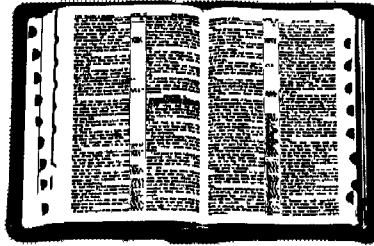


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

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Challenges to Faith

Faith and Morals

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There can be no conviction of right and wrong apart from a standard by which such conviction may be judged. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). Our "walk" describes our course of life. "By faith" means that our course is determined by the convictions we have formed. In the context of this passage Paul contrasts our present bodily existence with the life that is to come. What one believes about a life to come has much to do with his "walk." Since "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17) then failure to "hear" the word of God results in immoral behaviour. Bound up in this simple principle is the answer to the moral chaos of our times. Society has become more immoral because it has lost faith. To the extent that it recovers genuine conviction based upon undeniable evidence will it recover moral uprightness.

The New Testament writers appealed to early Christians to purge themselves from all impurity, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). There can be no perfecting of holiness nor purging from impurity without "the fear of God." In the First Corinthian letter Paul unleashed a heavy attack upon carnality as it was reflected in a divisive spirit, in an unrepentant fornicator, in brethren going to law before

unbelievers to settle their grievances with each other, and in their misuse of the Lord's Supper. But before he addressed any of these problems, he established the certainty of the gospel as distinguished from human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-31). He then argued that the words delivered by the apostles were chosen of God (1 Cor. 2:9-16). Upon the basis of verbal inspiration Paul built his case for right action throughout the remainder of this great epistle.

The same line of approach was made in Ephesians. In grand panorama we are swept from God's eternal purpose before the world began to the glory "world without end" through Christ and the church. Upon such lofty premises, Paul then made his appeal for the "unity of the Spirit", for the growth in Christ of every saint and for putting off "the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ..." so that they might "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:20-24).

The Hebrew epistle proceeds in the same fashion. We are introduced to God's greatest spokesman in his Son, Jesus Christ, whose qualifications surpass all human spokesmen and even angels (Heb. 1:1-2:4). The argument is climaxed in the statement "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. 12:25). God has spoken in his Son and the consequences of failure to heed what he said are frightful indeed. This is the common problem of our age. God has spoken, but who is willing to listen?

The Erosion of Faith

Satan has always challenged what God said. In the Garden he preached a lie when he said "ye shall not surely die" when God had said the opposite. Eve was deceived. Her faith was challenged and misplaced. Her wrong action proceeded upon her misplaced faith. Through the centuries there have been many who

flatly denied what God said. In spite of the evidence of God's art, might and wisdom reflected in the universe, still "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Psa. 14:1). Men who worship at the shrine of their own intellect have scorned the statement that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" in favor of the absurdity that in the beginning nothing created the heavens and the earth. With great swelling words they have filled the hearts of generations with the notion that something came from nothing; that life came from non-life; that rationality and conscience developed from absolutely nothing. Deity was dethroned by this process and humanism enthroned.

With humanism as a working philosophy there has been a gradual chipping away of the foundations of faith with an accompanying moral deterioration. If we were not made by God, in his image, then we are not subject to any spiritual law or rule based on such conviction. The moral implications of this pervading philosophy are horrendous and are being witnessed on every hand.

The erosion of faith has been aided and abetted by religious leaders and movements. The religious intelligentsia joined hands with the forces of infidelity and cloaked their action for years in high sounding platitudes and social reforms. Outwardly they appeared pious and reverential while inwardly they were ravaging wolves undermining the faith of those who trusted them. Movements which once were considered citadels against the incursions of rationalism turned out to be Trojan horses full of enemy troops. Witness today the debates in the general assemblies, councils, and conferences over sex education, homosexuality and you name it. Trial marriages, live-in arrangements, wife swapping, abortion on demand and the most bizarre doctrinal and practical aberrations go on right under the tolerant eyes of the "clergy" and sometimes with their open endorsement and/or participation. The underlying cause of all of this is the erosion of faith. Let religionists temporize on the first verse in the Bible, or the parting of the Red Sea, the virgin birth of Jesus, the miracles of Jesus, the inerrancy and authority of the scriptures and you have swept away the foundation upon which doctrinal conviction and moral turpitude rest.

Ready to Give Answer

Peter wrote "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Before one can "give an answer" he must first set God apart as the Lord and ruler of his life. He must know the ground of his faith and hope. The religion of our Lord is based on incontrovertible evidence. The Christian is not expected to gullible accept what he is told without evidence to support the claims of the gospel. The miracles of Jesus were reported by eye-witnesses (2 Pet. 1:16). John, one of the witnesses, said "these things are written that ye might believe" (Jno. 20:30-31). Paul preached a certified gospel (Gal. 1:11). With God set apart as the Lord (ruler) of our lives, we are then challenged to "be ready to give an answer" con-

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cerning our hope. The word "answer" means a defense, an apology. The challenge to our faith and morals must be met. There is an answer. We must learn it and be prepared to give it. Where the skeptic or moral reprobate rattles his saber, there let the battle be joined. Too many of our day are as cowardly as Saul and the Israelites were when Goliath bellowed his heathen challenge across the valley to timid men who had lost their conviction that God was with them when they did right. Some would have given in to the treacherous unity forum offered by the Samaritans to Nehemiah when he was invited to meet in one of the villages "on the plains of Ono" to talk. After all, is it not better to talk than fight? Apparently, some think so today. Others, like the Edomites, stand by on the other side and become as one of the enemies of truth when faith and morals are challenged.

No Reason for Fear

Christians have the truth. Truth has been tested in the crucible of persecution, has survived the betrayal kisses of its would-be advocates, and has emerged triumphant to bless future generations. It does not matter whether the challenge is from the educational

or scientific community, from social tamperers bereft of faith in God, Christ or the Bible, from sensual deviates, from materialism, from the reprobates who control the entertainment world, or from false religious leaders and movements, we must be prepared to meet it with the power and might of the word of God. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

An Urgent Matter

Unless we realize the power of truth and use the sword of the Spirit against those who challenge it, we shall continue to see a weakening of faith and a continuing moral decline. Unless we understand the correlation between faith and moral action, we shall continue to see more and more professing Christians overcome by the world. What good will it do to lecture them on attendance, giving, dancing, drugs, drinking, fornication and you name it, unless they have a clear understanding of the essential pillars upon which faith rests and out of which spring moral decisions? It is our settled conviction that many of the present attitudes and worldly actions of those who claim allegiance to the Lord have come about because of either a failure on the part of those who teach to instill the basic truths of the gospel, or an unwillingness to accept such teaching when it is given.

