

The Gospel Preceptor

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104

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The Polemics Of Christianity

Cled E. Wallace

Christianity was born and has triumphed in the heat of controversy. It claims and demonstrates divine origin. It treats all opposition as rebellion against God, and every manifestation of “Anti-Christ” as a huge and destructive lie. It spurns all offers of compromise or fellowship with rival religions. He that exalts himself against its perfect and exhaustive principles of truth is called a “son of perdition” and is denied the salvation that can be found only in Christ. This sure and dogmatic attitude precipitated a conflict that loosed tidal waves of persecution and drenched the earth with blood.

Jesus, the Christ, is called “the author and perfecter of our faith.” He came down from Heaven with the expressed purpose of doing the will of God. He propagated no opinions of His own. He was the mouthpiece of supreme authority. “For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.” (John 12:49-50)

Jesus, The Invincible Polemic

There could be no compromise of this perfect revelation of truth out of consideration for any conflicting system of doctrine or philosophy, however respectable it might be. The stage was all set for bitter and ceaseless conflict until error was banished and the will of God held undisputed sway. Jesus, the Apostle of God, to wrest a world of humanity from the dominion of Satan, must be a strong contender, an invincible polemic. As a matter of fact He was the greatest fighter and the most successful debater the world ever saw.

The first great conflict was with the devil himself, the commander-in-chief of the forces of evil. A compromise would have been a victory for the devil. The truth of God would have been crushed to earth to rise no more. Without the aid of even one angel, and He had legions of them at his command, Jesus emerged from that contest in sole possession of the field. The devil left Him. The only weapon Jesus used was the Word of God. He repelled three major attacks with an “it is written.” Jesus entertained supreme respect for the written word of God, something that many of his professed followers sadly lack.

The War With Tradition and Hypocrisy

The fight was not over when the devil left Jesus “for a season.” He was deeply entrenched in the organized religion of the day. It was organized rebellion against God in the sheep’s clothing of piety. They paid the Almighty a lip devotion while they worshipped tradition and taught “as their doctrines the precepts of men.” Jesus was not deceived, as the people were, by the long faces and long robes of Pharisaism. He clearly discerned the trail of the serpent beneath it all and was unimpressed by sad faces and street corner prayers. He quickly joined issue, and started a fight to the finish, with the lovers of money, power and popular applause, whose highest ambition was a position of influence in an earthly kingdom ruled over by a speculative Messiah.

They quickly and instinctively recognized Jesus as the enemy of their cherished ambi-

tions. They were jealous of His influence over the people. The war was on with no thought of compromise on either side. The enemies of the truth used traditional weapons and used them skilfully. At first they hoped that it would be effective to ignore Him. His spreading fame put an end to that. He was active and persistent in a most tantalizing way. He clearly held them in contempt and was getting it over to the people. That the people might have a clear right of way for fellowship with God, their leaders must be utterly discredited. They tried ridicule. He came from Nazareth. His family was poor. He did not enjoy traditional training. He was not orthodox. In fact, He was just a plain nobody. His company was bad. He associated with publicans and sinners. This line of attack failed. Something must be done to stop this young prophet. They put forth their shrewdest to meet him in debate. He made fools of them. It came to the point where they did not dare to ask Him even a question. He carried the war to the courts of the temple and branded them “blind guides,” “hypocrites,” “strainers of gnats and swallowers of camels,” “whited sepulchres,” “serpents,” “off-spring of vipers,” “fools” and “sons of hell.” There was one weapon left and they used it. They said “Let’s kill him,” and they did. They mocked Him and scourged Him and crucified Him.

Contending For The Faith

The triumph of falsehood was brief. A guarded and sealed tomb could not hold Him. He arose from the dead. Seated at the right hand of God with all authority, He began His reign. Chosen and inspired ambassadors in Jerusalem launched a world wide campaign to bring all nations into captivity to the law of Christ.

The law of the Kingdom of Heaven is found in the “Apostles’ doctrine.” The Holy Spirit came to guide them into “all truth.” The truth that they preached, defended and died for we now have in the New Testament. It is “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” and Christians are commanded to “contend earnestly” for it.

Politics is a game of compromise and party platforms are constantly changing. There is room for a broad tolerance in the realm of opinion. But it is not so with faith. Faith must believe what God says and do what he commands. Faith must not go beyond what is written.

Issues Not Settled By Prayer

There is a place in the life of the Christian for prayer. But doctrinal issues are not settled by prayer. A schismatic might be talking so volubly to God that it might be in order to tell him to hush and let God talk awhile. Doctrinal matters are settled by the written word of God, not by an impression that some mystic receives in answer to prayer.

A prominent feature of the Christian’s armor is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” False doctrine is the chief means that Satan uses in deceiving men and keeping them from obeying the truth. It is the duty of the disciples of Christ to meet it and expose it.

The Blood of Christ Cleanseth Us

David Lipscomb

This is a universally recognized truth by believers in the Christian religion. Yet while all believe it, we are satisfied but **few** realize its **truth**, of the obligation the truth lays the human family under, to Jesus.

A great many seem to think because Christ's blood cleanses from sin, there is nothing for them to do. But it is plainly taught in the New Testament that Christ's sacrifice only so far satisfied the demands of justice as to make God just while justifying him who would believe on Christ. Nothing in the universe has ever been done, so far as the Bible informs us, that will enable God to be just while justifying unbelievers. God must be just. Through the propitiation of Christ, he is enabled to be just in justifying him who believes in Christ. He paid so much of the demands of the law as would satisfy the justice of God in saving the believer.

If he saves the unbeliever he either tramples upon his own justice and honor or the satisfaction of the law comes through some other being than Christ. Christ made the propitiation for all who would believe in him. The propitiation is efficacious only as it is accepted through faith. Justice demands the submission of faith on the part of man, in

addition to the propitiation offered by Christ. Without faith, justice will not permit God to justify man. The propitiatory offering of Christ renders it more impossible for God to justify man without the obedience of faith on his part, than would have been had Christ never been crucified.

Christ's suffering was of this two-fold nature. While it propitiated the wrath of God, to those who would accept Christ—it laid man under additional obligation to obey and honor God. Hence the sacrifice of Christ, the blood of the Redeemer, involved the deeper condemnation of all who refused to obey. The suffering of Christ was a second opening to man of the opportunity of obeying God and being blessed in the submission. To refuse the proffered mercy, through disobedience, is to repeat under greatly aggravated circumstances the rebellion against God that brought about the first separation from, and condemnation by, Almighty God.

Man then stands doubly guilty, doubly damned, by rejecting the mission of the Son of God. The gospel reaches with saving efficacy only those who are, through it, brought into saving union with God, by submission to his will. Only through submission can man be brought into harmony with God.

In submission, man is a friend of God, and out of submission he is the enemy of God.

If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings and the word which I speak unto you is not mine but the Father's which sent me.” (John 14:23-24).

Christ's blood then has cleansing efficacy only to those who believe in Christ, who keep his word, who do his commandments, who obey the truth.

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

“The blood of Christ, it cleanseth us from all sins—ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.” Then the blood must cleanse through the obedience of the truth. The efficacy, the healing virtue of the blood, is appropriated or applied to men only through that to which faith leads men. The efficacy is there, the virtue to heal is there—sufficient in quantity and power to cleanse all who will appropriate it through the obedience to which faith leads man.

The blood cleanses. How does it cleanse? It has virtue and efficacy. How can it be applied or appropriated? We have not the material blood here. If we had, we could not apply it to our immortal souls or spirits. How then can we reach its efficacy? The blood of Christ imparted its saving virtue and cleansing power to the conditions given by Christ and sealed by his blood.

Under the Jewish law the typical blood saved or cleansed only through the laws and institutions sealed by that blood. Those were purified by the blood, and those only who complied with the law were sealed by that blood.

No man under the dispensation of grace can come to the blood of Christ save as he comes through the directions, laws, ordinances sealed by that blood. Whoever seeks salvation or favor through these ordinances and laws, seeks salvation through the blood of Christ. They who seek it through the blood sealed appointments rely upon the blood of Christ.

He who seeks salvation through any other means or ways than through a humble submission to, and walk in, the ways, conditions, laws and institutions sealed by the blood, seeks salvation outside of, and without, the blood of Christ.

Whosoever denies that there is power in the institutions and laws sealed by the blood of Christ to save, denies that there is efficacy to save in the blood. Whoever teaches persons to seek salvation otherwise than through the laws sealed by the blood, teaches them to seek salvation without the blood of the Redeemer. Whoever denies or depreciates the ordinances and appointments of God decries and dishonors God himself as

well as the blood that seals God's laws to man.

Many persons talk much about the blood of Christ, and in words magnify its efficacy, yet reject the appointments sealed by the blood. Just as many persons, in word, greatly exalt the Spirit, yet reject the teachings of the Spirit, refuse to obey the commands, and neglect the appointments given by the Spirit. They “say and do not.” They “draw nigh unto me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:8-9). All praise of the blood or of the Spirit, while obedience to the laws revealed by the Spirit and sealed by the blood is withheld is vain. It is mockery.

Now we believe in the necessity of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We believe no man can live the Christian life a day save as he follows the direction of the Spirit. Therefore we insist on doing just what the Spirit commanded us. We believe that “without the shedding of blood is no remission.” We believe that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” Because we believe this, we insist on walking humbly, trusting in every command and ordinance that has been sealed by his blood. We believe a man ought to believe in Christ on the testimonies given by God concerning him because the Spirit said believe, because the blood of Christ sealed the command, “believe.” We insist upon repentance because the Spirit said, “repent,” (Acts 17:30-31) and the blood of Christ sealed that command to repent. We teach baptism for the remission of sins because the Spirit said, “be baptized,” (Acts 2:38) and the blood sealed the command “be baptized.” The virtue of the blood is put forth through the commands which it seals. The blood seals the commands given by the Spirit and the Spirit and the blood agree in one.

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The Gospel In Old Testament Example

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

We speak today of the gospel in Old Testament story. Our particular text is 2 Kings 5:1: “Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.” Someone has complained that we do not have any use at all for the Old Testament, because we have shown that the Old Testament ended at the cross. There is a lot of difference in saying that “ye are not under the law” (which is the very thing Paul said in Romans 6:14), and in saying that we have no use “at all” for the Old Testament. The same Paul who said that we are not under it, also said, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). The proper use of the Old Testament scriptures is in the fulfillment of its wonderful prophecies in the New Testament; and in seeing the Old Testament type, shadow and metaphor in the light of New Testament antitype, substance and reality.

The Old Testament

Some people become alarmed when they hear us say that no part of the Old Testament is binding upon Christians. They think that since the Old Testament says “thou shalt not kill,” if it is done away then it would mean that we may kill, commit adultery, steal, and disregard the “moral law.” But that does not follow. The United States was once under the law of England, and Texas was once time under the law of Spain. Today we are under neither. Yet in the statutes of those countries there were laws prohibiting things such as named. Does it mean therefore that our people may now do such things seeing that we are no more under the laws forbidding them? No, is the answer, but why? Because our new constitution prohibits the doing of such things also. On the

same principle the New Testament becomes unto us a perfect law and itself forbids the doing of all those things that were in themselves wrong to do. The prohibitions and inhibitions of the new covenant (or constitution) are therefore independent of what was in the old, and they are obligatory upon us, not because they were in the old, but because they are in the new.

Paul said of the Old and the New “He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified (saved)” (Heb. 10:9). So we are not under the Old Testament. It is not our law; it is not our system. It does not contain the things we are to do in obedience to God, nor the gospel commands we must obey in order to become a Christian and live as a Christian. Neither does it contain the ordinances of worship for the New Testament church. As a law, we are not under it, nor any part of it—for Paul said, “But now ye are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held (that law being dead); that we should serve in newness of the spirit and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6). These, and a hundred more, clearly show that the Old Testament has been abrogated, and we have a New Testament. Of what use, then, is the Old Testament? Simply the use that Paul made of it, and the use that I propose to make of it—the things in it are for our examples. The principles of obedience to God are the same— but the elements of obedience (the things we do) are not the same because the law has changed. “He taketh away the first *that* he may establish the second.” Since it is impossible to have two testaments in operation at the same time—which one do you say we are under, friend, as we cannot according to Paul, be under both of them? And we bring nothing over from the old—Christ who made the new, and is its mediator, and minister, put in it all that it was God’s will to include, and all else is excluded. This, however, does not mean that in the history of Old Testament things there are no lessons for us to learn— yea, they are written for our learning, for our patience, for our comfort and for our hope. Do you ask how? My answer is, in applying the lessons we learn, in examples of faith, on the part of those who obeyed God under the old covenant, to the commands and duties the New Testament binds upon us in the new covenant.

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience (in times past) received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him (Heb. 2:2-3).

Thus we may teach by example from the Old Testament, but the New Testament alone is our law.

Facts Versus Fables

There are those who claim to believe the Bible—but not all of it they say. They would delete it, blue-pencil it, and cull out certain things they call fables and relegate these to the realm of myth and tradition. They tell us that they accept the teaching of Christ, but not such Old Testament stories as Noah and the flood, Jonah and the whale, and of Naaman the Leper. It so happens that it is so fixed that you must believe all or none, for the integrity of the New Testament is linked with the truth, veracity and authenticity of the Old Testament. For instance, Jesus said concerning the flood:

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Mat. 24:38,39).

