not to follow the preaching of the gospel. However, someday they will stand before God with a life of no account and blaming the faithful for their wickedness. If the preacher preaches the word, it is that word by which souls will be judged (II Timothy 4:1; John 12:48). No soul will be judged because the preacher said it, but because God said it! Preachers who love the lost do not merely offer suggestions, new perspectives, fresh looks, but they **PREACH THE WORD!**

—2535 N.W. Loop
Stephenville, Texas 76401

"UNTIL THEY COME HOME"

David B. Smith

No one can deny that, from the human perspective, the church suffers from a number of problems and inconsistencies. That is, members of the church are impacted by everything from materialism to pride which, in turn, accounts for the sore spots congregations often experience. For whatever reason, people seem to struggle more with the inability to forgive than any other problem. This no doubt explains the repetitive nature of admonitions like this one from Paul: "even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13). To be sure, Christians are tested with this application every day. But the pinnacle of tests is evidenced at the return of an erring brother or sister — especially in cases where withdrawal of fellowship has been en-

acted. It seems that there is always one or two persons more grieved by the return of the lost brother or sister than when that person first apostatized from the faith. Unfortunately, entire congregations can be guilty of a refusal to forgive. And this is the problem with the Corinthians in II Corinthians 2:6-11. Notice the text:

Sufficient to such a man, is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgive any thing, to whom I for-

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12:00 PM	Lunch Provided	
1:30 PM	"The Work of The Local Church"	Eddy Craft
2:30 PM	"Worship In Spirit And In Truth"	Clifford Newell

SUNDAY, October 3

10:00 AM	"The Danger of Apostasy"	David Brown
11:00 AM	"Instrumental Music In Worship Versus The New Testament Pattern"	Kent Bailey
6:00 PM	"The New Testament Pattern And The Second Coming of Christ"	David Brown

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Lectureship Directors: Kent Bailey Email: Kbailey385@aol.com, phones: 865.986.5698 or 865.363.0080 and David P. Brown Email: jbrown@charter.net, phone: 281.350.5516

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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gave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Initially the church had been slow to withdraw from the brother, according to I Corinthians 5:1-13. And the strong rebuke here from Paul obviously provoked the members at Corinth to do what they had failed to do to this point. But now their lack of action moves in the opposite direction. Now they are guilty of manifesting an inability to forgive. What they failed to remember was this: when correction is accomplished, the punitive discipline stops. The brother was now to be treated as faithful. And Paul even adds the sense of urgency by warning **“lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow”** (II Corinthians 3:7).

It is clear then that there is a great need for members of the church to examine themselves carefully, and be cautious so as to avoid rashness and lack of forgiveness. But since the passage above speaks of the withdrawal of fellowship and those actions required by Christians at the time of restoration, I would like to inject another line of thought that considers actions prior to restoration and while the corrective discipline is still in force. The problem is this: *treating those members of the church who have been withdrawn from, or have been marked because of proven unfaithfulness in some area, as if they are actually faithful—as if their current position is the same as it was before corrective discipline was enacted.* Frankly, this seems to be a problem almost as widespread as the lack of forgiveness.

If this does not make sense at first, consider this hypothetical and extremely generic example. John is a member of the church in the town of Anywhere, USA. Unfortunately, John commits adultery against his wife, and refuses to repent of his wrong. The church attempts to restore John. But his unwillingness to repent of the wrongdoing forces the church to withdraw fellowship from him. At first, the church acts toward him as they should. They understand that he is lost; and every run-in with John results in a serious spiritual conversation about his current status, accompanied with pleas to return home. But in the passing of time, members of the congregation begin to forget that John is lost. Members of John’s family, who are also members of the church, start dissenting the decision to withdraw fellowship from John and act as if nothing is wrong—even to the point of becoming angry at members who remind them about the withdrawal from John. But the problem continues to infect more than just John’s family. The congregation itself starts speaking of John in favorable terms, spending social time with John, and greeting John in public in such a way as to suggest that John is just a

faithful as any other member. Before long John starts “in-sliding” back into the congregation, where he is eventually considered “restored”—even though he has never repented of the wrong. This is the problem that really does exist on the side of discipline, opposite to forgiveness/restoration.

Exactly why this happens is a question only the individual can answer. Some are cowards, and are therefore unwilling to take a courageous stand to try to save a soul. Some forget, which must imply that a failure has occurred in their own prayer life or in personal Bible study. Some allow emotion to override what they know to be right, and subsequently compromise the integrity of the decision of the congregation.