What is at stake here? The **identity of the Lord's people is at stake**. When the unbelief of the world about us is absorbed, then moral decline is sure to follow. The **evangelization of the world is at stake**. People who have lost their faith and compromised the morals based upon it will have no interest in sharing with the world principles which mean nothing to them anymore. That is one reason the more liberal denominations are losing members at an amazing rate. They have lost their interest in evangelism because they have lost faith in the gospel and have centered their interest in the social needs of the present age. And they are powerless to exert moral influence with no faith to undergird it. The **preservation of our nation is at stake**. It is still true that "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). For the sake of ten righteous souls God would have spared Sodom. They could not be found. The greatest enemies of our nation are its own citizens who have lost faith in God, Christ and the Bible and who are therefore adrift on a sea of moral chaos without a compass. The greatest patriot of all is the humble servant of God who knows who he is, what he is, where he came from, why he is here and where he is going after this life is over. He is a light in a world of darkness. He is salt to preserve all that is good and decent. When all the lights are hidden under a basket and all the salt has lost its savor, then we have no basis upon which to hope for a continuation of our nation. **Our souls and those of our children are at stake**. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Without living "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world", we shall be lost eternally.

Foundations of Faith

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Fundamental to our faith and hope as obedient believers are certain foundation principles. Reflection upon these basic truths will punctuate them as essential to any right and proper approach to the relationship of deity and humanity and will bring the constant shoring and strengthening that only continuing study and meditation can produce. As a basis for this entire series of study we urge prayerful consideration of the following principles.

God Is!

Is there a supreme being known as Jehovah God? This is the most profound of all questions to be raised by human minds. This question is at the foundation of all of man's religious beliefs, involving duty and responsibility, sin and salvation, immortality and eternal blessedness. The reply given to the question determines not only the temporal and eternal happiness of the individual but the welfare and progress of the whole human race. Thus, the idea that man forms of his God will have everything to do with the moulding of his own spiritual character as well as the knitting of his moral fiber.

Man does not have to accept God, this is but one of the two options open to him. The other, God is not, is the choice of the professed atheist. We believe there is abundant proof of the proposition, "God Is!," from every rational point of consideration. The demonstrations through natural order blend with the proof of Scripture to establish an overpowering body of evidence which has never been successfully refuted.

In the introduction to the Book of Romans, the apostle Paul establishes the universal need for the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The depravity which had developed within the whole human family, particularly the segment other than the Jew, is first established in these words: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold not the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:18-20). Among other things, these verses establish a correspondence between the invisible things of God and the clearly seen, thus arguing that creation necessitates a Creator.

The Psalmist declares the unmistakable evidence of God in the universe in Psalms 19:1; "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth

his handiwork." It is said, the natural eye can normally see six or seven thousand stars on a clear night, but millions with the aid of a high powered telescope. The closest fixed star is Alpha which is twenty-five trillion miles, or five light years away from earth. (Light travels 186,000 miles per second, and at that speed it would take light five years to travel from Alpha to earth). Pollux is thirty-two light years, or 160 trillion miles from earth, and Castor, the "twin," is some twenty-eight light years farther away. At the present method of calculation, astronomers are able to measure a distance of 15,000 light years or 100 quadrillion miles out into space. And the precision and harmony with which the universe moves is so perfect that predictions of eclipse can be made to the second, hundreds of years in advance. This is unmistakable evidence of a Superior Being to whom such order must be ascribed.

Design clearly implies designer. This is so whether it is a watch, automobile, house, or whatever. It is said that Benjamin Franklin once made a model planetary system, showing the earth and the planets nearest it. An atheist friend, upon seeing it, asked who made it. Mr. Franklin replied, "No one, it just happened into existence, like the universe!" It is said that the atheist saw the point. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Heb. 3:4).

Without God the material universe is and remains a perplexing enigma. It is axiomatic truth that every effect must have sufficient cause; when one beholds creation, nature, and providence the only conclusion open is that Jehovah God is the grand Cause, Creator of all. Indeed, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

The works of nature declare that there is a God who created by word and ordered by law all things. The Bible, in addition to setting forth this truth, tells who God is and gives such information as he wants men to know. The God who has thus revealed himself is fact, and that fact is a principle, fundamental to our faith.

The Bible Is God's Revelation

This proposition needs no defense in the mind and heart of those who accept the fact, "God Is". This, along with the other fundamental considerations here offered, is to promote greater faith and growing, and unshakable certainty in the midst of a skeptical generation. The Hebrew writer begins, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). The principle clause here is, "God hath spoken."

The language of the Old Testament prophet, Hosea, in rebuke of Ephraim may be applied with equal force to us as he says, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as strange things" (8:12). Without violence to the context this passage may be applied to the Bible and its divine authorship. The prophet, "mouth of God," speaks for Him, saying, "I have written." This is claim for divine authorship, and that the Bible is the word of God. What "God hath spoken" (Heb. 1:1), is written and the sum total is confined to the pale of the Bible. "All

scripture is given by inspiration" (2 Tim. 3:16) — "Theopnustia," God breathed words. Paul said, "God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit. . . which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:10-13). Emphasis is here on verbal inspiration of the Bible as Paul attests spiritual thoughts are conveyed in spiritual words, both originating with God.

The Bible claims that God is its author. If that is not true the Bible is the greatest fraud perpetrated on the human family. Its claims are true or the Book is false. Believing the former is fundamental to our faith. The Bible is the Word of God not because all the words therein were spoken by God. It records some words of evil men, words of some false teachers, even some of the devil himself. It is the word of God because every syllable from Genesis to Revelation is exactly as God caused it to be written.

Paul wrote to Timothy admonishing that he continue in the "holy scriptures" which he had known from childhood because this knowledge of the Old Scriptures and prophecy led to faith in Christ and would make him "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." This comparison of the Old and New Scriptures, points up that both are by the same inspiration, whether apostolic or prophetic, and this is the basis for belief in the Bible as the word of God.

While there are numerous internal and external proofs establishing that the Bible is God's word there is one area we propose to explore in some detail at this juncture; **prophecy and fulfillment**. While a wide range of events and circumstances are framed in Old Testament prophecy, the principle object and purpose was preparation for the coming of Christ. Prophecy is an element of the Old Testament which no amount of criticism based on natural principles can explain away. Prophecies of the Old Testament which fit into the most minute details of history hundreds of years later can be explained only by divine insight and projection. If there were no other aspect of proof for inspiration of the scriptures, that they are indeed the word of God, this would surely be sufficient evidence.

There are several hundred Old Testament prophecies pointing directly to Jesus Christ. Looking out into the emptiness of the future the prophet's telescope saw the minute details of that which was to come and his indelible pen committed to the page his declarations. We offer a representative sampling of prophecies concerning the Messiah, with little or no elaboration, as a foundation to a more exhaustive study of this body of evidence establishing that the Bible is God's revelation. The unity of the Old Testament as it deals with the purpose of God to redeem sin cursed man through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as established in the New Testament, constitutes insurmountable and irrefutable evidence for our proposition.

The baseline of all prophecy is couched in Genesis 3:15, "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." Here a sequence of revelation begins which culminates in the

death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. Specifically, God pronounced judgment on the serpent and upon Eve and her posterity. Sin has always produced suffering and hardships for the guilty. However, through the seed of woman victory in that conflict is held forth. Paul joins this promise to Christ in Galatians 4:4 when he writes, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law." Luke 1:34-35 records the reaction of Mary upon being informed of God's purpose for her in bearing Jesus, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The initial revelation of Genesis 3:15 spans the ages and cradles all other prophetic utterances as Jesus Christ is projected as the hope of all men who would overcome sin and Satan.