Now, how can a man believe in Jesus Christ and deny what he said about the fact of the Old Testament record of the flood? The divinity of Jesus Christ is therefore made to depend on the accuracy of the Old Testament record. And that is not all. Regarding what is called “the big fish story” the Son of God said, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mat. 12:40). If Jonah was not in the belly of the whale the period of time named, Jesus Christ was not in the earth the same period of time, nor did he arise from the dead. It means that you believe it all or none. No man can be-

lieve that God raised Jesus from the dead, according to the Lord's own statement, and reject the Old Testament record of Jonah and the whale. As to whether a whale can swallow a man or not, the record says that God "prepared a great fish," we believe he did, and are not interested therefore directly in the scientific argument. The same God that made them all surely "prepared" the one that swallowed Jonah. Friends, when a modernist gets through with the Bible, we have no Bible, for he takes out of it every single, solitary, mark and evidence of its divinity and reduces it to a human book, written by man. Believing the Bible is a matter of believing all of it, or none of it.

Then, what about this man Naaman getting his leprosy cleansed by washing seven times in the Jordan river? Well, that is just what happened—now, do you say that you believe in Jesus but don't believe that? Then hear Jesus: "And many lepers were in Israel in time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27). Thus Jesus puts the stamp of credibility on the story of Naaman. The cleansing of Naaman was a fact, not a fable.

Leprosy And Sin

Here is a very striking analogy. What leprosy is to the body, sin is to the soul. It is loathsome in all of its effects. It is beyond the power of man to cure. It has in its sound the hiss of the serpent and in its glamour the gleam of the fang—**S-I-N**. As in the case of Naaman, great men are not exempt. Naaman was a great man. Naaman was a hero. Naaman was honourable, a "mighty man in valour." We love to talk of great men, heroes and of deeds of honour and valour. But there was one overshadowing fact—this great man was a leper. He was physically and socially disqualified. Many people appear to think that there can be nothing wrong with great men— but they are sinners before God. Greatness is not a synonym for salvation, and if men of greatness have not obeyed the gospel of Christ they are sinners unsaved "for there is no respect of persons with God." Often we appeal to people through flattery to come into the church. We would compliment their position of power and mention what they would be worth to the church. That is the wrong appeal. No man can be brought to Christ through flattery or any appeal to pride. The church needs no man (in that sense); the man needs the church. You may be great, my friend, but if you are in disobedience to God you are a leper—a loathsome leper in need of cleansing. The redeeming thing about Naaman is that he realized he was a leper. All the flattery of his admiring people could not minimize his trouble. He knew it was leprosy. He could not have persuaded himself that it was a minor skin trouble, perhaps, rash or roseola, eczema or that other skin trouble that everybody has had; he knew he couldn't scratch it out in seven years! Men are prone to minimize sin and mitigate disobedience. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Pro. 28:13). Until convicted of his sins, no man can be saved. Such a realization, or conviction, humbles men. Naaman was humble—realizing his condition, he was willing to receive instruction even from humble sources. It was the maiden in his household who told him what he did not know. When men will not be told, they are hopeless. "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18). The Son of God "humiled himself and became obedient" (Phi. 2:8) and it was He who said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mat. 11:29-30).

Sincerity Seeking The Way

When Naaman reached the land of Israel he went to the wrong place—he became misguided—he went to the king instead of the prophet. The maiden said the prophet, but Naaman went to the king. He made a mistake. The king knew as little about what to do with Naaman as the average denominational preacher knows about telling sinners what one must do to be saved. When you go to men and creeds, friends, instead of the word of God, you are misguided. But many people say that it makes no difference what one believes just so he thinks it is right—that did not seem to work in Naaman's case; he thought he was going to the right place when he went to the king. I have never understood how anybody could think that wrong is right because one believes it is. Jesus called the religious teachers of his day "blind guides" and "blind leaders of the blind" and said, "both shall fall into the ditch." They will not escape the ditch merely because

they are blind and cannot see it, nor because they think no ditch is there. It simply means, friends, that you cannot be right if you are wrong.

But this man Naaman was sincere and when he found out that the king was not the prophet, he went in search of the prophet. Many people do not search for the truth; and when their credulity has been once imposed upon in religion, often they will give it all up and wander into unbelief, rather than sincerely seek the way. So, Naaman comes to the prophet. It is here that his faith must stand its test. The prophet did not come out to see him—Naaman is at his door—but the prophet remains inside. Why does he not come out? This is Naaman, “my lord Naaman,” whose chariot and horses stood at the door. But he is no more to the prophet Elisha than any other leper. Presently a servant comes out to the chariot with the terse orders of the prophet: “Go wash in the Jordan river seven times.” It knocked the breath out of Naaman. There he was the Generalissimo of the Syrian army, who had come in great array to the prophet of Israel only to be told to dip himself in the river. He went into a rage. To him it sounded as though the prophet had said “go jump in the river!” He said, “behold, I thought” the prophet would do this or say that—it was not as he had thought it would be. And men are still putting what they think up against what God says. Naaman was biased—that enemy of one’s soul that will steal away your power to think, that thing called prejudice. Naaman was prejudiced—he would not wash in the murky Jordan. If rivers and waters were necessary, he would choose his native streams. But one cannot substitute when God commands—God said the Jordan, and no matter how pure their streams, Abana and Pharpar would not do. You must come to the Jordan of obedience, friend. When God says do one thing, you cannot do another, nor can you dispense with what He commands. It must be done. Naaman turned and went away in rage. Many people have done that when they heard a gospel sermon—but when they “think it over,” as Naaman did, they return to obey God. His servants interposed: “If the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean.” Naaman turned toward the Jordan. He had conquered pride and prejudice; he was ready to do the prophet’s bidding. He was in the Jordan. Complete obedience was necessary. Partial obedience cannot save—**partial** obedience is **disobedience**. There is not a line, not a word, nor an inference in all the word of God that encourages partial obedience. All that God commands must be obeyed. When Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized” it does not mean “he that believeth and is not baptized!”

The Simplicity Of The Gospel

God’s word has never been what men would have it be. His word is of marked simplicity. What the prophet commanded Naaman to do was simple—so simple that he did not want to do it. But the servants said: “How much rather than when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?” Friends, there is never the slightest connection between the thing that God commands men to do and the reason for which it should be done. “For we walk by faith and not by sight.” It is when reason rebels that faith accepts. Faith accepts—obeys the command. When a command is left unobeyed there has been no acceptance of faith. Faith never blesses a man until it expresses itself in action. By faith Abel offered his sacrifice; by faith Enoch walked with God; by faith Noah moved with fear and prepared the ark; by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called; by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days as God commanded; by faith the children of Israel were healed of the bites of the fiery serpents when they looked on the serpent lifted on the pole—the command was to “look,” and faith without looking was not a saving faith (neither was it “snake salvation” when they looked). It is true that man must exercise faith to be saved, but his faith must also exercise him. When Jesus Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—if one does not have faith enough to be baptized, he does not have faith enough to be saved.

Another illustration of faith coupled with obedience is in the story of the blind man who came to Jesus. Jesus spit on the ground and made clay out of the spittle, and said: “Go, and wash in the pool of Siloam.” Now, there was nothing in the water of this pool to heal the eyes of the blind—if so, all the blind men in the country would have been

there for this. The blind man goes. Can you imagine that someone meets him on the way, and says to him: “Where are you going?” He answers: “I am going to the pool of Siloam to wash this clay off my eyes.” His neighbor says: “Who told you to do that ?” The blind man replies, “Jesus told me to do it.” His interrogator again inquires: “Well, do you believe in Jesus?” And the blind answers: “Yes, I believe in Jesus.” Whereupon his gratuitous friend says: “Well, don’t you know you can see already, if you believe in Jesus.” Ah, friends, do you think you could have the blind man see it? No, he knew he was blind, yet he believed, yes. he believed when he came to Jesus, but he was not healed until his faith expressed itself in obedience. Yet preachers will strangely tell men that the moment they believe in Christ—that very moment they are saved—for which there is no example under the gospel of Christ. I say again. Jesus having said “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” the man who does not have faith enough to be baptized does not have faith enough to be saved. Is it faith, or is it unbelief when men do not obey? Really, what some of these preachers call faith is actually a lack of it—plain unbelief.

Naaman’s faith blessed him when? Why, when he washed as the prophet commanded. How many times? The number of times commanded—seven. Obedience must be complete, never partial. But a Methodist preacher said one time that Naaman did not have any faith, it was a mere experiment with him. That’s news, isn’t it?—saved by an experiment instead of an experience! Well, he had seven times as much faith as that preacher had—he had faith enough to be dipped seven times, with no promise of healing save the word of God’s prophet, and that preacher didn’t have faith enough to be dipped one time with all the teaching and examples in the New Testament to induce it. But there is little telling what creed bound preachers will say when they are trying to evade the commands of God. Jesus said of them, “Ye are blind guides” and “if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” Don’t let them lead you, my friend, unless you are willing to be ditched.

The Power Of God

With final reference to the cleansing of Naaman, the question comes: Where was the power? When Naaman ascended from Jordan waters, standing on the bank, did he look back into the rolling river and praise the Jordan? Did he say. “The Jordan river has healed my leprosy; I’ll praise the river and worship its fountain!” No, no, friends. Naaman knew better than that, even if some preachers do not. Then what did he say? Here it is: “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.” Naaman knew that God healed; but he also knew that he had to do what God commanded in order to be healed. Friends, faith is not our saviour; Jesus Christ is our Saviour—but we must believe. Repentance is not our saviour; Jesus Christ is our Saviour—but we must repent. Baptism is not our saviour; Jesus Christ is our Saviour—but we must be baptized. For the Saviour said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” and if you believe and trust the Lord you will do it. The man who will not do it is a rebel against God, and there will be no rebels in heaven. We beg you, friends, to continue not in senseless resistance to the demands of the gospel until you are lost. The career of the disobedient ends in hell; divine vengeance is the end of all who know not God and obey not the gospel. There is danger and death in delay, Your decision to wait may decide your fate. O, the hardihood that rejects God and rebels at His word, heaven and earth will pass away, but His word will not. It will judge you in the last day. Why not bow to His will, as did the leper, and receive His saving power, and stand on the promises of God?

Why Hesitate to Change?

Gayle Oler

Many sincere people suppose that if an individual has espoused some certain religious faith he should never change from it regardless of the circumstances. If that religious faith is right and accurately taught in the word of God, that one should never leave it is correct.

But suppose one finds that the religious name he is wearing is not the name God applied to His children in the New Testament. Suppose he cannot read about the church to which he belongs, and the organization it has is not revealed in the word of God. Suppose he finds out that he has believed in and practiced a baptism not taught in the Bible, and learns the Bible plan of religion is being practiced on the earth in some other church, or by some other people. Is it not right and proper to change then?

The way of the Lord is perfectly revealed in the Bible, but so many in the world have only a smattering of knowledge of it. When we learn the right way, it is sin not to follow it, however devoted to some other way we may have been (Jas. 4:17).

We find a preacher in the New Testament who changed when he found out he was wrong.

Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquilla heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:24-26 ASV).

Apollos was sincere, and honestly believed he was right in his teaching until he was taught “the way of God more accurately.”

Many of the conversions recorded in the book of Acts were of people who were already religious. Those baptized on the day of Pentecost were referred to as, “devout men out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). Because they were “devout men,” they changed when they found out the right way.

The eunuch, whom Philip baptized had come hundreds of miles to Jerusalem to worship, but changed his religion when he learned he was wrong (Acts 8).

Paul the apostle had always been very religious, a Pharisee, and zealous. Always sincere and worshipful, Paul changed from the religion of his fathers to the religion of the apostles when he found out that he was wrong.

Cornelius was a devout man before Peter ever came and preached salvation to him. But when he found out that he was in error and was still lost, he was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:48).

And so it is, my friend. If one is honest and wants to go to heaven, he will readily and gladly change from wrong to right as soon as he learns it. Will you?

**Coming Soon: “*...To The Saints Which are at Ephesus*”
A New Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians**

Indications Of Bible Inspiration: Religious Errors It Anticipated

Jess Whitlock

It is only by the inspiration of God that so many religious errors could not only be anticipated, but also soundly defeated by the power of God's authoritative Word. Numerous false doctrines existed in the first century that were demolished by the Gospel of Christ. With the passing of centuries new false doctrines have accumulated and continue to the present day. In preparation for my first public debate with Mr. Ballard, my moderator, the late brother J.T. Marlin gave me some good counsel. He put his arm around my shoulder and said, “brother Jess when your opponent tries to prove his proposition by going to a particular verse of the Scripture, then you look at the several verses preceding and following that verse. Most of the time God has already prepared your rebuttal for you.” That good advice proved to be so very true. My opponent argued in our discussion on baptism, that all the Philippian jailor had to do to be saved was to believe. He beamed as he quoted: “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and

thou shalt be saved...” (Acts 16:31). In my rebuttal to that argument all I did was to read Acts 16:31-34, pointing out that “they spake the word of the Lord unto him...” (32), “and was baptized, he and all his immediately...” (33), “and rejoiced greatly... having believed in God” (34). The Word of God not only anticipates religious error, but refutes it as well!

Look at the Calvinistic doctrine of “foreordination and predestination.” This doctrine asserts that certain ones are arbitrarily chosen to be saved or lost, and there is nothing the sinner can do to change that arbitrary decision. Acts 2:21 responds, “And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The invitation is offered to “whosoever” will.

The so-called “thousand year earthly reign of Christ” is destroyed by Peter in Acts 2:30-31, “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he forseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ...” Therefore, Christ is not coming again to set up His throne on earth, for He is *now* seated on His throne at the right hand of God in heaven. His kingdom is His church (Matt 16:18-19; Col. 1:13, 18).