In the majority of instances known to me, the breakdown is primarily evidenced in the family. It is easy to talk about withdrawing from members of someone else’s family, but many people will never entertain the thought of rendering punitive discipline to a child, or to grandchildren, or a sibling, or a spouse, et cetera, in their own family. This is most tragic because family members fail to realize that they actually possess the greatest influence in cases of punitive discipline. As hard as it may be, families must be willing to do what is right for the benefit of the lost. Let all men be reminded, **“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”** (Matthew 10:37). Of course, love is manifested in commandment-keeping (John 14:15; I John 5:3).

What should be done then for the unfaithful brother or sister (i.e., the one withdrawn from)? The New Testament offers numerous actions: **“let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”** (Matthew 18:17); **“not to keep company with”** and **“with such an one no not to eat”** (I Corinthians 5:9-11); **“count him not as an enemy, but admonish [or, warn] him as a brother”** (II Thessalonians 3:15); **“restore such an one”** (Galatians 6:1); and **“convert him”** (James 5:19, 20).

But even more, every member of the church must consider that corrective discipline is an act of love (I Corinthians 5:1-5; 16:14; Galatians 6:1), rendered by the command of God (I Corinthians 5:5), and worked in an effort to save souls (I Corinthians 5:5). And so, out of respect for God and respect for the soul of the unfaithful, consistent application of the principles of punitive discipline must be rendered by every member of the church—until they come home.

—700 Jolly Rd. NW
Calhoun, Georgia 30701

PROVIDENCE AND PRAYER

Gary W. Summers

Some brethren have erroneously charged, of late, that, unless one agrees with the false doctrine that God is directly imparting wisdom to Christians and directly strengthening them against sin, he does not believe in prayer or providence. This is what is known as a false dilemma. Some things do fall into an either/or category, such as creation versus evolution—supernaturalism versus naturalism. Other things do not fall into one of two categories (animal, plant, or mineral, e.g.).

God has worked directly in times past. His creation of the world was a direct, supernatural, miraculous action. **“For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast”** (Psalm 33:9). Inspiration was also direct, in which God put words into people’s mouths (Jeremiah 1:9). Jesus performed divine, direct actions that John refers to as miracles, signs, and wonders (John 20:30-31).

Can God act indirectly? Yes, he can act indirectly in both a supernatural and natural way. The word that he has revealed has the power within it to convert people who have never heard a direct command from God and who have never witnessed a single miracle. The gospel is the power of God to save people. It was supernatural and directly revealed, but it is studied and received according to natural laws.

Might God work in a providential way to save someone today? Of course, he could! It would be an assumption, however, that providence involves a direct action upon someone to succeed, although any action he takes is supernatural (by the very fact that he is a supernatural Being). In other words, suppose a member of the Lord’s body invited a neighbor to a gospel meeting. Did God directly tell him to do so? No, he may have read a bulletin article suggesting that he do so; he may have heard the preacher encourage the church to invite neighbors, or he may have been reading about first-century evangelism from the Bible.

Because God, in acting providentially, does not di-

rectly impose himself on a Christian, we do not know how he accomplishes what he does. One thing we do know is that the Holy Spirit has not commanded an evangelist to go and join himself to someone’s chariot, as he once spoke directly to Philip.

When we pray for wisdom, we do not expect to receive it directly. It may come through a brother’s insight, through reading a secular book or watching a television program, through a particular circumstance, or through studying and discussing the scriptures. God can provide the wisdom we need without having to communicate it to us directly. Since there are a number of non-direct, providential ways of communicating wisdom to us, it is folly to say that we either get it directly or we are deists.

The same is true of prayer. God does not tell us how he will answer our prayers—just that he does. In Elijah’s case, when he prayed for the sacrifice to be burned up, God obliged directly and miraculously. But when Elijah prayed for it not to rain, did God miraculously alter weather patterns or simply “arrange” the drought? If we answer miraculous, then how do we explain other droughts? James cites Elijah as a man with like passions as ours. If it was a miracle then, then would not James be encouraging brethren to pray for a miracle now (5:16-18)?

We do not need to understand HOW God answers prayer or works providentially in order to know that he does so. We certainly are not deists because we lack an explanation. Deists do not believe God acts at all in the affairs of men; such is not our thinking. We know that he remains involved with his creation. To deny direct communication (such as imparting wisdom to man apart from the revealed word or providence) is not at all the same as deistic philosophy. Some are simply trying to confuse brethren.