Isaiah declared Messiah was to be "born of a virgin and called Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Matthew records, "when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (1:18); "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us" (1:23).

The graphic description of the suffering of Messiah unfolds in Isaiah 53 and we note the prediction of his sinless character as the guiltless is projected dying for the guilty. The New Testament then records that he was "without sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). He would bear his reproach and oppression in silence (Isa. 53:7); make intercession for the transgressor (53:12); be rejected by Jews (53:3); His death a sin offering for all (53:4-6); and on and on. Each of these and all others minutely fulfilled and verified by the New Testament record; "Jesus held his peace" (Mt. 26:63; 27:12-14); he prayed for his enemies and the thief on the cross (Lk. 23:34, 43); "His own received him not" (Jn. 1:11, 7:5); He gave "his life a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28).

He was buried in the grave of a rich man (Isa. 53:9) who is identified as Joseph (Mt. 27:57). The Psalmist declared his flesh would not see corruption (Psa. 16:8-100); his flesh did not see corruption (Acts 2:31). He was to ascend on high (Psa. 68:18); and indeed he did (Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9).

Space forbids taking note of scores of other prophecies which minutely identify and specifically note all the pertinent features, characteristics and circumstances germane to the purpose and prediction of God's plan for redemption. How is such insight, foresight, and accuracy revealed hundreds of years before the actual fulfillment explained? Only as we accept the Bible as God's revelation. Upon this the case must rest.

Deity of Jesus

Jesus is the most universally admired character in history. To view his movements across the stage of human history is to be filled with wonder and approbation. No one can long behold him without asking great questions about him. From whence is he? How

did he obtain such grace and beauty of character? How shall we account for the potency of his personality?

There are really but two views concerning Jesus. One maintains that he was a great and good man but only a man; the other holds that he is the son of God, as no other being is. The first view cannot be true; for if he is not what he claimed to be, then he is neither good nor great. The second view is correct, and certainly no one today signifies more than Jesus does. Although it has been more than 1900 years since he left the earth, he is not a dead issue. He must still be reckoned with. He grips attention, challenges, and all must do something with him. A consideration of his deity involves recognizing several things.

The focal point of the Bible, the purpose of God in human redemption from sin, the church and even advancing civilization requires acceptance of the deity of Jesus. There is a rationale in our world which recognizes cause and effect. Effect requires cause, and cause produces effect. Things happen in a rational way. Christianity is an effect, and it, therefore, must have adequate cause. The cause is Jesus Christ.

None but deity could make and sustain the claims which Jesus made and sustained. The most amazing thing about these claims is that they are claims only God could make. He claimed to be above the Scripture, "teaching as one having authority" superior to all others (Mt. 7:28-29); to exist before creation, speaking of a glory shared with the Father "before the world was" (Jn. 17:5); sinlessness, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46). If Jesus is not divine then these claims are the claims of an impostor. But he was no impostor and every claim was sustained.

The crowning proof of the deity of Jesus is in the resurrection. The importance of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is suggested by the fact that it is mentioned one hundred four or more times in the New Testament. Not only so, but, it is treated as the climax in Paul's comprehensive summarization of the gospel to the Corinthians in that memorable chapter 15. Herein the apostle makes a five-fold negative argument designed to show the futility of all things centered in Christ if indeed he is not risen.

The argument (1 Cor. 15:12-19) begins with the declaration, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead." Upon the cardinal fact of Christ's resurrection, the resurrection of all is then predicated and the integrity of the gospel is hinged. "If Christ be not risen:" (1) "Then is our preaching vain;" (2) "We are found false witnesses of God;" (3) "Your faith is vain;" (4) "Ye are yet in your sins;" (5) "Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished." The whole superstructure of the Christian's salvation and hope rests on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Evidence proves the fact and faith in it is vindicated. God be praised.

Here then is what this writer sees as the foundation principles of our faith, lightly treated for lack of space, but established nonetheless. Indeed, God is; The Bible is His revelation; and Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Upon these things, living faith and lasting hope must be established.

Educational Challenge: Humanism

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We live in a society which seemingly rushes headlong toward degradation and sinfulness, and thusly to ultimate ruination. Our generation is permeated with inordinate pride, unrestrained passion, and rank selfishness. The blame for a large part of this lack of morality can be placed squarely on man's propensity to devise his own means for controlling himself. This problem has ever been present (Jer. 10:23; I Cor. 2:9; Prov. 14:12, etc.). Man has never been too impressed with the fact that only as he functions as God intended when He created him does he function at his proper level of efficiency. The problem stems from man's desire for complete freedom to do as he chooses, the desire for pure self-determination. Such thinking seeks to glorify man, not God.

Humanism defines as "any view in which interest in human welfare is central."¹ It crystallized into dogma religiously when a group of Unitarian theologians and several professors of like persuasion met in convention in 1933. The communiqué derived from this gathering is called THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO. In this godless document religion is viewed as "'a snared quest for the good life,' and social justice and social reform are stressed as important in religious endeavor."² In other words, religion was reduced to seeking after merely secular ends in the promotion of human welfare. And while interest in the soul is avowed, the works performed by the movement deny it.

In 1973 THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO II was published. Among other things, it contained, 1) the denial of creation, 2) the promotion of organic evolution, 3) outright spoofs at the idea of redemption and salvation from sin, even stating that such notions are harmful to the constitution of man, and, 4) that moral values are purely situational and that any lifestyle is acceptable which imposes no harm or restrictions on others.³

When reduced to its practical elements, humanism is the advancement that man's intellect is the unit with which to answer all of man's problems; it is the promotion that religion is no more than mere intellectual evolution. Such thinking reduces Christianity to no more than a slightly higher form of thinking than was Judaism, which was only a higher system than the Hellenistic philosophies, which were only an evolution of whatever preceded them. Christianity, according to this sequence, will eventually evolve into some even higher intellectual system. The modern humanist avers that situationalism is a bridge to that system.

I have sought in vain to find a clear, concise and

unambiguous concept of humanism, one which properly depicts its true aims, intentions, and goals. The term itself is so general and has been stretched in such diverse directions of use that it defies adequate definition as regards connotation. However, the ideas being promoted by humanism are found in almost every school of religious thought and proceed to affect almost every area of life. Humanism cannot be restricted to education, for it pervades more than just the intellectual community. When viewed practically, it is not merely justifiable immorality and situationalism, although it allows and recommends both for a happy and productive life. It is certainly active at every level of education. Strictly stated, it seems to me that humanism is man's answer to his own existence and purpose according to human wisdom. In it he determines where he came from by his own senses and decides his course of activity by his own methods, ultimately to his own glorification.