Consider the myriad of religious folks who teach that salvation comes by “faith only” or “grace only” or “confession only” et al. Most of these will argue that baptism is not essential to salvation. When Peter and the other apostles were asked by those on Pentecost what they must do, Peter’s answer was unmistakable. Acts 2:38, “And Peter said unto them, repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” One would need professional help to misunderstand what Peter and the apostles taught. In Acts 2:41 we learn, “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.”

Some religious groups assert that man does not have to do anything in order to be saved, that God’s grace and love will take care of everything. That was the position defended by Mr. Ballard. He argued that “man *does not* contribute *one whit* to his salvation.” In my rebuttal I said, “Mr. Ballard, I am a *Whit*-lock, and I want you to hear the words of the inspired Peter who said, “...*save yourselves from this crooked generation.*” Yes sir, there are things that man must do in order to have eternal salvation.

There are enemies of the Bible today who deny the bodily resurrection of Christ the Lord. In Acts, chapter two, His resurrection is predicted (25-ff), His resurrection is then affirmed (29-ff), His resurrection was witnessed by the twelve (32), and following His resurrection He was exalted to the throne of God (33-ff). Three thousand souls obeyed the Gospel that day (36) and were added to the church by the Lord Jesus Christ (47).

Did you notice we demolished many false doctrines of men and never left the second chapter of Acts? Just think what would happen if we should take the New Testament chapter by chapter. This brief article would become a 500-page manuscript. How can we view the Word of the living God as being anything other than God’s inspired, inerrant, and infallible message to mankind?

The Plan of Redemption

John Allen Hudson

It is utterly impossible to discuss all the parts to the wonderful scheme of human redemption. But there is the same evidence of plan and purpose there as in nature, where again it would be impossible to discuss all the parts, or even name them, in one brief article.

Suffice it to say that every part is related to the Lord Jesus Christ and His expiating death on Calvary, just as in nature every part is related to every other part and the whole to a congruous plan. Jesus, the Sun of righteousness is the center of the scheme of redemption as the sun is the center of this solar system.

1. God planned, when the first couple sinned, to save man. He was the original planner or designer.
2. Jesus Christ purposed to enter into man's condition and thus prepare Himself to represent man's cause, to go between God and man and effect a reconciliation. He was the mediatorial cause. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
3. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Godhead, became the revealing cause, for after the death and departure of our Lord from the apostles, Jesus had the Holy Spirit to come and be their Comforter and to bring all things to their minds whatsoever He had said unto them (John 14:25-26; 16:13-25). This was the special, superior, and distinct work which the Holy Spirit did beginning with the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2). Hence, the Holy Spirit was the third divine causation in the scheme of redemption.
4. The blood of Jesus Christ was the procuring cause of man's redemption. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22), but it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. No. Only the blood of Christ could save. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
5. The apostles were the instrumental agency or cause in men's redemption. They were appointed to treat with men and women and to offer redemption to all mankind. Hence, they were called ambassadors for Christ.

In the first sermon preached by them, recorded in Acts 2, man was offered complete forgiveness in the name of Christ for the first time in the history of the world. In that sermon the apostles manifested the place and position that God had assigned them in the scheme of human redemption. They were the vessels and bearers of the message of salvation. What a lofty mission! And for that they had been intensively trained—trained as never were men trained before. They had been with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for three and one-half years day and night. In the crowded villages, on the lonely plains by the sea, He had instructed them unto the kingdom of God. Then He gave them the Holy Spirit to safeguard their utterances and to have them say just what heaven wanted them to say in the momentous plan of saving the eternal spirits of men and women. What a work, indeed! "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ," said the apostle to the Gentiles (2 Cor. 5:20).

6. The gospel was the didactic and prescribing cause. It makes man to know his condition and God's grace in contrast therewith. Jesus said for the apostles to go and teach all nations. He said for them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. His commission of authority and commission of duty upon them was most explicit. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have said unto you and, lo, I am with you alway; even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20). "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15-16). Wherever they should go from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the earth, their message was to be one and unchanging. It was to be the gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16-17).
7. Finally, faith exercised in the heart, would be the appropriating cause. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth, in him, should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

When the people on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus heard, for the first time in the history of the world, the gospel in its fullness offering from God complete forgiveness, Peter said to them, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Faith—faith in their hearts was required. "Then being cut to their hearts, they cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They believed, and coupled with that faith was this obedience: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:38-39).

Have you obeyed the gospel plan of salvation? Do you now enjoy the peace with God that comes through the remission of your sins? If not, why not obey the Lord today and be baptized for the remission of sins?

Restoration of New Testament Christianity in England Preceded That in America

Keith Sisman

EDITOR'S NOTE: The late Keith Sisman was a gospel preacher in Ramsey, England who did extensive research into churches of Christ in that country. Further information can be acquired from his website, *Traces of the Kingdom* at <http://www.traces-of-the-kingdom.org/>

For those seeking to restore the New Testament Church, they found that the Reformation was not going to go far enough. The question of baptism, church and state and the autonomy of congregations were three issues that the leaders of the Reformation were absolutely unprepared to deal with. Because of this, the necessity to break with the established church was forced upon the Restorers.

The so-called great Reformers, Calvin and Zwingli, were prepared to execute Anabaptists (by burning) and did so on many occasions. Henry VIII showed no mercy to any one opposed to the new Church of England (CoE), and it was only Luther who had any sort of mercy towards anyone opposed to his opinions. Under Luther such people were sent outside the country where their fate can only be guessed at.

With Berengarius in the 11th century, believers in baptism and a return the Lord's Supper was made. Wycliffe in the 14th century added to this teaching that Elders and Bishops are the same. With Helwis (the spelling of this name alters considerably with different authors) the idea of keeping the first day of the week holy, and for all Christians to observe the Lord's Supper on this day was taught. The idea of the church being the kingdom and therefore the rejection of the recitation of the "Lord's Prayer" in worship came about. During the 1600s the church of Christ in England was known for its rejection of the instrument and for "singing from the heart."

The movement known today as the Puritan movement started during the 1550s, possibly at Cambridge, which was always a centre for Puritanism. The term *Puritan* was a name given by their opponents and refers to their return to the Purity of the Gospel and Christian living. In the strict sense the Puritans were a party opposed to the Anglican party in the Church of England (CoE). The Anglicans, who were high church, ultimately won with the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and from then on the CoE returned to many Catholic beliefs and ceremonies.

In a broad sense the Puritans also included the independents such as the church of Christ although no organization was ever established to share views. The CoE Puritans were Calvinistic and were Presbyterian, much of their beliefs coming from the reformed churches of the continent. Their Bible was the Genevan version and they had a major influence on the 1611 King James Bible.

They were opposed to the use of the Altar for Communion and often used kitchen tables to serve the Lord's Supper. They attacked the use of costumes for the priests, the

use of the sign of the cross, organs, ecclesiastical courts, the episcopacy and religious days and holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Under the Puritans much frivolity was banned such as the pagan practice of dancing round the May Pole. The Puritans advocated preaching and the Bible as being the sole authority as opposed to tradition. Under the previous Anglican system of preaching a preacher needed to preach only four sermons each year to remain in office.

From the 1550s onwards the church of Christ sought to propagate the gospel and were well known for their evangelism. Looking towards the reformers they sought to separate church from state. They were known as *Anabaptists* and must not be confused with the continental Anabaptists. The Baptist church which came about during the 1600s were also known as Anabaptists. Therefore there were three major groups in the 1600s who were labelled together with others as Anabaptists. This can be confusing when reading various histories because historians still make the same mistake.

During the 1600s these three groups met together although this resulted in division as there was no common ground in some areas such as Calvinism and Baptism (in regards to salvation). The Lord's Church at this time identified themselves as being "the church of Christ." All Anabaptists in England were preaching and meeting against the law. Under the Puritans from 1646 they were tolerated.

In the 1700s there were three distinct groups; the Anabaptists who were just a small remnant, the church of Christ, which was established in Europe, England and the Americas, but was severely weakened after many divisions. Largest was the huge Baptist denomination, most of whom were Calvinistic, particularly in America.

During the 1500s and 1600s the Lord's church in England was far larger than most will realize. Conservative estimates suggested around fifty plus congregations at the turn of the century. The church was largely made up of people from a working background and was not represented in parliament.

As the Puritans increased in power during the 1640s the country was torn apart by civil wars from 1642 to 1648. Arguments existed between King and Parliament and in the church against the Anglicans and Puritans. As the Church of England is a state church these arguments were political as well as religious. The Archbishop of Canterbury, high church Anglican William Laud, was executed on Tower Hill, London on 10 January 1645.

In January, 1649, King Charles I was tried for his life and executed. Never before had an English king been executed by law. Certainly kings had been brutally murdered but never killed legally. Now the Puritans under Cromwell had power in the country, in the church, parliament and the army. Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector of England and the Commonwealth on 16 Dec. 1653. Cromwell died on 3 Sept. 1658 and was replaced by his son Richard but this lasted only a short time. The monarchy was reinstated and during 1662 the act of Uniformity was re-established.

Under this act those who preached against the now successful Anglican party in the church were removed from office. Many were imprisoned where they died. This act with small alterations is still in force. A preacher in the Church of England may be able to preach legally for sodomites in the Church, but the same preacher cannot preach against infant baptism!

The true church suffered greatly at this time. John Milton—poet and author of *Paradise Lost*—previously a Presbyterian became a member of the Lord's church and suffered greatly for his belief. The church in Bedford had an able preacher named John Bunyan—author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. He suffered 12 years in prison (1660-72) before becoming the first licensed preacher outside the Anglican church in England. He died in 1688. He unfortunately adopted the doctrine of salvation by "grace only" and was well known for his liberal theology, which did much damage to the church.

Cromwell was well acquainted with the Lord's church. For a while whilst in London he had met with the Bell Alley church of Christ (Coleman Street), the same one that some of the pilgrim Fathers also worshipped with. Many in the army were members of the Lord's church and the head of the army was Cromwell.

For the first time in English history, the Lord's church could worship without fear, as well as being able to influence the politicians of the time. Cromwell's son-in-law, The Lord Deputy Fleetwood, was married to Bridgett, being her second husband, the first having died. They were both members of the church of Christ and well known for it. Major General Harrison, Major General Ludlow and Colonel Hutchinson were other well known members of the church.

As such they were able to influence parliament against imposing a compulsory religion. Cromwell was a member of an independent church. Whether that was a church of Christ or part of the greater congregational movement is difficult to establish. The congregational churches at this time were known as independent, separatist or even dissenting churches. The churches of Christ were labeled as being part of this movement. These churches became later known as the United Reformed Church and as such are clearly today separate from the Lord's Church.

After 1660, repression again was forced on all churches who opposed the State Church of England—now strongly Anglican. This continued until the Act of Toleration was passed in 1689. This allowed not only for the legalisation of congregational churches but also allowed preachers to preach against infant baptism (outside the CoE).

With the newly forming Baptist theology the Lord's church in Britain largely fell away from the true Gospel. Some congregations survived, both on the continent to the 1950s and in England to the 1800s, whereupon they came into fellowship with the American churches of Christ.

In America it would be the Campbells and others who would start to think in terms of restoration, which they worked very hard at, but in Europe the church had existed for hundreds of years—small but beautiful as the bride of Christ.

Why I Won't Sing That Song

Jerry C. Brewer

In my travels, I've noticed that some churches use song books containing a song entitled, *Glory, Glory Hallelujah*. That title is misleading, and was not written as a spiritual song to be used in worship. Its original title is, *Battle Hymn of The Republic* and I **won't** sing that song in worship because of its history, origin, philosophy, Biblical error, and blasphemy. It should **not** be in **any** song book which Christians use in worship. It was written by a woman who denied the Deity of Jesus Christ and it expresses sentiments that are anti-Scriptural, carnal in nature, and more accurately resemble the philosophy of Islam in advocating the killing of unbelievers.

Northern religionists and their abolitionist allies viewed the War Between The States (1861-1865) as a struggle of **their righteousness** against the "evil" South and that *they* were God's instrument for meting out His wrath. That was the thesis of Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), who wrote *Battle Hymn of The Republic* in November, 1861, and which was first published in 1862. In an analysis of Howe and her song, Michael Givens wrote the following in 2009 in *Confederate Veteran*:

Mrs. Howe was not a Bible-believing Christian. She was a Unitarian Transcendentalist. As a Unitarian, her religious views were not based on fundamental theocentric doctrines of the Scriptures, but upon the anthropocentric beliefs of the higher critics of her day. . . . By her own statements, it is very clear as to what her opinion was concerning Jesus Christ. She was quoted in her biography saying, 'Not until the Civil War (sic) did I officially join the Unitarian church and accept the fact that Christ was merely a great teacher with no higher claim to preeminence in wisdom, goodness, and power than any other man.'

In her Battle Hymn, Mrs. Howe arrogantly applied the apocalyptic judgment of Revelation 14:17-20 and 19:15 to the Confederate Nation. She pictured the Union army not only as that instrument which would cause Southern blood to flow out upon the earth, but also as the very expression of God's word.

...from the moment these lines were first sung, when the Union Army first crossed onto Southern soil, the troops, via the strains of this song, were (according to Howe) authorized agents of the Lord's work. Thenceforth, of the nearly 700,000 lives lost in that internecine war, the Union dead fell as martyrs, with a special place awaiting them in heaven. But Confederate soldiers or even Southern non-combatants were Satan's minions, the plebian others, deserving of death and no hereafter.