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THE GREAT MANIPULATOR

Irene C. Taylor

It is a fact beyond question that today's world is void of total honesty. Politicians and public officials have ridden the fast track downward and no longer merit our unquestioning trust. Sadly, tainted truth has invaded the church of our Lord in various forms from outright error to deceptive manipulation of words. The Great Manipulator (Satan) has done his work well. Christian mothers face an added challenge to train their children in the fullness of honesty. They need much fortification to meet the onslaught that awaits them.

In the early dawn of time, Satan honed his skill at manipulating the words and deeds of mankind. He is especially skilled in the manipulation of words in order to deceive. So skilled is he that he has been designated rightfully as the father of lies (John 8:44).

God clearly declared to Adam and Eve in the paradise of Eden that there was one tree whose fruit they were forbidden to eat. **“Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”** (Genesis 3:3). But Satan, The Great Manipulator, cleverly added just one word to change completely the picture. He vows, **“Ye shall not surely die”** (verse 4).

Satan's work did not end in Eden. He has continued his deceptive methods all through the ages. In I Kings 13 we read of two prophets. One was a man of God who cried out against the altar prepared by King Jereboam upon which to offer incense in idol worship. When the king's hand withered, he begged the man of God to intercede on his behalf that his hand might be restored. The man of God prayed to God for the king and his hand was restored. With gratitude, the king invited him to share the hospitality of his home, but the man of God declined.

If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel (I Kings 13:8-10).

All seemed well to this point in time but one must always be on guard lest he fall into Satan's trap. An old prophet went after the man of God and, finding him under an oak, said to him, **“Come home with me, and eat bread”** (verse 15). Wanting to follow God's instructions, the man of God informed the old prophet of God's decree. But the old prophet lied to him. He said, **“I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water”** (verse 18). No angel had delivered such a mes-

sage! Satan was using the old prophet to deceive. Trusting the old prophet and believing his lie, the man of God accompanied him and it cost him his life. Just because one claims to be a servant of God does not necessarily make him one! Satan's henchmen can be most convincing.

Again, we read of the prophet Hananiah who also was a tool of Satan. Jeremiah, a true prophet, had foretold of the coming captivity in Babylon specifying its very length—70 years. But Hananiah challenged the message. Claiming to be God's spokesman himself, he said,

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: (Jeremiah 28:2-3).

Which one should the people believe? We know from our vantage point that Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled. The people at that time needed to make a right decision and they needed the facts upon which to base it.

The Great Manipulator, Satan, is still at work today. And he delights to work through those whom we least suspect. Picture the following scenario:

A problem had arisen between brethren. A meeting was scheduled between the parties involved. “Extras” arrived to join the meeting. Though an elder called the meeting to order, one of the “extras” cleverly took over. In the course of the meeting the interrogator questioned a father regarding his son. He asked, “Did you admit that you **never**...” The question was obviously asked to infer a declarative charge. The father responded, “Did I admit that I **never**...? No.” This can be easily confirmed by listening to a tape of the event.

In the succeeding months, the interrogator has given his version of the event on at least two lectureships. He reveals the gist of the question but reports the father's response as **“Never”** as though it were a confirmatory admission rather than a denial of the charge. Such seems nothing short of an outright, deliberate word manipulation designed to deceive and cast a slanderous shadow on both the father and his son.

The Bible teaches plainly that honesty must be a part of the Christian's life in every aspect. And when word manipulation is used to smear another's

reputation the problem is compounded. It then becomes character assassination or verbal murder.

Many a church has been deeply hurt by the “convenient memory” of those who refuse to admit the disruptive part they have played. By refusing to accept concrete evidence even a court would accept they choose to forsake truth in support of friends. God knows the facts and will call for an accounting come Judgment Day.

When we practice “word manipulation” we need to remember “**by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned**” (Matthew 12:36-37).

Yes, The Great Manipulator is still at work. May God help us not to fall into his trap!

—P.O. Box 464
Ripley, Tennessee 38063

One Woman's Perspective...

ON EAGLES' WINGS

Annette B. Cates

As a small child I had an irrational fear of eagles. I was certain that one would swoop down out of the sky and take me away. I have no idea of the origin of this fear, but the memory remains quite vivid. My image of the eagle was quite different from the allusion found in Exodus 19:4, where God, speaking through Moses, told the Israelites, “**Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.**” This beautiful verse describes the love that God has for his people.