The gospel message of salvation has forever been in conflict with the secular mind (Cf. Rom. 8:1-ff, etc.). Man, in his nature, was created to be instructed; he is formed for service and such natural qualities cry out for information and education. In his efforts to explain himself by himself, he has not "retained God in his knowledge." I am aware that the humanist would probably deny that statement, but it is nonetheless so. Let me illustrate. The humanist denies God in that he does not believe what God has given as explanation for his existence (Gen. 1, 2, 3). He denies God when he does not subscribe to God's identification of and condemnation for sin (Rom. 3:10, 23; Isa. 59:1-2; Ezk. 18:20). He denies God when he places his confidence in his own abilities and methods of control instead of subjecting himself to the control of the divine directive (II Cor. 10:12). In all these instances, the humanist prefers his own explanations to those of God.

The Onslaught of Humanism

The result of the propagation of humanist philosophy can be seen in almost every area of education. Beginning in the tender and impressionable years, our youngsters are fed a steady diet of organic evolution as if there was no question at all about its truthfulness. In secondary schools, colleges, universities, answers must be given by students as they appear in the evolutionist textbooks, whether or not they are a matter of conviction with the student. The person who would dare suggest that there might be an alternate view is open to ridicule and coarse treatment for even considering what is held by most scientists to be a superstitious and senseless absurdity. Education is the growing bed for the seeds of humanistic philosophies. It furnishes fertile ground because the younger mind is groping for answers, asking to be noticed, and in its newfound independence, is anxious to show off its intellectual strength and potency.

The concept of humanistic thinking can easily work itself into our personal meditations and contemplations. It has an appeal to our tendency toward intellectualism, mental calisthenics, phrenic speculation, sense gymnastics. For instance, if we concede to being mere biochemical machines, how is there any such thing as sin? Then, if there is no such thing as sin, why should we feel the pangs of con-

science when we do wrong? Furthermore, anything done "in love," love being the highest motive to the intellectual, is neither inherently right or wrong. It depends on the situation in which it is done. And if such is so, I can easily justify almost any course of action I deem to be necessary to the situation, according to my own reasoning. And finally, the humanist reasons that unless subjectivism replaces the ancient, droll, and antiquated morality, then puritanical religion is retained and progressive intellectual evolution is retarded. Friedrich Schleiermacher, one of the fathers of classical liberalism, set the stage for such thinking when he taught that "sin is an unavoidable inequality of development and transformed it, as presupposing the need of redemption, into a stage of evolution toward goodness."⁴

Humanism has always had a penchant for the esthetic, the intellectual, that which elevates man as man, rather than the spiritual. E. G. Sihler says, "The overvaluation of formal and literary and esthetical things, and a profound indifference toward spiritual things has been, and still is, a serious failing of much classicism . . ." ⁵ It is obvious that there is a definite connection between the pompous intellectual and the pious humanist. They ascend from the same source—inordinate self esteem. Their creed is the same—human thinking for human need. So impressed are they with their own education and their own acquisition of knowledge that they have made such an end in itself rather than a means toward practical service. And while they cry loud and long about their social reforms, benevolent activities, and social welfare programs, most of what they do is intended to elevate themselves and its motive contains no glorification of God. They can credit themselves for accomplishment, and act as if they alone were responsible not only for their capacity for knowledge, but the talent to make it useful as well. In such endeavors knowledge becomes their god; theory becomes their instructor; and human wisdom becomes their saviour.

Humanist theories have gained a strong foothold in religious education, too. Many large church-related schools are no more than hotbeds for liberalism. Many religious professors today assign a poor definition to truth, if they admit that it can be ascertained, and would look upon seeking command, precept, or example for authority in religion as archaic and badly dated. Their intense desire to promote subjectivism as the final authority for each individual precludes their acceptance of the fact of a controlling and requiring law. They are so busily engaged in social reform and economic revolution that no time is left with which to refresh the soul. In fact, little attention is given to the soul in their instruction, since these so-called "religionist" decry the efforts of fundamentalists who call for authority in religion as divisive and disruptive of peace, arguing that all such actions serve to retard their efforts at ecumenism and unlimited toleration of one another's personal preferences. The existence in many churches today of benevolent societies and entertainment facilities is further testimony that humanism is not limited to the school or the home, but has gained a foothold in the church as well.

Our efforts to give our children the moral education and spiritual conviction they need are meeting with

great resistance today, partly because of the very subtle means being employed by humanist forces. Theistic evolution is a good example of these ploys. Theistic evolution is but a compromise, a bargain struck so as to allow religious people to tolerate organic evolution along with their religion. But this challenge to our faith, when carefully examined, is neither theistic nor religious, but humanistic. It is nonetheless being sold in great batches to our people in a camouflaged and cleverly counterfeited package. If such a theory, which has staggering implications, is accepted then man becomes no more than a highly sophisticated biological arrangement and you can readily see what that does to such ideas as sin ("I was made that way"), accountability ("It's just human nature to do that"), and judgment ("How can He condemn me for doing what I was made to do?"). And so our children face great challenges because of humanistic thinking.

What Can We Do?

What is to be done? How can today's Christian combat the onslaught of humanistic thinking? May I suggest some things?

1. **Let every man have his own faith.** Too long we have tried to function with someone else's conviction. We are too often what we are only as a result of the happenstance of birth—we are Christians because Mom and Dad were; the same with Methodists and Baptists. We have too many who have merely an inherited religion. Let every man begin to think for himself, to be convinced in his own mind from his own study and deliberation. The problem of humanism is condemned by Paul as he cites its practical functions in Rom. 1:18-ff. Notice that all the moral decadence sprang from a failure of the people to "retain God in their knowledge." Any time a man seeks to operate without the benefit of his own faith he operates without a true compass and runs a course of destruction. Let us teach our children the value of being right, not merely religious. Let us teach them to be independent and convinced only after consideration of proper evidence and support from God's Word. Let us show them how to develop their own confidence and trust in the Word of God and then instill in them the courage to follow those convictions, even in the face of adversity. Let us show them a good example, illustrating in our lives our complete trust in God's Word to accomplish what is good for us.

2. **Let us learn to examine.** Oftentimes we accept things just because "that seems logical." The man of God must not be so gullible. He must try things, prove theories, investigate assertions. Many people today will not even admit to the possibility of false teachers in religion. And yet, beginning at the Sermon on the Mount and from thenceforth throughout the New Testament there are repeated warnings about false teachers (Matt. 7:15, Gal. 1:6-9; I Tim. 4:1-4; II Pet. 2:1-3; I Jno. 4:1-ff, etc.). Only as we learn to investigate can we know what is being taught to our children; only in our investigation, our own comparison with the divine standard, can we be certain that our course of pursuit has the approval of God. We do not listen to men, but to God! We need to search the Scriptures to see if what we are being told is true (Acts 17:11).

3. **Let us begin an educational program of our own.** We need to stop depending on others to do our work for us. We need to stop counting on the church to provide the spiritual education we all need. We need to stop waiting on the preacher to teach our friends and neighbors. If we had the excitement, the sheer joy of our salvation possessed by the first century Christians, we would all be instructors (Acts 8:4). Christians do not necessarily need more formal training in how to do personal work, they just need the motive which comes from the joy of salvation (Psa. 51:2; Isa. 25:9), the zeal that comes from loving the souls of men. In Old Testament times, personal family education was a way of life (Deut. 6:3-9; 11:18-20). It should be no less so today. We must learn the value of constant contact with the message of God. How can we conclude that we ourselves or those who are our responsibility can properly ward off the wily stratagem of humanistic thinking without the knowledge necessary to identify it and deal accordingly?