Simply stated, this Battle Hymn was used as war propaganda to legitimize a cause for the Northern soldiers and citizens in their bloody invasion and destruction of the South.

Not only does the song express sentiments of carnal warfare and the bloody destruction of a people, but its words teach religious error, and it is as sinful to **sing** error as it is to **preach** it from the pulpit. Consider the following errors taught in the song's original lyrics.

Stanza 1:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword
His truth is marching on.

To apply John's apocalyptic vision in Revelation 14-19 to *any* nation is a blatant disregard and perversion of Scripture. The, "Fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword," is Howe's direct reference to the Union armies who invaded the South. *They* were God's "terrible swift sword." "His truth" that she said was, "marching on" referred to the weapons of that carnal war wielded by Union soldiers—not the "sword of the Spirit" with which Christ's soldiers are armed (Eph. 6:17). The Christian's warfare and weaponry are **spiritual—not carnal**. The "truth" which she said, "is marching on" is a political statement referring to her perceived "divine mission" of the Union against the South.

Stanza 2:

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners so with you my grace shall deal";
Let the Hero born of woman crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on.

The "fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel" refers to the Union soldiers' bayoneted rifles—a blasphemous substitution for the gospel of Christ, God's power to save men (Rom. 1:16-17). Salvation comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ, revealed through inspired men (John 14:26; 16:12-13; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 2:9-16)—not in weapons of carnal warfare.

The second line of this stanza is in quotes and is allegedly God's message to those soldiers. His "contemners" are Southern soldiers who, Howe says, have contempt for Him. In this line, she says that God promises to give them grace to the extent that they annihilate the enemy, i.e., the more Southern blood they shed, the more God will favor them.

This is diametrically—and diabolically—opposed to Paul's teaching: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 5:20; 6:1-2). Based upon what Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 5—that Christ's sacrifice is extensive enough to cover **all** sin, great and small—some might argue that, "If the greater the sin, the greater the grace, then we may continue in more sin and receive even more of God's grace." Paul's inspired answer in Romans 6:1-2 is, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."

Another blasphemous assertion in this stanza is, "Let the Hero born of woman crush

the serpent with his heel.” This phrase refers to the first mention in the Bible of a coming Saviour and His war with Satan, as God said to the serpent: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Howe took this Scripture, which pointed to the Son of God, and with presumptuous blasphemy, personified Union soldiers as “The Hero born of woman” who would “crush the serpent with his heel; “the serpent” being metaphorically personified by Southern soldiers.

Stanza 3

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

“Seeing” Christ “in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps,” she again blasphemes the Son of God who walked in the midst of the golden candlesticks, representing the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:13, 20). In those “camps” she saw an altar upon which the Union “priests” would sacrifice Southern lives—a punishment meted out in “His righteous sentence” read by the light of the soldiers’ “dim and flaring lamps.”

Stanza 4:

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

This begins the crescendo that will culminate in Stanza 5. This stanza urges the soldiers to finish their bloody work of subjugating and/or eliminating the Southern people. His (the Lord’s) trumpet is sounded forth to battle and “shall never call retreat” until the South is crushed. The “sifting out the hearts of men” is being done by the war in which they are engaged and the Union soldiers are His instruments of judgment. The call then goes forth to, “be swift, my soul, to answer Him,” to which is added, “Be jubilant, my feet”—an urgent call for them to complete Christ’s bloody work with all the strength of body and soul.

Stanza 5:

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me.
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

While the first line may be poetry, it far transcends whatever poetic license it may have into false teaching. Christ was **not** born “in the beauty of the lilies.” No earthly “beauty” surrounded His birth. He was born into this world in a stable and laid in a manger (Luke 2:1-7, 12). His birth was not in the manner of a king, surrounded by beauty in royal quarters, but as a lowly child among animals.

In his commentary on Luke, chapter 2, Matthew Henry observed,

He was born *at an inn*. That son of David that was the glory of his father’s house had no inheritance that he could command, no not in the city of David, no nor a friend that would accommodate his mother in distress with lodgings to be brought to bed in. Christ was born *in an inn*, to intimate that he came into the world but to sojourn here for awhile, as in an inn, and to teach us to do likewise.

He was born *in a stable*; so some think the word signifies which we translate *a manger*, a place for cattle to stand to be fed in. Because there was *no room in the inn*, and for want of conveniences, nay for want of necessities, he was laid *in a manger*, instead of a cradle. The word which we render *swaddling clothes* some derive from a word that signifies to *rend*, or *tear*, and these

infer that he was so far from having a good suit of child-bed linen, that his very swaddles were ragged and torn.

Many suppose that, being born during the time of the taxing, he was enrolled as well as his father and mother, that it might appear how *he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*. Instead of having kings tributaries to him, when he came into the world he was himself a tributary (e-Sword).

And, what is the meaning of “a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me?” It is nothing but meaningless, empty poetry that titillates the ear—not the inner man. The **soul** is **not** “transfigured” because it cannot be seen with human eyes. *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* says the word “transfigure” is, “to give a new and typically exalted or spiritual appearance to: transform outwardly and usually for the better”—a definition which fits perfectly with Howe's theology “that Christ was merely a great teacher with no higher claim to preeminence in wisdom, goodness, and power than any other man.” To Howe, Christ was **not** the Son of God, but simply a great teacher whose human insight and teaching could physically “transfigure” His fellow men “for the better.” That was her soulless religion expressed in this song.

Her third line in the last stanza is the song's climax and final exhortation to Union soldiers. “As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free.” If there is any truth in her blasphemous work, perhaps it lies in the first phrase of that line. Christ died for all men that we might be redeemed from sin by His blood (Heb. 2:9), which is only in Him through obedience to the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 1:7; Gal. 3:26-27). In gospel obedience, man's outward visage remains unchanged, and that does **not** take place in carnal warfare. Jesus said it is not the flesh that is changed in conversion, but an inner change of man's spirit.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8).

The fact that Lincoln's war cost 618,000 American lives, a death toll exceeding the combined number of Americans subsequently killed in World War One, World War Two and Vietnam, was immaterial to Howe who reveled in the bloodletting of Americans. On a single day in Lincoln's war, 23,582 Americans were killed at the Battle of Sharpsburg. That single day's death toll was more than the combined total of Americans killed in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Spanish American War and the Mexican War. Lincoln went to his grave with the blood of more than a half million of his countrymen on his hands, and Julia Ward Howe, crying, “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah” glorifying, praising, and urging the eradication of Southern people.

And **that's** why I won't sing that song.

Baptism And Pardon

Jerry C. Brewer

When the apostle Peter delivered the first recorded gospel sermon on Pentecost, his hearers were convicted of their sins and interrupted his speech, crying out, “men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Without missing a beat, Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

A clearer answer regarding the purpose of baptism cannot be found in the Bible. After

all is said and done, after all the objections are raised against this command of God, after the scholars have exhausted all their “academic” arguments opposing this command, it still remains that baptism is for (**in order to**) the remission of sins. Even though the religious world largely disdains this truth through a misconception of the remission of sins, baptism remains inseparable from it.

[Remission of sins] is confounded with a change of heart, and is supposed to be a renewing of the soul effected by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. It is regarded as an inward experience, a matter of consciousness; and men are taught to look within themselves for the evidence of it, and to find that evidence in the state of joy which immediately succeeds it (J. W. McGarvey, “Excursus A,” *A New Commentary on Acts of The Apostles*, Standard Pub. Co., 1892, p. 243).

McGarvey is pointed in his observation and succinctly contrasts the difference between most of the religious world today and New Testament teaching regarding the matter of pardon. The phrase, “remission of sins,” means forgiveness. The word translated “remission” is generally defined as, “release, as from bondage, imprisonment, etc. Secondly, when connected with sins, it means forgiveness, pardon of sins (properly, the letting them go, as though they had not been committed), remission of their penalty” (ibid. p. 244).

Forgiveness of sins, or pardon, is not an act that takes place within the consciousness of the one who is pardoned. The guilty party is forgiven by the one whom he has wronged and in the case of sin, the wronged party is God. Hence, pardon takes place in the mind of God and can be known only by some means of communication. Forgiveness is an act of the Divine mind, with reference to the sinner and not a change within the person who is forgiven (ibid. pp. 244, 245).

Remission of sins is not a change of heart. The heart is purified by faith (Acts 15:9). Neither is baptism the same as repentance. Repentance is a change of the mind or will (Matt. 21:28-29). When the gospel is preached, heard, understood, and believed, the heart is purified. Acting upon that faith, the hearer then determines to forsake his former manner of living and live according to the will of God. That is a change of will, preceded by godly sorrow and issuing in the reformation of one’s life, and that’s the exact Bible definition of repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

As God requires belief and repentance before He forgives, so He requires baptism. The act of baptism is the consummation of primary obedience to God’s will and it is the single act that changes one’s relationship to God from alien sinner to His child. Baptism puts one into Christ where all spiritual blessings are to be found (Eph. 1:3), including redemption through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). No one believes, repents, or confesses into Christ. The single act that changes one from a citizen of the kingdom of darkness to a citizen of the kingdom of God is baptism (Col. 1:13). Those who are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ are those who have been baptized for the remission of sins.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

On The Physical Death Of Jesus

Jerry C. Brewer

Death by crucifixion was one of the cruelest forms of execution ever devised by man. It probably began first among the Persians. Alexander the Great later introduced the practice to Egypt and Carthage and the Romans appear to have learned it from the Carthaginians. Although the Romans didn't invent it, they perfected it as a form of

torture and capital punishment, designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. Most people know of the crucifixion of Jesus at Calvary outside the walls of Jerusalem. However, it is doubtful that anyone comprehends the utter agony and horror of His experience.

In 1986, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* carried an article entitled, “On the Physical Death of Jesus” by William Edwards, Wesley Gabel and Floyd Hosmer. Their article described the excruciating physical ordeal that Jesus underwent. The word “excruciating” is entirely appropriate in this context. That English word is from a combination of two Latin words—*ex* meaning *from* or *out of* and *cruciatu* meaning “torture/cruelty; torture form/apparatus; suffering, severe physical/mental pain” (www.worldofdictionary.com). That describes the death that Jesus suffered for the sins of the world in the flower of His physical life.

Physically, Jesus was in the prime of His manhood. At about 33 years of age, he had traveled across the land of Palestine by walking and was doubtless in fine physical condition. But his quick death on the cross surprised even the Roman Governor Pilate who had ordered His death (Mark 15:43-45). Jesus' physical condition was probably affected by the great stress He underwent between 9 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m. Friday. During the night He had been abandoned by His closest friends, Peter had denied Him, and He had suffered a beating after His first Jewish trial. The authors say that, “in the setting of a traumatic and sleepless night, He had been forced to walk two and a half miles to and from the sites of his various trials.” These factors, they say, “may have rendered Jesus particularly vulnerable to the hemodynamic effects of the scourging.”

That is another important consideration in Jesus' death—His scourging. According to the article, “Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution, and only women and Roman Senators, or soldiers (except in the case of desertion) were exempt.” The scourging (or flogging) was a torturous preliminary to crucifixion. The victim was stripped of his clothing and his hands were tied to an upright post. His back, buttocks and legs were then flogged either by two soldiers—one on either side of the man—or by one soldier who alternated sides. The instrument used in the scourging was a short whip, called a *flagrum* or *flagellum*, which had several single or braided leather thongs of different lengths, with small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones tied into the braids at intervals.

The severity of the scourging often depended on the disposition of the soldiers, and was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death. After the beating, the soldiers often cruelly taunted their victim. As the soldiers repeatedly struck the victim's back with full force, the iron balls would cause deep contusions, and the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into His skin and subcutaneous tissues. As the flogging continued, the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivering ribbons of bleeding flesh. The pain and blood loss from this beating usually set the stage for circulatory shock and the extent of blood loss may very well have determined just how long the victim would live on the cross.

According to Matthew 27:24-26, Jesus was severely whipped in the Praetorium and although the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John do not describe the details of the beating, it is implied in First Peter 2:24, and a study of the Greek words describing it indicate it was particularly harsh. Then the Roman soldiers, amused that this weakened man had claimed to be a king, mocked Him by placing a robe on His shoulders, a crown of thorns on His head, and a wooden staff as a scepter in His right hand. Then they spat on Him and struck Him on the head with the wooden staff.

When they tore the robe from Jesus' back, they probably reopened the scourging wounds. According to the the physicians' article, His severe scourging, combined with a great blood loss probably left Jesus in a pre-shock state. The physical and mental abuse He suffered at the hands of both Jews and Romans, combined with His lack of food, water, and sleep also contributed to His weakened state. So, according to the medical authorities, even before His actual crucifixion, Jesus' physical condition was serious and possibly critical.

After Jesus suffered the flogging inflicted by Roman soldiers, His physical condition was extremely weakened. In that condition, He was still forced to carry his cross to the place where He was to be crucified until he fell beneath its weight and Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry it (John 19:17; Mark 15:21). Since the weight of the entire cross was about 300 pounds, only the crossbar was carried. This weighed about 75 pounds and was placed across the nape of the victim's neck and balanced along both shoulders. The outstretched arms were then usually tied to the crossbar and the procession to the crucifixion site was led by a Roman Centurion. During this procession, a Roman soldier usually carried a sign on which the condemned man's name and crime were written. This sign was then nailed to the cross for the public to see. In Jesus' case, Pilate had written, "This is Jesus The King of The Jews."