What does it mean to be borne on the wing of an eagle? The mother eagle will nudge an eaglet out of the nest in order for it to fly. If the little one cannot fly, the mother descends to beneath the falling eaglet, allows it to settle on her wing, and then returns it to the nest. Deuteronomy 32:11 also tells of the care of the eagle for her young and compares it to God and his people: “**As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.**” Through his providence, God is the protector of his people.

Our secular society views Christianity much as I thought of eagles when I was a child. They see it as something that would snatch them away from living an exciting lifestyle, not as a way of life that offers eternal security. To the world, Christianity is set on ensnaring or imprisoning people through moral restraints. They resist being limited in participating in and fulfilling their every carnal desire. Those who follow this thinking do not realize how liberating God's love for those who obey him really is.

God's love shields us from the difficulties of life. Yes, we face many of the same trials as anyone in the world might face. Nowhere are Christians promised the streets of gold while on this earth. The difference is that we can face troubled times knowing that God sees and cares. Hagar's life looked hopeless when she fled

from Sarai. However, the angel of the Lord told her to return to her mistress. Her response was, “**Thou God seest me**” (Genesis 16:6-13). When David was distressed because the people were talking of stoning him, the Bible says, “**David encouraged himself in the Lord his God**” (I Samuel 30:6). Christians can pray “Our Father, who art in heaven” because we know he is there, and we are lifted by eagles' wings.

Where can the non-Christian turn when trouble comes? He does not believe in God. He does not have the encouragement of fellow Christians. He cannot go into surgery quoting Psalm 23 because he does not know the scriptures that can bring him comfort. He cannot appeal to morality and biblical principles to help him with a wayward teenager. The pleasures that had surrounded such a person in the past do him no good, and possibly will return to haunt him in the future. Not all the wealth in the world can prevent his inevitable death. It is said that **Queen Victoria** pleaded with her doctors to prolong her life, crying out, “I will give you millions if you will give me minutes.” The terror-filled deathbed statements of well-known atheists and deists such as **Voltaire**, **Hume**, and **Thomas Paine** point out the emptiness of their lives. As the song says, “Where could I go but to the Lord?”

God's people have always triumphed over the world. History has shown that persecution makes us stronger. We grow when we are tried and we come forth as gold (Job 23:10). James wrote, “**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him**” (James 1:12). When we think we cannot take another step, God is there. When we think we cannot face tomorrow, God is there. When we think there is no hope, God bears us up as if on eagles' wings.

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Somerville-Union Church of Christ, located on Hwy 36, one mile east of Hwy 67, Somerville, Alabama, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

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Evansville-West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, Evangelist.

-Louisiana-

Chalmette-Village Square Church of Christ, 200 Delaronde St., Chalmette, LA 70044. Mark Lance, Evangelist, (504) 279-9438.

-Massachusetts-

Chicopee-Armory Drive Church of Christ, 26 Armory Drive; Chicopee, MA 01020, in-home, (413) 592-4834, Ken Dion, Evangelist.

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Dan Goddard, Evangelist. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Scheffield Drive Church of Christ, 3309 Scheffield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27802 (252) 937-7997.

-Oklahoma-

Porum-Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, Evangelist, email: lawson@starnetok.net.

-Tennessee-

Memphis-Forest Hill Church of Christ, 3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd., Memphis, TN 38125. Sun. 9:30, 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. (901) 751-2444, Barry Grider, Evangelist.

-Texas-

Houston area-Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. Home of Spring Bible Institute and the SBI Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com

Hubbard-105 NE 6th St., Hubbard, TX 76648, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Delbert J. Goines, Evangelist; djgoines@writeme.com.

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Hurst-Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Jason Rollo, Evangelist, (817) 282-3239.

Lubbock-Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00, 9:55 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Sunday worship aired live at 10:15 a.m. over KFYO 790 AM radio. Tommy Hicks, Evangelist. (806) 794-5008 or (806)798-1019.

New Braunfels-1130 Hwy. 306, 1.5 miles west of I-35. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7 p.m. Lynn Parker, Evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

Richwood-1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.

Roanoke-Church of Christ, Corner of Rusk and Walnut, Roanoke, TX 76262. Sun. 9:45, 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 pm. (817) 491-2388.

Schertz-Church of Christ, 501 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz, TX. (210) 658-0269. Sun. 9:30a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m., take Schertz Pkwy. Exit off I-35, NE of San Antonio, Kenneth Ratcliff and Stan Crowley, Evangelists.

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne-High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Gerald Reynolds, Tel. (307) 635-2482.

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