4. **We need to speak up for right.** The forces of humanism have no timidity; they promote their product with care and precision. It is "a time to speak" (Eccl. 3:7). Too long we have been mute as we watched the proponents of human philosophy march by unabated and unopposed. It is time that we learned to speak up for right, contend for decency, show our abhorrence for immorality and gross misconduct, even if it is shrouded in the clothing of respectability and religion. If we do not seek to stem the tide of immorality we may soon find ourselves inundated with a flood of decadence from which escape is mighty nigh impossible. Is right right? Then let us stand for it! Is sin wrong? Then let us cease to tolerate it with seeming indifference! And is Christ the Son of God? Is he the Saviour of the world? Then let us say so! Let us unhesitatingly recommend him. Let us unashamedly emulate his conduct in our lives. Let us untimidly speak of him wherever we go.

Conclusion

Our faith is being challenged on every hand. Doubt, speculation, presumption hang as ominous clouds over our faith. We must rise to the occasion. With a buckler of faith, a sword honed to a fine edge from constant use, with bosoms filled with the joy of our Lord and hearts galvanized with the zeal of our profession, let us rise up and fight. Not merely protect and defend, but march out with an offensive thrust calculated to subdue the enemy and conquer the foe. With glad hearts, let us proceed. With love for men, let us commence. With fear of God and respect for His cause; with love for His Son and profound regard for His law, let us launch our noble conflict. "The earth shall tremble neath our tread and echo with our shout," for "faith is the victory."

Footnotes

¹ *Dictionary of Philosophy*, D. D. Runes, Published by the Philadelphia Library, 1942. (pp. 342).

² *The Godly Family in a Sick Society, Florida College Annual Lectures, 1979*. Edited by Melvin D. Curry, Published by Florida College Bookstore, 1979. In his lecture "Humanistic Thinking," Dave Bradford gives a concise and lucid view of the derivation and history of Humanism. (pp. 172).

³ *Ibid.*

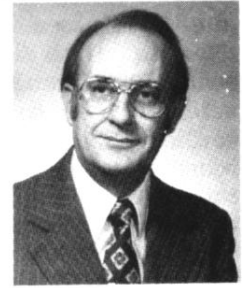
⁴ *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. X*, Baker Publishing Company, 1956, pp. 243.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 402.

Organic Evolution Challenge to Divine Creation

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Organic Evolution is the theory that "non-living matter became alive, that this original living matter was simple in its organization, and that the world of living things known today, including man, gradually developed from these original simple forms" (Dr. John Klotz).

Simply stated, the theory proposes that dead matter, acting upon itself, spawned a very simple form of life (one-cell organism), which by chance evolved into higher forms of life over a period of millions of years. The micro-organisms evolved into multi-cellular organisms (invertebrate), which in turn eventually became fishes (vertebrate), and the fishes evolved into amphibians, the amphibians into reptiles, the reptiles into mammals, the mammals into monkeys and apes and the apes into man. The plant life was also evolving, they say, at the same time.

When I was a boy I thought if you put a hair from a horse's tail into water, it would become a snake. I discovered that it would not. Yet, many scientists are just as juvenile in their concept as to how life began.

To read some of the high school and college textbooks, the scientific journals, to watch some of the TV documentaries and listen to some professors, you would think that organic evolution is a well-established fact with just the ignorant and stupid believing otherwise.

But what is the fact about evolution? The truth is that organic evolution is NOT a scientific fact, but is merely a theory. It is philosophic rather than scientific. Science deals with that which can be observed and tested. Evolution has to do with origins and is not repeatable. No man observed how things began, nor can it be repeated for observation and testing. Therefore, the evolutionary theory is not scientific.

Evolution, An Assumption

Dr. G. A. Kerkut, a British scientist, professor and evolutionist, wrote that "there is a theory that all living forms in the world have arisen from a single source which itself came from an inorganic form. . . . the evidence that supports it is not sufficiently strong to allow us to consider it as anything more than a working hypothesis" (*Implications of Evolution*, p. 157).

In the beginning of his book Dr. Kerkut states that there are seven basic assumptions that are often not mentioned during discussions of evolution. They are:

(1) The first assumption is that non-living things gave rise to living material, i.e. spontaneous generation occurred.

(2) The second assumption is that spontaneous

generation occurred only once.

(3) The third assumption is that viruses, bacteria, plants and animals are all interrelated.

(4) The fourth assumption is that Protozoa gave rise to the Metazoa.

(5) The fifth assumption is that the various invertebrate phyla are interrelated.

(6) The sixth assumption is that the invertebrates gave rise to the vertebrates.

(7) The seventh assumption is that within the vertebrates the fish gave rise to the amphibia, the amphibia to the reptiles, and the reptiles to the birds and mammals (p. 6).

After listing these seven assumptions, Kerkut then adds: "The first point that I should like to make is that these seven assumptions by their nature are not capable of experimental verification. They assume that a certain series of events has occurred in the past" (p. 7).

In a review of Kerkut's book, Dr. John T. Bonner wrote: "This is a book with a disturbing message; it points to some unseemly cracks in the foundations. One is disturbed because what is said gives us the uneasy feeling that we knew it for a long time deep down but were never willing to admit this to ourselves" (*American Scientist*, Vol 49, June, 1961, p. 240). It appears that evolutionists have been "whistlin' in the dark" when they told us that evolution was a well-established fact.

Ancestors Unknown

Dr. Bolton Davidheiser, who received his Ph. D in Zoology from John Hopkins University, has authored an excellent book refuting the evolutionary theory. It is titled, *Evolution and Christian Faith*. On pages 302-309 Davidheiser quotes from the writings of 81 different scientists, who are evolutionists, and who state they do not know the origin or ancestry of the animal groups. He also states it would be just as easy, if not easier, to do the same for plant ancestry. His long list of quotations closes with this one from Dr. Earl L. Core of W. Va. University: "We do not actually know the phylogenetic history of any group of plants and animals since it lies in the undecipherable past."

It is obvious, therefore, that the evolutionists do not know what they are talking about when they say that fish evolved into amphibians, amphibians into reptiles, etc. The evolutionary tree that appears in many of the science books would be nothing more than an arbitrary drawing of someone's imagination.

Evidence Examined

After examining the evidence that evolutionists offer, it is amazing how weak and feeble their case is. Many of them would have us believe that the evidence is overwhelming in their favor and for one to doubt their conclusions is to close his eyes to an abundance of scientific data. Let us weigh the evidence that commonly appears in the textbooks.

(1) **Comparative anatomy.** This involves the comparison of different kinds of animals as to the similarities of their skeletons, muscles, blood vessels and organs of the digestive tract. The greater the similarity, the closer the relationship, they say, thereby showing a common ancestor from which the similar animals evolved.