At the crucifixion site, the victim was thrown to the ground with his arms outstretched along the cross bar. The hands could either be tied to the crossbar or nailed. Nailing was the preferred Roman method. The nails were tapered iron spikes about five to seven inches long with a square shaft of about three-eighths of an inch across. They were driven through the wrists, rather than the palms. After the victim was securely nailed to the cross, he was lifted up to hang there and the feet were nailed to the upright on which the crossbar hung.

After this was done, the soldiers and onlookers often taunted the victim and the soldiers divided his clothes among themselves. They could not do this with Jesus' seamless garment, so they cast lots for it, fulfilling prophecy (Psa. 21:16-18; Matt. 27:35). Then they waited for the victim to die. The length of time a person survived on the cross ranged from three or four hours to three or four days, depending on the severity of the beating. During this time, insects would often light upon or burrow into the open wounds of the helpless man and birds would tear at these places. It was also customary to leave the body to be devoured by predatory animals, but Roman law allowed the family of the condemned to take the body if they requested it.

Adding to the agony of this ordeal, when the victim was thrown to the ground on his back for nailing him to the cross, his scourging wounds most likely would become torn open again and contaminated with dirt. And with each breath he took, the painful scourging wounds would be scraped against the rough wood of the upright part of the cross.

It has also been shown that the ligaments and bones of the wrist can support the weight of a body hanging from them, but the palms cannot. That's why the spikes were probably driven through Jesus' wrists between the two rows of carpal bones. This might not have produced a fracture, but it would sever the rather large median nerve and that would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms, according to the article by the physicians. We might also note that although the Scripture references the nails in His hands, the ancients customarily considered the wrist to be a part of the hand.

The article goes on to say that the major physiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. The person who was crucified could barely breathe and "the body, pulling down on the outstretched arms and shoulders would tend to fix the intercostal muscles in a state of inhalation and severely hinder passive exhalation." He could inhale, but was hindered from exhaling, so his breathing was very shallow. They also note that muscle cramps, or what they call "tetanic contractions" due to fatigue, would further hinder his breathing. Thus each effort at breathing would become agonizing and tiring. That's important to remember as one studies Jesus' words from the cross. Each of his utterances was made with the most agonizing pain and effort.

For one on a cross to adequately exhale, he had to lift his body by pushing up on the feet and flexing the elbows. But this movement would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals producing further searing pain. The flexion of the elbows would also cause the wrists to rotate about the iron spikes and cause fiery pain along the median nerves. The lifting of the body would also painfully scrape the scourged back of the victim against the rough wooden upright part of the cross and muscle cramps of

the outstretched and uplifted arms would also add to the discomfort. As a result, each effort to breathe would become agonizing and eventually result in asphyxiation.

After this, the soldiers and onlookers often taunted the victim and the soldiers divided his clothes among themselves. They could not do this with Jesus' seamless garment, so they cast lots for it, fulfilling David's prophecy (Psa. 22:16-18; Matt. 27:35). Then they waited for the victim to die. The length of time a person survived on the cross ranged from three or four hours to three or four days, depending on the severity of the beating. During this time, insects would often light upon or burrow into the open wounds of the helpless man and birds would tear at these places. It was also customary to leave the body to be devoured by predatory animals, but Roman law allowed the family of the condemned to take the body if they requested it.

Jesus spoke seven times from the cross, and since speech occurs while a person exhales, his short utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful. At about 3 p.m. on that Friday, Jesus cried with a loud voice, bowed His head, and died. Luke says, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). The Roman soldiers and onlookers recognized the moment of his death, which even caused a hardened centurion to exclaim, "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

The Jews didn't want the bodies on the crosses on the Sabbath, which began at sunset, and asked Pilate to hasten the deaths of the men who were crucified. This was done by breaking their legs. Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, but when they came to Him, they discovered that He was already dead, and did not break His legs. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34). The authors of the article say the wound was in the thorax or chest and that "a large flow of blood would be more likely when the thin-walled right atrium or ventricle was perforated." They also note that the water probably represented "serous pleural and pericardial fluid."

After such a short time on the cross, His death amazed Pilate. The authors say His death may have been hastened by His state of exhaustion, and the severity of the scourging with its great loss of blood and pre-shock state. To support that conclusion, they cite the fact that Jesus was unable to carry the crossbar. They say the cause of His death may have been due to many factors related to hypovolemic shock, exhaustion, asphyxia, and perhaps acute heart failure.

They point out that the important feature may not be **how** Jesus died, but rather **whether** He died. Here's what they conclude:

Clearly, the weight of historical and medical evidence indicates that Jesus was dead before the wound to his side was inflicted and supports the traditional view that the spear, thrust between His right ribs, probably perforated not only the right lung but also the pericardium and heart and thereby ensured his death. Accordingly, interpretations based on the assumption that Jesus did not die on the cross appear to be at odds with modern medical knowledge.

The conclusion of these medical experts **refutes** the **Moslem claim** that Jesus **didn't** die on the cross.

That Jesus died is a fact, but the central point to be made about His death is **why** He died. The law of God demanded justice—death for those who sin—but nothing in that law provided forgiveness for sin. Therefore, the grace of God provided **for us** what we could not provide for ourselves—a perfect sacrifice for sin in the person of His own Son. It was in His death that Jesus shed His precious, guiltless blood which cleanses man from his sins (1 John 1:7; Eph. 1:7). But Jesus' blood must be applied to the soul through gospel obedience. That is done when we believe He was who he claimed to be (John 8:24), repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31), confess our belief in him with our mouths (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37), and submit to Him in baptism into His death (Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:3-5). The **only way** to receive the benefits of Christ's blood is to be **in Him** (Eph. 1:7). Any other way is bloodless and futile.

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God's Warning of Judgment

Marvin L. Weir

Plague after plague fell upon the hardhearted Egyptian Pharaoh. The land was reeling from the mighty hand of God. Water was turned to blood (Exo. 7:20), frogs covered the land (8:6), lice afflicted man and beast (8:17), swarms of flies corrupted the land (8:24), deadly disease killed the Egyptian's cattle (9:6), and then terrible boils broke out upon man and beast. (9:9). Four more plagues will follow before Pharaoh reluctantly relents and lets Israel depart from Egypt (hail, locusts, darkness, and death of the firstborn. But let us focus our study for now upon this 7th plague from God!

The **evidence** of God's existence and mighty power is not enough to convince some men to yield to His will. We see:

God Warning of Judgment! God's words are plain: "Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail..." (9:18). First, we see His "I will" was certain and sure. The wrath of hail was coming, but there still was time for protection. Second, the hail was to occur tomorrow, and this leaves no time for postponing the preparation for shelter.

God warns today that life is short. James says, "whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (4:14). Although the Bible says, "The judge standeth before the doors" (Jas. 5:9) and "now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2), many today procrastinate and live as if there will be many tomorrows.

God's Earnest Entreaty! "Now therefore send, hasten in thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; for every man and beast that shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die" (Exo. 9:19). The judgment of God was coming (the hail), but God offers the people a way of escape (His mercy). First, the people and beasts were to be "brought home" for safety. Every living thing left outside would die. Second, such was to be done with haste lest time run out!

Today we are reminded that salvation is found **only** "in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10). In case one objects to saying that salvation is **only** in Christ, I refer you to the words of Peter who stated of Jesus, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). One who fails to seek refuge **in** Christ will perish. Obeying the gospel is the **only** way to get into Christ. One must hear God's Word (Rom. 10:17), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ as God's only begotten (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38). Baptism is the final step in God's plan of salvation that puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27) where salvation is **located**! Baptism is a burial or immersion and occurs **before** one has newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Now to those who delight in teaching that baptism has nothing to do with one's salvation, read Romans 6:4 again and argue with God as to when salvation (newness of life) occurs!

Many today reject God's plan for safety in Christ Jesus. Others, while probably knowing they ought to obey the gospel, convince themselves God's judgment will not come for a few more days, weeks, or years. Listen to God, and seek refuge at once!

The Obedience of Faith! "He that feared the word of Jehovah among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses" (Exo. 9:20). God was merciful to the Egyptians in that He gave them one day of grace. All that believed God obeyed His message and fled to homes for protection. This is a classic example of people being saved by grace through faith. There is nothing mysterious or miraculous about their faith. Their faith came by **hearing** and **obeying** the Word of God. We

know the fate of those who heard God but refused to take shelter.

People today must also **hear** and **act** upon the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” God speaks today only through His Word (Heb. 1:1-2). His Word must be accepted as truth (John 17:17) and obeyed (John 14:15). There is a vast difference between believing in God and believing God. Many people believe that God exists, but they are not willing to comply with His divine will. The majority of humanity still insists on being saved the way they want to be saved, and worshipping the way they want to worship. One who will not do what God says must be done does not believe God! This truth should be simple enough for any accountable person to grasp!

The Price of Unbelief! “And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field” (Exo. 9:25). Unbelief leads to indifference, and indifference leads to destruction! The Egyptians who did not flee to their homes for safety were killed by the hail as God had promised. Bible history is a wonderful teacher if people will humble themselves and be taught!

Today, God warns that those who refuse to seek salvation **in Christ** will be eternally lost. Christ is indeed the Savior, but He is the author of salvation **only** to those “**that obey him**” (Heb. 5:9). The question: “Do you believe salvation is **only** in Christ Jesus?” If so, will you obey the gospel, and be added to the Lord’s church?

Honest Searchers of Scripture

Lester Kamp

We should all be searchers of the Scriptures helping each other come to an understanding of the truth, which is the Word of God (John 17:17). I believe that there is much for me to learn from God’s Word, but I also believe that I can know the truth and can know that I am saved (1 John 5:13). I also know that there are many false teachers in the world and sometimes in the church (2 Pet. 2:1-2; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29-30). There are some who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 5:16). We are warned, therefore, to try the spirits whether they are of God (1 John 4:1). The majority is not necessarily the right standard (see Matt. 7:13-14); following the traditions of men, including the majority, is what Isaiah and Jesus had in mind when they described people’s reception (or lack of it) of God’s Word:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matt. 13:15; see Isa. 6:10).

The **right** standard—the standard by which we will all be judged—is the inspired Word (John 12:48).

I believe that we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1)—that is what the text says. But what kind of faith saves? Paul begins and ends this letter to the Romans by defining the faith that saves (justifies). In Romans 1:5 he refers to the “obedience to the faith” and in Romans 16:26 he concludes with “the obedience to the faith.” The kind of faith that justifies is the kind of faith that obeys. Abraham’s faith, since he is the “father of the faithful,” is a prime illustration of this. See James 2:21-24. By the way, the only verse in the entire New Testament that says anything about faith alone as it relates to salvation is in James 2. It reads: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (verse 24). Even the demons believe (Jam. 2:19), but surely they are not saved. Notice please that Romans 5:1 **does not say** that one is justified by “faith **only**.” I believe that would be adding to the Scriptures, don’t you?

Consider Acts 11:12-18. Look at verse 14. Cornelius was told to send for Peter, a preacher, “who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved.” Some of those words Peter told them “whereby thou and thy house shall be saved” included that which is here referenced: “And he (Peter) commanded them (Cornelius and his

household) to be baptized” (Acts 10:48). This is water baptism (see also Acts 8:36); Holy Spirit baptism is nowhere commanded in the Scriptures. While we are here, let me emphasize that the book of Acts records cases of conversion in the first century. Look at these records carefully. Baptism is the only act of obedience that is specifically mentioned in every single case of conversion recorded—not hearing the Gospel, not faith, not repentance, not confessing faith. The rest are surely implied in each case, but baptism is specifically mentioned and yet it the one that many object to. If baptism is a work, it is a work of God (not a meritorious human work) for He authorized it, but so is even faith (John 6:29). God’s plan for the salvation of man involves the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, God’s Word, and not some direct operation on the human heart. If the later were the case God would be a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

Consider Mark 16:16 (some question the authenticity of this verse, but I have considered the evidence and believe it to be part of the inspired text). The text reads: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Jesus did not say “He that believeth shall be saved and be baptized if he decides he wants to or to demonstrate that he is saved.” The conjunction *and* ties the two things together. You cannot meet half of the requirements and meet the requirements. Both are necessary. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Then consider the last part: “he that believeth not shall be damned.” Some suggest that nothing is said about the one not baptized. Such is not necessary. This is statement of Jesus is parallel to this sentence: “He that eateth and digesteth his food shall live; but he that eateth not shall die.” In this case it should be obvious that if one refuses to eat then digestion would not occur and therefore the person would die. The same is true in the statement of Jesus which is parallel.

But also consider: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Man is lost because of his sins. Unless and until those sins are forgiven, he will remain lost. To receive the remission of sins (this phrase “unto the remission of sins” is exactly parallel to “unto to the remission of sins” in Matthew 26:28 if you need help in determining the meaning here) one must “repent and be baptized.” Note the conjunction and again. Both repentance and baptism are required—not just one, but both. In Acts 22:16, Saul is told to be baptized to “wash away” his sins. Not here or anywhere else in the Scriptures is it taught that baptism is an outward act signifying sins already remitted, or forgiven.

Hence, completely in agreement with all of these Scriptures (and more which could be cited); “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God...” (2 Tim. 2:15). Be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures to see whether these things are true (Acts 17:11).

“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). I pray that the Lord will open your heart through His Word.

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Society's Crumbling Foundation

Ron Cosby

After creation, the first act by the Father was to institute and establish the home. Family is not just part of a commercial for the American way of life, it far surpasses baseball and apple pie. It is the foundation of **any** society, including America, though you

would not know it by the way society has sought to dissolve God's view of home. For a society to be blessed, the nation must obey God's law regarding the family.

Attempts To Destroy The Home

Materialists, atheists, communists, humanists, and feminists have their theories on marriage, family, and the home. Their agenda ought to alarm us. The few quotes that I am about to place before you express the heart and soul of a variety of philosophies that carry great influence in America.

Feminists blame the home as the reason for their supposed oppression and lack of worth. To their way of thinking, if they can destroy the family they can establish their own good. Linda Gordon said,

The nuclear family must be destroyed, and people must find better ways of living together... Families have supported oppression by separating people into small, isolated units, unable to join together to fight for common interests... ("Functions of the Family," *Women: A Journal of Liberation*, Fall, 1969).

Feminist, Roxanne Dunbar encourages women to leave their husbands, saying, "How will the family unit be destroyed?... [W]omen can begin establishing a community of work with each other and we can fight collectively. Women will feel freer to leave their husbands..."

This materialist way of life has sent more women to the divorce courts, seeking freedom. Robert Hughes, Jr., Ph.D., Former Professor, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, College of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Missouri-Columbia, said,

The divorce rate in the United States has generally been going up throughout the 20th century until its peak in the late 1970s. The rate of divorce has been slowly declining since that peak. In the most recent data, there were about 20 divorces for every 1,000 women over the age of 15. This number is down from about 23 divorces per 1,000 women in 1978, but it is still significantly greater than the rate of divorce during the 1950s. At that time, the rate of divorce was about 5 per 1,000 women
(www.missourifamilies.org/quick/divorceqa/divorceqa3.htm)

Some may think that the quoted statistics refute our assertion that modern philosophies have aided the breakup of the home. However, we need to hear Dr. Hughes tell us the reason for the lower divorce rate. Among the reasons, he says, "A variety of factors are producing the current leveling off of the divorce rate... more young people are cohabiting rather than getting married. The breakup of this kind of relationship does not get recorded as a divorce." It sounds to me like the philosophers have gotten their message across.

Of course, husbands are not helping much. Without the bond of love and the moral constraint of God's Word, they are chasing their neighbor's wife just as Israel of old. They are fulfilling the Humanist's view of society. Humanists attack a God-like society. The paper that expresses their core belief, Humanist Manifesto II, says,

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitative, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered evil... Moral education for children and adults is an important way of developing awareness and sexual maturity.

Though I have given only a few of the thousands of quotes, they are enough to establish the agenda of those that would do harm to a godly way of life. Children and society pay the price for this ungodliness.

The Home As God Would Have It

Contrary to the popular thinking of many, marriage is of divine origin. God decided, planned and established the home (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:3-9). Since God is the Creator and since He knows the core needs of His creation, our happiness depends on following His plan. If you leave His prescribed purpose and design for a happy life, you will get hurt. Pain will follow. It is amazing how many people blame God for their pain, when they bring it upon themselves.

God's plan for marriage was to be monogamous in its character (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:4-5). Lamech was the first man to decide God did not know what He was talking about. He was the first polygamist (Gen. 4:19). The Patriarchs found out the trouble that polygamy can cause.

Abraham hurt Sarah and Hagar when he practiced the customs of men (Gen. 16). His grandson Jacob fared no better when he married two sisters, Leah and Rachel (Gen. 29:30-30:24). Did God want polygamy? No. However, He allowed it because things could have gotten even worse (Matt. 19).

Sex is not wrong. Sex outside of the bounds established by God **is wrong** (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is intimate in its relationship. The man and woman were/are to cleave one to the other (Gen. 2). Jehovah placed the sexual urge in the human personality. Throughout human history it has been recognized as one of the strongest drives known to man. However, God made provision for it to be enjoyed in one relationship and one only—**marriage** (1 Cor. 7:2-8; Heb. 13:4).

Though the laws of man allow divorce, **marriage is permanent** in its duration (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11, 39). Heed Jesus' warning (Matt. 19:5, 6). "Asunder" is from an original word which means "to be of no value, not to matter, to have no meaning." A North Dakota judge addressing a young couple who sought a divorce, said, "According to the laws of this state I must declare you free from the bonds of marriage, but I remind you that probably on the books of Almighty God you are still husband and wife" (4SGN, Keys, #10).

Why is society in such sordid moral shape? Its foundation—the home—has crumbled and the superstructure is fast being destroyed.

No Law—No Transgression

Cleon Lyles

Paul said, "Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). Of course we realize, when reading this fourth chapter of Romans, that Paul is saying that the Gentiles could not have transgressed, regarding the law of Moses, when the law of Moses did apply to them. He is not saying that the Gentiles had no law, and therefore were guiltless, but rather that they were not held responsible for what was demanded in the law of Moses that did not apply to them. This verse, however, has been used by some to prove that it is alright to add mechanical instruments to the worship of God, since no law was given concerning them. It might be well that we see if this is a true application of this statement.

This argument was made by a member of the Christian Church. In the first place I am prone to agree that their use of the instrument is not a transgression, since God wrote no law to govern the Christian Church. God said nothing about this church. He did not plan its existence, its laws, or its worship. Any institution which the Lord has not built stands outside his laws and the benefits thereof. Whether the Christian Church does, or does not, use the instrument cuts no ice with God. They might take the instrument out of their worship and they will still be wrong, because the mechanical instrument is not all that is wrong with this man made body. I am not interested in the Christian Church giving up the instrument, until they are willing to give up everything else that is wrong. They have as much to give up as any other denominational body. They are wrong in name and practice. The use of the instrument is only one thing that is wrong. If they were right in everything but this one, then we might well advise them to give it

up, but giving up one wrong and holding on to many others is going to do little, or no good.

In the second place, this argument states a falsehood. The Lord does have a law concerning music. Paul said, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). This is only one of several such statements given by the Lord and the apostles, but it expresses what the others say. God's law for praise is singing. He named the kind of praise, and the kind of instrument to use. Who in his right mind, then, could say that there is no law concerning it? If Jesus had not commanded any kind of praise, but just said praise God and left us to select our own way, we might have a choice in the matter. But he did not do this. He said sing and make melody in the heart. So the argument is of no value. In fact it is no argument at all. For Christ does have a law concerning music and has stated it in no uncertain terms. Where there is law, there is transgression. So when God's people add to his worship, by adding the mechanical instrument they transgress God's law. Others need to become God's children before they become transgressors.

If one is prone to reason that by remaining out of the family of God he never becomes guilty and, therefore, can be saved, a little thinking will reveal to them that he has never been granted any of the promises of God. Those on the outside have no promises. Therefore remaining a child of the devil in order to keep from being a transgressor, will keep one from receiving the promises of God, and will grant him only the offerings of the devil. It pays to obey God.

Three Things Hindering Repentance

Charles Pogue

In Luke 13:3 Jesus said, "I tell you nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." When Peter and the other apostles were asked by those on Pentecost who were pricked in their hearts what they must do, the first thing they were told was to repent. No one can be saved except he repents of his sins. Not all will repent of their sins in order to come to the Lord in obedience. Why will they not? There are essentially three things one or more of which may stand in the way of one repenting.

The first hindrance to repentance is a failure to understand what it is. I was once told by a sister in Christ her understanding of repentance was to admit one has sinned. No, that is confession. Some others say repentance is being sorry for sin. There is a sorrow involved in repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Without one being sorry for his sin he will not repent, but repentance goes beyond merely admitting to or being sorry for one's sins. Repent, from the Greek *metanoeo* means a change of mind. That change of mind means one has decided to quit sinning and do what is right. His repentance is manifested by his future actions. Preacher brethren used to refer to repentance with the statement that, "repentance is a change of heart which results in a change of life." One can be sorry he has sinned without repenting because he is sorry for the last act of sin he committed but has not made up his mind to avoid the next one. Ignorance of what repentance is stands in the way of some repenting of their sins.

A second barrier to repentance is a lack of knowledge that what one does is a sin. This is exceedingly dangerous because a failure to recognize sin as sin does not make one guiltless of it when he has committed it. Ultimately, one can go to his grave believing he is in a saved condition but is not because he never studied, reasoned enough, or made the necessary application of the Scripture to identify sin as sin. Many members of the church we fear will find themselves lost on the day of judgment because while they say I would not commit the sins of fornication or foul language, they fail to avoid entertainment sources wherein those sins are prominent. I admit to focusing on the issue of corrupt entertainment in much of my writing. I do so because it is a huge problem among members of the church, many of them not recognizing it is sin, but it is.

It is quite possible Simon the Sorcerer did not know that his attempt to purchase the ability to lay on one's hands and impart the miraculous gifts of the Spirit was a sin because when Peter told him it was, he immediately asked Peter to pray for him (Acts

8:24). In this context, it would not hurt any of us to have the attitude Simon did when he learned what he tried to do was sinful.

The third thing which interferes with one coming to repentance is an unwillingness to do so. Sin carries with it certain pleasures as Hebrews 11:25 points out. One who loves the world more than he loves God will be attracted to the things of the world which are encapsulated in the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and pride or vainglory of life (1 John 2:16). Verse 15 states that if one loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. The lack of that love is manifested by his unwillingness to repent. One may be given to holding on to sin by the attraction of the world's offer of wealth or fame, or purely because he loves things which are evil. There is no question that this third thing standing in the way of repentance is the most difficult to deal with because it involves a stubborn heart which must be changed before repentance can take place.

We must understand what repentance is, be knowledgeable as to when repentance is needed, and be willing to leave the grips of sin in order to have the desire to repent and be forgiven.

Editor's Travels

On the Lord's Day, June 16, we were privileged to visit the Corner church of Christ at Disney, Okla. and lead singing in worship. A friend of more than 50 years, Ron Cosby, is the preacher there, as well as a staff writer for *The Gospel Preceptor*. On June 23, we were privileged to preach at Willow, Okla. where Jim Foster has preached for 23 years.

“Teaching Them All Things”

Allen Killom

There is no plainer statement of man's obligation to God than in the great commission. The New Testament, from Acts through Revelation, explains Jesus' declaration to His apostles which was made just before His ascension. Matthew, Mark and Luke record the Saviour's words:

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20 ASV).

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned (Mark 16:15-16 ASV).

Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:45-47 ASV).

“All Authority”

God gave Christ all authority in heaven and on earth. “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand” (John 3:35). The rule of the “Prince of Peace” cannot be doubted, for God “raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:20-23). Jesus has all power. Therefore, in matters of faith, no authority is given to man. “Hear ye Him.”

Having full dominion, Christ can give His own orders. Man must listen. The apostles were designated to “go.” They could walk, ride, or fly, but the **gospel** had to go. We

should not be satisfied with merely knowing the word of God ourselves, but we should carry it to others.

“Into All The World”

The message of salvation through Christ is for all people everywhere. “All the peoples, nations and languages should serve him” (Dan. 7:14 ASV). “Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8 ASV).

The apostles and early Christians were so diligent about the spreading of the glad news of the kingdom that Paul was able to say that the gospel “was preached in all creation under heaven” (Col. 1:23 ASV). According to that passage, all the world had been evangelized in 30 years after the church was established in Jerusalem.

Believe, Repent, Be Baptized

Jesus not only told the apostles where to go and what to preach in the commission, but He included the plan of salvation for the alien sinner and its subsequent blessings. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Belief in Christ is essential to salvation. Repentance is a step toward redemption, for Luke states that, “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name” (Luke 24:47). To repent is to sorrow for one's sins to the extent that he turns away from them. Repentance changes man's heart. But one who just believes in Christ and repents of his sins is not yet saved, for he must be baptized “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” “As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27 ASV). The only way into Christ is through baptism. Salvation is in Christ (Eph. 1:7) and we get into Him only by baptism (Rom. 6:3).

Remission Of Sins And Salvation

Remission of sins and salvation are placed *after* baptism. When the Jews on Pentecost were pricked in their hearts and asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins...” (Acts 2:37-38). Notice: “Repent and be baptized **for**”—in order to—**not** “because of” remission of sins. “Faith only” will not save. Have you been baptized “for the remission of sins” as God's word instructs?

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

The following comes to *The Gospel Preceptor* from a reader in Missouri:

“Brother Davidson, What did the apostle mean in 2 Cor. 8:14 when he said that there might be equality? I have heard various explanations. I would appreciate reading your answer.” — D. R., Missouri

Answer: As in all cases, the immediate context and broader context is very important in understanding any Scripture. The late brother H. A. Dixon and brother G. K. Wallace kept on emphasizing context, context, context in the mid 1950s when the writer was in their Bible classes at Freed-Hardeman College. Look at the passage itself: “But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality” (2 Cor. 8:14).

Please let me say that this does not teach that we are to give to bring the poor up to our level or to give until we become poor. Equality cannot be reached that way. If all would go back to Second Corinthians 8 and begin with verse one, the picture will become abundantly clear. Paul intended to use the church at Corinth as an example of how people should give. Corinth was not responding in a positive way. Paul used Macedonia, a very poor congregation physically, as an example to attempt to get Corinth to take stock of the great blessings that they were receiving. Compared to Macedonia, Corinth was wealthy. According to the first several verses of 2 Corinthians 8 Macedonia actually had need that someone help them. There is only one thing wrong with that

statement. While they knew they were poor, dwelling in poverty, they first gave themselves to the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 8:5). This record reminds the writer of the conditions that prevailed on the farm during World War II. Almost all of us were poor, but no one, including us, knew such was the case.

Paul was not readily agreeable to receive a contribution from the Macedonians according to verses 4 and 5. Corinth was able financially a year ago (verse 10), but for some reason they stopped or lacked in their giving. Paul is using Macedonia as an example for Corinth to follow. It should have been the other way around. Now get the picture!