But instead of similarity showing a common ancestor, why could it not be showing a common

Creator, namely, Jehovah? Furthermore, it is but natural that animals which occupy the same environment should have similar characteristics. Too, why should God have to follow a different pattern for every creature?

(2) **Vestigial organs.** This is the argument that certain structures and organs of the higher forms of life, such as man, are remains which were once required by our ancestral parents but are now no longer essential. The appendix and tonsils are given as examples, although we have now learned they help fight infection.

Several years ago the German anatomist, Wiedersheim, listed 180 vestigial organs that were useless to man. Among those was the pituitary gland, now known as the master gland of the body. Today, the list has dwindled to a half-dozen or so. Because we do not know the function of a certain organ or structure does not mean it does not have one. Scientists can be just as ignorant about the six as Wiedersheim was about the one-hundred and eighty.

(3) **Embryonic recapitulation.** This is the idea that during embryonic development (while in early stages of the uterus) all animals and humans pass through stages resembling their evolutionary history.

But this view has been so discredited that it is hardly ever presented as serious evidence by the scientific world. As early as 1932 Dr. Waldo Shumway of the University of Illinois said that this theory "seems to demand that the hypothesis be abandoned." Space does not allow the ample arguments showing the weakness of this theory.

(4) **Genetics.** Evolutionists tell us that through mutations of the genes, which they say develop more favorable characteristics for the specie and enable it to ultimately evolve into some other kind, the evolutionary process took place. Those animals and plants best suited to the environment survived and reproduced their kind at the expense of those which were not so well suited to the environment. This is called "natural selection." As time progressed, creatures became better and better adapted, changing through the years by mutation to something else.

No doubt that mutation takes place within species, and, consequently, some changes. The fruit fly is a good example. But after all the changes have taken place, the specie remains the same—the fruit-fly is still a fruit-fly. If the fruit-fly became a horsefly, then you have evolution. The evolutionist needs to show transmutation, not mutation. Evolution requires transmutation—the changing of one kind into another kind.

Professor Theodosius Dobzhansky, an evolutionist, and a leading geneticist, said: "Most mutants which arise in any organism are more or less disadvantageous to their possessors . . ." (*American Scientist*, Dec, 1957, p. 385). Ernest A. Hooton, Harvard anthropologist, was honest enough to say they were "leaning upon a broken reed when we depend on mutations" (*Apes, Men, and Morons*, p. 118). Why, then, do evolutionists try to explain evolution by mutations? Because they have nothing better.

(5) **Fossils.** Fossils are evidence of ancient life. Evolutionists maintain that the fossil record is the direct evidence of evolution and provides the only

historical, documentary evidence that he has evolved.

If evolutionists are correct about fossils, there should be a continuous series of fossils from the simple to the complex organisms. But such is not the case. There are millions of fossils but no intermediate or transitional fossils. If evolution took place there would be just as many transitional fossils (the gradual change, for example, of reptiles into birds) as there are the differentiated. The fossils say that evolution did not happen. George Gaylord Simpson, well known paleontologist, said concerning the fossils of the thirty-two orders of mammals: "In most cases the break is so sharp and the gap so large that the origin of the order is speculative and much disputed" (*Tempo and Mode of Evolution*, p. 105).

The Bible teaches that God made everything after its kind (Gen. 1:21-25). These are the fossils that are in abundance and not some freakish, intermediate organism that is part one kind and part another kind of animal life. Dr. Duane T. Gish thoroughly refuted the evolutionist's argument from fossils in his excellent book, *"Evolution? The Fossils Say No!"*

A Young Earth

The evolutionary theory demands a lot of time, like hundreds of millions of years. This is why they developed the geological time scale. It is just as arbitrary as their phylogenetic tree. Scientists do not know the age of fossils or the rock in which they are found. The time clocks we hear so much about are actually not very reliable. Dr. Melvin Cook, who got his Ph.D. in physical chemistry at Yale, wrote: "... *There really are no reliable time clocks* despite an almost overwhelming contrary opinion" (*Prehistory and Earth Models*, Preface, p. xi). As Dr. Robert Rastall said: "The succession of organisms has been determined by a study of their remains embedded in the rocks, and the relative ages of the rocks are determined by the remains of organisms that they contain" (*Encyl. Britannica*, Vol. 10, 1957, p. 168). This is what you call "going around in circles."

Instead of the earth, and life on it, being very ancient, the evidence tends to show that the earth is relatively young, not allowing evolution the time it needs for development. Let us notice:

(1) If man has been on earth for a million years with an annual growth rate of 0.01 percentage (very low), the population would be 10t# people, enough to fill 3,500 solar systems solidly with bodies.

(2) The accumulation of the delta of the Mississippi shows it could not be older than about 5000 years.

(3) Petroleum and natural gas are held at high pressures in underground reservoirs of porous rock and sand. Calculations show that the oil and gas could not be maintained for much longer than from 10,000 to 100,000 years.

(4) If the earth was once in a molten state, as evolutionists claim, the time of cooling to present temperature could not be more than 45 million years. They say the earth is about four and one-half billion years old.

(5) The concentrations of various elements and salts contained in sea water, when compared with the an-

nual estimated amounts being added by rivers, rains, springs, and other sources, uniformly point to a young earth.

(6) The average depth of sediments on the ocean floors is only a little more than one-half mile. But billions of years should have loaded sixty-miles of sediments on the ocean floor.

(7) Helium gas resulting from radioactive decay is continually being released into the atmosphere from the earth's crust. The estimated rate of this release compared with the total helium now in the atmosphere suggests that the atmosphere may be only about 12,000 to 60,000 years old.

(8) Meteors of all sizes crash into the earth's atmosphere and settle to the surface mostly in form of dust. It is estimated 14 million to as much as 50 million tons fall annually on the earth's surface. If this has been going on for four and one-half billion years, the layer of dust would be at least 150 feet thick (Taken from *Handy Dandy Evolution Refuter* by Robert E. Kofahl, Ph.D.).

After all the evidence has been weighed, reason and common sense would lead us to say: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It is impossible for me to conceive that dead matter could produce life, conscience, intelligence, instinct, etc. I can only attribute this to an Intelligent Being.

Life is, therefore, life has always been. The law of biogenesis says that all life comes from life. This is a scientific fact! On this fact the creationist stands.

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Social Challenge: Women's Rights Movement

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It is appalling to behold the measure of infidelity in our society today. It is in evidence in the radio and TV talk programs, community public hearings, syndicated columns of the news papers, magazines, and the press in general. Seldom, if ever, is an appeal made to any standard by which an issue may be settled definitively. Rather, human rationalism shows itself to the highest degree. The wisdom of one human is pitted against the wisdom of another. While the issue is never completely settled, public thought and conduct in general is ordered according to whichever rationalist is able to influence the greater number of people. Rationalism, Pragmatism, and Situation Ethics join hands to revolutionize our social world and to challenge the faith of all Christians.