When those who are poor and those who are rich have given according as they have prospered (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2 and 2 Cor. 8:9) there is equality. It is still that way. If the widow gives her two mites and the wealthy gives as he has prospered there is equality. These great verses were never intended to teach that we should give until others are brought up to our level or us down to their level. When we all have given as we ought there is equality and this is what Paul is talking about. One is not necessarily blessed for being poor financially or wealthy. One is blessed in these matters when each has given as prospered. Then and only then has each done his part.

Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at harrelld@charter.net

The Seed and What it Produces

Dub Mowery

At the time of creation, God set the natural laws into existence. This included the law of procreation—each species of life having the ability to reproduce after its own kind. The scripture reveals that,

God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:11-12).

What was true of plant life was also true of all other species of life. All other types of life were fully developed with the ability to reproduce their own kind, including humans (Gen. 1:20-28). Each species of life **did not** come from any other species of life. Therefore, this rules out the unfounded theory of evolution. Since **mankind is of one blood**, this proves that the entire human race has a common heritage (Acts 17:26). Humans are not even the same kind of flesh as other species of life. The inspired Word informs us of this fact in the following words: “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds” (1 Cor. 15:39).

This same principle of seed reproducing after its kind in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. When a person obeys the gospel of Christ, that individual is born into the spiritual kingdom of the Lord (John 3:5; Rom. 6:17-18). The inspired Word of God is the seed in this process. The Apostle Peter reveals this truth as follows: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). This same truth is taught in James 1:18. Also, in the parable of the sower, we learn that the seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Luke 8:11). Since the spiritual kingdom is the church, if we use the same seed that produced the church in the first century, then we will get the same results. There will not be a single denomination produced by the pure seed of the inspired Word. It takes something **other than, or in addition to**, the New Testament to produce a particular denomination. The doctrines of men, whether those doctrines are in the form of catechisms, church manuals, prayer books, or informally upheld, are vain (Matt. 15:9).

If a clay bowl filled with wheat grains that were 2,000 years old was found in a pyramid of Egypt, what would those grains be capable of producing if the germ of life remained within them? We know that those grains of wheat would not produce water-

melons, cucumbers, or any other kind of grain than wheat. In the spiritual realm, this same principle is just as valid. Those individuals who go past the creeds of men and their preconceived concepts to the pure and unadulterated Word of God found in the New Testament can learn how to become a Christian and how to live in harmony with the principles found therein. To do less or more than that is to produce a denomination, not the New Testament church.

Salvation—A Bible Answer

Fred E. Dennis

On the birthday of the church, after the gospel had been preached, this question was asked: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Saul of Tarsus asked, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 22:10). The trembling jailer at Philippi inquired, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). No more important question can engage the mind of a thinking person. Upon the correct answer to this question our souls' salvation depends. We will now give consideration to this all-important question and the Bible answer thereto.

First, what must we know to be saved? Many poor souls do not know enough to be saved. We cannot be saved until we know the truth. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). It takes a knowledge of the truth to save us from our sins.

To be saved, we must know the Lord. We have this language in Hebrews 8:11: “And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” This is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:34. In the New Testament plan of salvation, one is taught of the Lord **before** becoming a Christian. This precludes infant church membership, which is unknown to the New Testament.

What Must We Believe?

We must believe that God is. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). We must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

We must believe the gospel of Christ. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). In His farewell commission to the apostles, Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark. 16:16). This commission is part and parcel of the gospel of the Risen Lord.

How Must We Feel?

There has been much controversy in the religious world relative to the part feelings play in matters religious. One cannot be saved until he feels that he is a sinner and in need of salvation. The prodigal son finally came to himself and felt that he was in need of the blessings that only his father could bestow. He said, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants” (Luke 15:18-19). He certainly did feel his sins and his unworthiness.

Thus ought the sinner to feel in coming to the heavenly Father. We should indeed feel sorrowful for our sins. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Cor. 7:10). We must feel determined to do what the Father commands us to do. But feelings are not proof of salvation. If we were to feel that we are saved before obeying God's commands, we would have the wrong feelings.

What Must We Do?

There are four things the sinner must do to get rid of his past sins. He must believe, or have faith.

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).

Jesus did many things that are not written, but there are enough written to cause any honest soul to believe that He is the Son of God.

After believing, we must repent of our sins. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

We must then confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is the way He said it: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32-33). Again, in Romans 10:9-10 we have this language: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

To get into Christ we must be baptized. In no other way can we receive the remission of our sins. We have already noted this from Acts 2:38 quoted above.

How Must We Live?

Getting saved and keeping saved are not the same thing. We may be saved from our past sins, thus becoming Christians, members of the body of Christ, but finally be lost in hell. We must **keep saved**. How must we do this? We must live godly lives. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12).

My brethren, do these adverbs describe the way you are living? If God were telling it, would He say you are living soberly, righteously, and godly? I am afraid there are many members of the church—even preachers—who are not thus living. And please note that this living is to be done now, “in this present world.” It does not sound much like a “second chance” does it? No, my friends, the doctrine of a “second chance” is of the devil—devilish. The Christian must be busily engaged in the work of the Lord. Thus Paul admonished the brethren at Corinth to, “be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Dear reader, if you are not a Christian I beseech you to become one by faith in Christ, repentance of your sins, confession of your faith, and by being buried in baptism for the remission of your sins (Rom. 6:3-5). If you are a Christian, may God help you to be faithful in your work and worship.

Will the Old Book Stand?

J.D. Tant

No grander subject ever engaged the mind of man than the one we have before us now. The question of the inspiration of the Bible is not one of minor importance, asked by a few men only, but the ablest men of all ages have taught on all sides of the question. More has been written, said, and thought of this Book than all other books given to the children of men.

It is the Book, alone, that deals with men as they are. All human-made books are made either by friends or enemies. When written by a friend, virtues are extolled and faults covered up; when by an enemy faults are magnified and virtues unknown. This Book is different from all these for it claims to come from God. Written by friends, yet it shuns not to tell the whole truth, and represents men as they are. It tells of Solomon

wandering off after strange women, of David ruining Uriah's wife, and of Peter cursing and denying his Lord. Yet not one of these books was written by an enemy of the transgressors, and how strange to see the facts told as they are!

The Book claims to be the word of the Lord, and upon the truthfulness of this statement it must stand or fall. If it is the word of the Lord its statements are true, and it will finally lead us to heaven when we die. If it is not the word of the Lord it is false, its teachings are deceptive, and no one can hope to be benefited in being governed by it. But one says, "The Bible is a good book. Its lessons of moral instruction are grand, and Jesus was a great reformer and a good man, but that is all. He is not the Son of God—only a good man—and there have been many other men good besides him. Christ said, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into this world." Again He says, "Oh, Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was!" Do you say He was a good man, yet He told lies, and built up His religion in a false book? What is your idea of a good man!

Suppose a man comes to your country, claims to be a son of your old friend you have known days, makes you a long visit, has a good time generally, leaves, then you find out all he said was false—that he was only the friend of your greatest enemy. Would you call him a good man ?

You say the Bible will do for old women and children, but it will not stand public criticism. Certainly not. But did you know that every few years some man comes along, upsets the Bible, entirely demolishes it, proves that it is all untrue, and explodes the whole thing from every standpoint; but that every piece of the exploded Book comes together again and runs faster than ever before?

Voltaire demolished the whole Bible, then wrote over its ruins, "In less than a hundred years Christianity will have been swept from existence, and will have passed into history." Voltaire has gone, the hundred years have gone; yet it is said that his old printing press, used to print his infidel literature, has since been used to print the word of God; and even the very house in which he lived has since been used as a depot by the General Bible Society in which to store the word of God.

Next came Tom Paine, and demolished the Bible again, and even buried, its ruins; but after Paine crawled into a drunkard's grave in 1809, the Bible took a greater leap than ever known before.

Ingersoll comes upon the stage of action and overthrows the Bible again; counts many mistakes of Moses—provided he is paid \$200 a night for the job. Perhaps it would be amusing to bear Moses on the mistakes of Ingersoll. Moses was a military leader; so was Ingersoll. Moses, though, was a man of God, and after he was eighty years old commanded, for 40 years, an army of six hundred thousand men, freed them from Egyptian bondage, and gave them a law that has bound them together as a separate nation for almost 3,500 years. Nations, once prosperous, have gone down; kings, great leaders, have been forgotten; cities, once populous, have been vacated; temples and buildings of magnificence have given way to the ravages of time; yet the law that Moses gave remains to this day.

This is the military life of Moses, a man of God. What would he have to say of the **mistakes of Ingersoll**, who was a colonel, and whose fighting career consisted of one engagement only? He was then run down by a sixteen-year-old boy and captured in a hog-yard. Certainly the contrast is great.

Certainly the Book is great, its character is great, and it has come to stay. If all the books that have been written against this Book could be gathered, no building is large enough to contain them; yet every time the Bible is demolished it is only a few years till some other man has to rise up and demolish it again.

But still its enemies tell us that it is untrue in history, contradictory in statements, unsafe in morals, and is a great mountain in the way of progress and true development. Why do they not demonstrate their faith by their works? It is much easier to build a house on a smooth foundation than it is to work for fifty or a thousand years, tearing away old tottering buildings, in order to get to build your house there. If

the Bible represents these old buildings in the way of true infidelity, why do not infidels go to those countries where the Bible is not known, and its principles are not taught? There are many places of that kind. Did you ever hear of an infidel going to a heathen country to build up an orphan school, or to erect an asylum for the needy? No. To those countries he does not go. Why? Because in some of them the natives kill and eat men, and the infidel is not willing to be made into sausage meat to be fed to his infidel heathen who do not believe the Bible.

It is said that in New York City there is a rogues' museum—a place where all kinds of tools, keys, and rogues' weapons are found; but in the number not a single New Testament can be found. If it is such a bad book, why is it not placed there?

This Book bears marks of divinity in that it foretells things that shall come to pass. This Book tells things that will come to pass next week, or next year. You can not do that. You may tell of the past, but you must guess at the future. But turn to this Book and thirty-five hundred years have not been able to fulfill all things that have been predicted there.

A few lessons along the line of prophecy may do us good (Isa. 13:19-22; 14; Jer. 1).

Prophecy concerning Babylon:

1. It was to be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. It should never be re-inhabited from generation to generation.
3. The Arab should not pitch his tent there.
4. The shepherds should not make their folds there.
5. Wild beasts of the desert should be there. Owls and doleful creatures should infest it.
6. It should become the possession of the bittern and pools of water.
7. It should be a target for the nations. All who plundered it should be satisfied.
8. Her walls and foundations should be overturned.
9. The sower and the harvester should be cut off.
10. Those who passed by should be astonished at her plagues.

Babylon was built 2,200 years before Christ. Its walls were 350 feet high, 87 feet thick; it had 100 gates with as many roads from all the world leading into it; had the rich valley of the Euphrates to support it and there was no sign of decay. Yet this prophecy was spoken nearly 1,000 years before destruction came. Now many centuries have looked down on its ruins, and every prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

Moses concerning Israel prophesied (Deut. 28):

1. That God would bring against the Jews a nation from afar, whose language they could not understand.
2. This nation should be of fierce countenance, not caring for the person of the old, and showing no mercy to the young.
3. That this nation should besiege Jerusalem in all her gates till all the walls should fall, and the last hope of Israel's escape perish.
4. That in this siege they should suffer untold horrors; that a man's eye should be evil against his own child
5. or his wife; that they should eat human flesh, and that the delicate woman, who would not so much as put
6. her foot on the ground, would secretly kill and eat her child.
7. That great numbers of the Jews should perish in the siege.
8. That multitudes would be carried into Egypt and sold, till no purchaser could be found.
9. That the Jews should be plucked off their own land which God had given them.
10. That the conquered Jews should be carried throughout all nations.

11. That among these nations they should find no rest, neither should the soles of their feet find rest.
12. That they should be oppressed and despoiled evermore.
13. That they should become an astonishment, a byword, and a proverb to all nations.
14. That their plagues should be wonderful and of a long continuance.
15. That, notwithstanding all these, God would not destroy them utterly, nor cast them entirely away.

So well is this destruction of Jerusalem known that I need not write of it. 1,240,000 were slain; 99,000 were carried to Egypt and sold as long as purchasers could be found. Women killed and ate their children in the siege. They could not understand the talk of the Romans and from then till now the Jews have been scattered in all nations of the earth.

These are only samples of some things said in the Bible. I look upon this book as being divine from the effect it produces upon men.

Did you ever hear a man say, “I used to steal, swindle, get drunk, abuse my wife, provide not for my children, was a terror to my community; but I studied geography, philosophy, astronomy; and then after studying geology for a while it worked a revolution in me. I now sing all the day, work hard to have plenty, love my wife, treat my children kindly, go to church, all my neighbors love me, and I am respected as a leader in my community?” A thousand times, no! But that is the way this old Book serves those who obey it.

Suppose all the people of some town should say, “We will commence on New Years morning, and practice the teaching of the Bible for one year.” What would be the result?

There would be no Lying, no stealing, no selling whiskey, no tattling, no hungry, unclothed children, no vice, no debauchery, and no innocent ones ruined. Every man would be a good man, every woman a good woman, every father a good father, every mother a good mother. Hard times would trouble no more, jails would be converted into church houses, court rooms into places of learning; judges would have to go to farming, and lawyers to some other work; for their services would end. Land would advance in value, hard times be past, and all would be happy.

Finally, so long as the Bible tells the end from the beginning, so long as Babylon is in heaps, so long as Nineveh lies empty, void and waste, so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets, so long as the Jews remain scattered among all nations, so long as Jerusalem remains trodden under foot of the Gentiles, so long as the meanest men on earth are made good men by obeying the word of God—I must conclude from these things that the Bible is from God, and am sure the old Book will stand.

The Positive About the Negative

Lee Moses

Many a faithful Gospel preacher has been chided for being “too negative” in his preaching. True, a preacher can certainly be overly negative, robbing Christians of the joy which is rightfully theirs by blasting the congregation from the pulpit every Lord’s Day, condemning them for sins of which they are not guilty, and omitting the preaching of the encouragement offered in the Bible. Positive preaching is an essential part of preaching. However, it is not the entirety of preaching—it is only part. Negative preaching is also essential, including that which God has commanded man not to do and God’s warnings to man. When the Lord gave His commission to Jeremiah as a prophet, He told him, “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant” (Jer. 1:9-10). Jeremiah had the authority to preach God’s word, by which he would strive to accomplish six things:

- (1) He would root out (“pluck up” American Standard Version).
- (2) He would pull down (“break down” ASV).
- (3) He would destroy.
- (4) He would throw down (“overthrow” ASV).
- (5) He would build.
- (6) He would plant.

Notice that the first four objectives of Jeremiah’s preaching were negative, while only the last two were positive—the negative was twice the positive. Having a certain balance of positive to negative preaching is a concept extended into the New Testament. Paul commanded the younger evangelist Timothy, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). Again, there is seen twice the negative (reprove, rebuke) to the positive (exhort). It is often said that a car battery needs both a positive and negative post, otherwise the car will never start. If the church has no negative preaching, it will not work as it should, yet “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

Before we can “build” and “plant” we must root out, pull down, destroy, and throw down all things contrary to God’s will in order to leave the pure foundation of Christ upon which to build (1 Cor. 3:10-11).

The Lord has reasons for demanding negative preaching. Warning is a foremost component of preaching: “I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Ezekiel 3:17). Paul told the elders of the Ephesian church, “I am pure (or ‘innocent’) from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God...watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:26-27, 31). If Paul omitted the negative portions of God’s word, he would have been guilty of their blood. He also ceased not to warn (preach negatively to) everyone night and day for well over two years. One may be sinning and not aware of it; yet he is still accountable to God for his sin (Ezek. 3:18). Some may simply need reminders of what sin is, that they can avoid it and help others avoid it. Even the righteous need to be warned (Ezek. 3:21).

Man can only be saved through the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and the Gospel, though a message of “good news,” is fraught with negative warnings as well. This is because God desires that all be saved, and, if unwarned, man will run the way of sin and none will be saved. Biblical negative preaching is saving preaching. Christians should appreciate Biblical negative preaching—if they hear it and heed it, the results will be positive.

Lost Souls on Pentecost

Dub McClish

The first Pentecost Day after Jesus’ ascension to Heaven found a throng in Jerusalem from “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). Of that number, 3,000 obeyed the apostolic message by their confessed faith, repentance, and baptism in order to receive forgiveness of their sins (vv. 37–41).

Upon their doing so, our gracious God “saved” them through the death of His Son and added them to His church (v. 47). If 3,000 were saved, likely a much larger number went away still lost in sin. We will do well to consider some of the bases upon which some remained lost.

- **“Belief is all it takes”:** Apparently, many were “pricked in their heart,” indicating their belief that Jesus is the Christ (vv. 36–37). Were those who turned away after being thus convicted among the saved? According to many, when they asked, “What shall we do?” Peter should have said, “Nothing. You were forgiven and saved the moment you believed.” However, he told them to repent and be baptized to be forgiven/saved (v. 38). Only those who obeyed were saved (vv. 41, 47), as is still the

case.

- **“We can’t earn our salvation through baptism”:** The statement is correct regarding “earning” salvation, whether by baptism or by any other means. However, it represents a gross misconception of baptism in God’s plan. Baptism is no more a “meritorious work” than is a confessed faith or repentance. These are acts of obedience to God leading to salvation, not acts of merit on our part that somehow place God in our debt. All who are saved will be saved through God’s mercy, not by their righteousness. Nonetheless, our salvation is through “the washing of regeneration” (i.e., baptism) (Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:20–21). Those who rejected the commands to repent and be baptized went home lost in sin, as they yet do.
- **“The answer is too dogmatic and exclusive.”** To the Jews, Peter’s words must have sounded like narrow-minded fanaticism. As then, so now: Truth is dogmatic and it excludes those who reject it—in the very nature of the case. Jesus’ way was—and is—narrow and exclusive (Mat. 7:13–14). It included—and still includes—only those who receive it (John 12:48; Acts 2:41), excluding all others (Mat. 15:13).
- **“God is too good to send anyone to Hell.”** This misstates the case, implying that God’s goodness and His justice are incompatible (Rom. 11:22). Actually, God is too good **not** to sentence unforgiven sinners to Hell. He would deny His own nature if He allowed sin to go unpunished. Men invite their own damnation by rebelling against God (Acts 13:46).

Recommending a Good Book

David Ray

Our society today is engrossed in two things—working and relaxing. We work a minimum of forty hours a week, then come home and look for ways to forget those forty hours. Two of the most popular ways to do this are book reading and movie watching. We’re all looking for a story that will capture our attentions and imaginations and take us away from our own lives for a little while. And this is what books and movies are intended to do. There are books and movies about everything imaginable: about men and about women, adults and children, rich folks and poor, the big city and the country, high society and the slums, good and bad, joy and pain. Some are heartwarming and some are heartbreaking. They cover every event that has ever happened, will ever happen, could ever happen, or could never happen. Some are real-life, and some are completely unrealistic. They’re based on actual events, wild dreams, and fantasies. They elicit excitement, joy, sadness, anger, fear, tears, feelings of heroism, or feelings of depression.

Regardless of the book or movie, there are always people who are willing to experience it first and then tell the rest of us how good or bad it is, if it’s really worth our time and money! I don’t read every book or see every movie, but there is a particular book I’m very excited about recommending. It’s got everything! There’s action, drama, comedy, horror, history, and poetry. It’s got controversy, murder, sex, scandal, love, hate, loyalty, deception, friendship, and revenge. It stars characters of valor, heroism, cowardice, and cruelty. You may have guessed that I’m talking about the Bible! It really does have it all. It leaves nothing out, because it covers real people in real places facing real issues. Some of these folks do the right thing and some do the wrong thing. Some have happy endings and some sad. This Book of books truly has everything Hollywood could ever come up with, and much more.

However, the Bible and Hollywood clearly take opposite approaches to similar topics. Where Hollywood glamorizes sin and wickedness, the Bible exposes it and corrects it. Where Hollywood is condescending towards, and at best patronizes God-fearing men and women, the Bible exalts these people for their actions that result in their souls being saved and God being glorified. Where Hollywood just wants your money and couldn’t care less about your soul, the Bible is God’s message to mankind that He cares very deeply about every soul that has ever lived, anywhere at any time. Books and

movies may be able to entertain you for a few hours, but the Bible is able to sustain you for life—this life and the next. Indeed, this Book has everything—“all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

Have you read the Bible lately? I highly recommend it!

Ask Your Preacher

Nathan Brewer

Do me a favor. The next time you see the fellow who preaches where you attend services, ask him what a sinner needs to do to be saved.

If he says, “A sinner has to ask Jesus into his heart by praying for forgiveness,” then ask him to show you where the Bible teaches that. Then ask him to show you an example in the Bible of a sinner doing that to be saved.

He won’t be able to, because neither the instruction nor the example of praying for forgiveness exists. That’s right—the sinner’s prayer is a myth.

If he says, “A sinner simply has to believe. At that point he’s saved,” then ask him to show you where the Bible teaches that. Then ask him to show you an example in the Bible of a sinner doing that to be saved.

Sure, people are told that believing leads to salvation. But ask where the Bible teaches that a sinner is saved the instant he believes that Jesus Christ rose from the dead as Savior.

Then ask him why Peter told people who already believed in Jesus that they still had to do something in order to be saved in Acts 2.

If believing is all it takes, then those believers should’ve already been saved. If believing is all it takes, then what was Jesus talking about in the Sermon on the Mount? He says in Matthew 7:21-23 that there will be people who’ll believe in Him and try to serve Him, yet He is going to turn them away from heaven, saying that He never knew them. If believing is all it takes, why will He do that?

If you get this far, then ask why there are so many churches today when, in the New Testament itself, there was only one. Back in the first century, when Peter and Matthew and Paul and John were around teaching Christ’s message, there were many congregations of the same church. Only one.

If you haven’t taxed his patience too far, and if you’re still willing yourself, then ask your preacher about his title—whether it’s *Pastor* or *Reverend* or *Father*. Ask him to show you in the word of God where preachers are supposed to be called such things.

But more importantly than asking anyone else about them, ask yourselves these questions. Because on Judgment Day, you won’t answer for what your preacher taught. He’ll answer for that, but you’ll answer for what you believed and what you did (2 Cor. 5:10).

On Judgment Day, pleading ignorance of God’s law won’t work. Don’t take any man’s word for what to do to get to heaven. To make your calling and election sure, study the Gospel of Christ and do what it says.

A Lack of Confidence

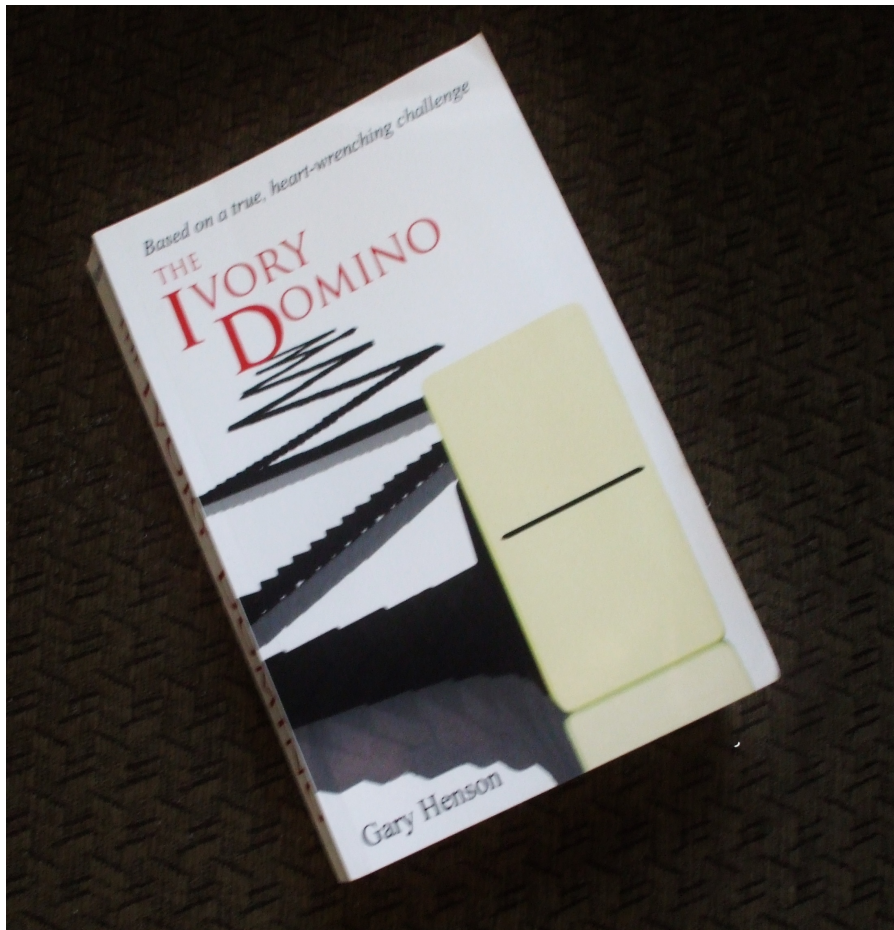
R.L. Whiteside

The besetting sin of the human family is a lack of confidence in God, manifested in every kind of departure from the word of God. If our confidence in God were what it should be, we would never want to turn aside from His way.

Eve lacked confidence in God, and so she followed the devil; Adam lacked confidence in God, and so he followed his wife. Why did Abel do what God said, and why did Cain not do what God said? Abel had confidence in God to follow His commands; Cain did not.

No man today would depart from the plain word of God if he had full confidence in God.

A Great New Book!



Written by Gary Henson, *The Ivory Domino* is a **must read** and **share** for anyone who loves the Truth and the souls of those enslaved by Catholicism.

Gary has preached the gospel for about 50 years and in *The Ivory Domino* recounts his own struggle to leave the errors of Roman Catholicism and step into the light of God's Truth.

From His Website - <https://theivorydomino.com/>

“With a heart overflowing with confidence during his senior year, high school student and football player, Gary, had no idea what nightmare awaited him. His religious faith—which he held dearly—was about to be put to the test by a kind old man with unfathomable wisdom and Bible knowledge. From the halls of religious schools to enormous libraries, this young man would not stop until he uncovered the truth.”

Written in the vein of Michael Shank's *Muscle And A Shovel*, whom Gary said, “inspired me to write this book,” *The Ivory Domino* is published by Cobb Publishing and may be purchased from them at www.cobbpublishing.com, or from Amazon Books.

Having known Gary for many years as a sound gospel preacher, I **recommend** *The Ivory Domino* to our readers, without reservation.

Jerry C. Brewer
Editor & Publisher
The Gospel Preceptor