Such standards, however, are ever uncertain. Rationalism of today yields to that of tomorrow and often reverses itself from generation to generation. Our world needs a definitive standard. Our world needs faith in the only definitive standard—the word of God. Here is infinite wisdom! Christians must remember that issues are to be settled by infinite wisdom (the word of God) and not by human rationalism. This is the issue involved in the WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT and the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment).

The ERA reads as follows: SECTION 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. SECTION 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

The expression "Equality of rights" is ambiguous and involves more than meets the eye from just a cursory reading. In fact, its involvements are rather shocking. Read the following from a former ardent supporter of the ERA:

"As a member of the Arizona State Senate, I spoke in favor of the amendment the day after it passed the Congress. Within a few days, I read the Congressional Record, with all the debate and testimony during the hearing, regarding the effect of the amendment. I was shocked. Never in all of my years of support did I realize that the amendment would have to apply in the absolute—that before the LAW we would be neither men nor women, boys nor girls.

"I was shocked also to find that the Senate overwhelmingly defeated all proposed amendments. They included exemption from military draft and service in combat on an equal basis as well as eliminating the requirement that a husband have a legal responsibility to support his family. There were others of great con-

cern. The Courts would have to see those defeats as legislative intent in all future decisions" (Bess B. Stinson, *Voice of Freedom*, October 1978).

The Women's Rights Movement supports ERA. Perhaps a summation of the high points of what is involved in the amendment would help some to see more clearly the challenge it presents to the faith of a Christian. According to literature from Phyllis Schlafly, National Chairman of STOP ERA, Box 618, Alton, Ill. 62002, *Yale Law Journal*, April 1971; Professor Paul Freund of Harvard Law School, et al., the amendment will:

1. Make every wife in the U.S. legally responsible to provide 50% of the financial support of her family.
2. Make women subject to the draft and for combat duty equally with men.
3. Wipe out criminal laws which protect only women from rape and sex crimes.
4. Wipe out much legislation which protects women from hazardous and unpleasant jobs.
5. Override the right to privacy and "require that there be no segregation of the sexes in prison, reform schools, public restrooms, other public facilities" (Professor Paul Freund, Harvard Constitutional Authority).
6. Transform every provision of law differentiating between men and women into a constitutional issue to be resolved by the Federal Court system.
7. Take from wives the right to draw Social Security checks based on her husband's earnings.
8. Approve homosexual marriages.
9. Approve of women in leadership roles in the church.
10. Nullify thousands of laws which give women special rights and privileges.

The above high points of what this amendment will do foreshadow social changes of great magnitude. Obviously, the objective is a unisex society. Child rearing would likely be done communally, for some women would claim their right to be free of such. Homosexual marriages with the privilege of adopting children would be another social evil with far reaching adverse effects upon the emotional stability of the children involved. Tax exempt status for churches that respect the divine order would most likely become a thing of the past—such being enjoyed only by churches with women in leadership roles. In fact, there would be no end to the social changes in our world.

It should be observed further that opposition to ERA does not mean endorsement of discrimination against women. In fact, the amendment is not necessary to remove discriminations. Federal laws providing for equal pay for equal work, with equal job opportunities, equal treatment in mortgage loans, credit opportunities, equal age limits in adulthood, voting, marriage, etc., already exist. When the laws making the above provisions are carefully considered in the light of the effects of ERA, one should see that the amendment is UNNECESSARY, full of infidelity, and little if anything short of just plain foolishness.

The Women's Rights Movement not only disregards but contravenes divine wisdom as revealed in the word of God. It is here that the faith of the Christian is challenged. This is evident from a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches concerning the relationship between man and woman. Much of the following is from a former article which I wrote on this point (*Searching the Scriptures*, Vol. XVII, No. 7, p. 5).

God is the creator of both man and woman, and He

created each with a view to the very ultimate in joy, happiness, and fulfillment both for time and eternity. He created both EQUAL, and with Him there is no such thing as the superiority of one over the other—so far as their worth either to Him or to one another is concerned (Gen. 2:23, 24; Eph. 5:28-31; Gal. 3:28). However, He did create each with essential differences.

Contrary to the claim of the Women's Rights Movement, these differences are not produced by a difference in education, training, culture, or one's environment. These differences are basic. Man and woman differ anatomically, biochemically, and emotionally. God created them that way. This means that each has a different capacity for service. Furthermore, this difference enables each to serve with excellence in the different roles designed for his or her fulfillment. While these different roles involve one over the other in some relationships, such does not mitigate against their equality in worth, honor, and fulfillment in life. Each serves in his respective role with honor and distinction and is a complement to the other. The Women's Rights Movement makes competitors of the two.

For further reference on the basic differences mentioned above, I suggest Dr. James Dobson's book, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*. He is a licensed psychologist in the State of California, associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Southern California School of Medicine, and Director of Behavioral Research in the Division of Child Development, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Here is a quote from his book:

"In truth, they are unique in every cell of their bodies, for men carry a different chromosomal pattern than women. There is also considerable evidence to indicate that the hypothalamic region, located just above the pituitary gland in the mid-brain, is 'wired' very uniquely for each of the sexes. Thus the hypothalamus (known as the seat of emotions) provides women with a different psychological frame of reference than that of men. Further, female sexual desire tends to be somewhat cyclical correlated with the menstrual calendar, whereas males are acyclical. These and other features account for the undeniable fact that masculine and feminine expressions of sexuality are far from identical. Failure to understand this uniqueness can produce a continual source of marital frustration and guilt... Dr. Katherina Dalton, in *The Premenstrual Syndrome* (Springfield, Ill., 1964) summarizes many studies of behavior change that show a large portion of women's crimes (63% in an English study, 84% in a French) are not distributed evenly over time, but clustered in the premenstrual period along with suicides, accidents, a decline in the quality of school work, decline in intelligence test scores, visual acuity, and response speed. In the United States, she calculated that absenteeism related to menstruation cost about five billion dollars a year, but accidents, absenteeism, and domestic quarrels are only part of the social repercussions of symptoms that affect everyone. A book might be filled with discussion of other biological differences between the sexes, that are of great importance in one way or another, in everyday life," ... (pp. 114,131,132).

These biological and other differences account for God's assigning them different roles in life. Hence, women are not to serve as elders and evangelists—they are not to be teachers of God's word so as to exercise authority over man (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; 2:15; 1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:34, 35). Man has been ordained to the position of headship in the home (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-21). While they are not equal in all of life's relationships, they are equal in God's sight so far as

their worth to God and to each other is concerned. Furthermore, each finds his greatest possible fulfillment in life as he serves in his respective role. It is not commensurate with woman's nature to serve best in fighting battles, commanding armies, controlling kingdoms, or in making laws. Her best is not to be found in braving the way and bearing the responsibilities of leadership. Man is best suited for this role. Woman's throne of glory is in the home.

Unfortunately, The Women's Rights Movement equates this position with serfdom and talks loudly about boredom and how unfulfilling such a role is. True, such involves doing the laundry, washing dishes, cleaning house, nursing babies, tending children, planning menus, shopping wisely, etc. Properly viewed, however, these are important responsibilities and are very rewarding. She shares equally with her husband (though doing different things) in providing a home atmosphere that is a haven of rest. Likewise, she shares equally in the growth and development of the children. Furthermore, she thereby becomes the object of the deepest respect among men, the recipient of the tenderest love known from all other members of the family. The deep satisfaction and gratifying results of such a role is clearly pictured in Prov. 31:10-31.

Man's role, too, may be viewed as routine, boring, and frustrating. He faces competition from nearly every viewpoint—among fellow workers, sales, contracts, and merchandise. He must pay "the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker"—bills, bills, and more bills. He must deal with and try to solve the problems of his company, listen to complaints of employees, supervisors, et al. But, again, when properly viewed, such a role is rewarding. When self is forgotten in service to others satisfaction fills the soul. Honor, esteem, and distinction become his crown. He is the recipient of appreciation from among his associates, and of the greatest possible measure of love from those who know him best. When both man and woman fill their God-ordained roles, they find bliss and fulfillment for both time and eternity.

This does not mean that there is no place, time, or circumstances that would justify a woman serving in public life. The pressure of circumstances, even tragedies, sometimes necessitate it. Furthermore, in our modern society there are some positions in public life that can best be filled by woman. This, however, is a far cry from opening the doors of every relationship in public life to men and women alike—even to leadership roles in the church. Such is subversive of divine wisdom.

"The role of a woman, when properly assumed and played, is honorable, glorious, and rewarding. In filling her role, she does her husband good, blesses her household—even reaching forth her hand beyond to the needy. She may also buy a field and plant a vineyard—even make and deliver goods to the merchants. But in all this she continually 'looketh well to the ways of her household' and 'her husband is known in the gates.' Such a woman is not only praised by her husband, children, and all others, but by the Lord (Prov. 31)" (H. E. Patton, *Bread of Life Teacher*, Vol. 3, No. 5, Montgomery, Ala.).

When women forsake their God ordained role for that of the man, the consequent evils are manifold. The marital relationship is frustrated, children suffer psychologically, juvenile delinquents increase, immorality spreads, and social evils multiply. God's way is the only way for true happiness now and forever.

Social Challenge: Children's Rights Movement

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A great deal of publicity has been given the women's liberation movement. Those who keep up with current events are somewhat familiar with the major arguments, pro and con, on that particular controversy. The children's liberation concept, though similar in its philosophy and objectives, has not yet been the object of as much coverage in the media.

Christians should be aware of the insidious designs of certain liberals in our society to redefine the family and destroy the basic unit of civilized existence, the home as God designed it.

For over two decades the children's lib movement has been underway. It has made frightening strides within the past few years. The United Nations passed a resolution in 1959 called Declaration of the Rights of the Child. 1979 was named "International Year of the Child" by the UN. Such was established in our nation by President Carter's Executive Order of April 4, 1978. All such has been promoted by the advocates of children's liberation and has served its purposes.

What Is Children's Lib?

One of the leading proponents of the cause is Richard Farson. He is a psychologist and faculty member of the Humanistic Psychology Institute in San Francisco and authored "Birthrights: A Bill of Rights for Children."

In a special feature of the *Los Angeles Times*, re-published in *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, Oct. 26, 1975, Farson lays his goals out for all to see. He opposes discriminating against children on the basis of age: "... we patronize them as adults-in-training and use this as an excuse to dominate, segregate, program, compel, ignore, incarcerate and abuse them to the point that being a child is like being disabled."

Child abuse, something all Christians and good people abhor, is being used by child's rights advocates as proof of the need for sweeping changes. But concerns of these promoters go far beyond the elimination of child abuse. Farson even states: "Ending corporal punishment is a relatively acceptable idea compared to other changes we would face if we put an end to age-ism . . . Full citizenship for children would mean the elimination of compulsory

education . . . what we have today is forced schooling, an example of incarcerating children against their will ... Children should have the same legal protection that adults have, including the rights to counsel, bail and a jury trial... another way that we keep children in their place is by refusing to allow them to vote... if children would vote they would become a political constituency and at last politicians would be truly interested in acting in their behalf . . . There are much broader implications, of course. They'd also be allowed to drive automobiles, enjoy sexual freedom, handle their own finances and choose all sorts of options for themselves. So be it."

Other rights that children's lib advocates have in mind are government funded abortion and contraception services without parental knowledge and consent, and elimination of age restrictions on buying liquor and marrying.

Sweden, in 1979, passed a law by a vote in Parliament of 259-6 that parents may not strike their children or treat them in any humiliating way. Spanking is against the law there. AP writer Hugh A. Mulligan notes: "So, too, is sending little Birgit to bed without supper, dusting the rompers of darling Dage, cutting off Olaf's TV rights, confining Pia to her bedroom and similar humiliations against impending posterity.

"Mom and Dad could wind up in family court by way of the police station for opening little Gustav's mail and getting an advance peak at his porno publications..."

Liberated From What?

Sober thinking people will want to know from what children are to be liberated. Many leaders in this movement would have us believe that the goal of "children's liberation" is only to help poor, neglected, and/or abused children. A closer examination, however, reveals that they want children liberated from:

1. TRADITIONAL AND SCRIPTURAL MORALS AND VALUES. In the *White House Conference on Children, Report to the President, 1970*, p. 65, 66, the statement is made: "The real solution requires a fundamental change in the value commitment, and the actions of the persons who control the public and private sector of our common life—parents, and those whose decisions determine the life-styles of other human beings."

Further, "Day Care is a powerful institution ... A day care program that ministers to a child from six months to six years has over 8,000 hours to teach him values, fears, beliefs, and behaviors" (p. 278).

The institution of government Day Care Centers is perhaps the prime immediate priority of this group. A grave danger is here evident. The *Child Care Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1971 avers: "Any agency that works with children should have as its goal the rehabilitation of its residents, rather than simply their custody . . . the child care worker is seen as the behavior change agent..."

We are concerned, of course, with the question: whose values, fears, beliefs, and behaviors will these children be taught? One does not have to read the

writings of the social planners for long to learn that the traditional and scriptural morals and values of our Judeo-Christian heritage are not what they have in mind.

2. PARENTAL AUTHORITY. Quotations from Richard Farson have already established this point. The *White House Conference Report* quoted above states: "We recommend that laws dealing with rights of parents be re-examined and changed where they infringe on the rights of children ... amendments should reinforce the primacy of the rights of the child."

3. RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY. The right of parents to indoctrinate their children religiously is opposed by children's rights advocates. The 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child states: "The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, RELIGIOUS, or any other form of DISCRIMINATION." Teaching that there is one church and one way of salvation is discriminatory, is it not? As a matter of fact, teaching that Christianity is preferable to Islam or Hinduism is discriminatory.

A Biblical Perspective

The philosophy and objectives of the children's rights movement is completely contrary to the teaching of God's word. "Bring up a child in the way he should go ..." we are admonished in Prov. 22:6. "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition (discipline and instruction, NASB) of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15).

Advocates of children's lib are among those described in 2 Peter 2:19. They promise liberty, but they themselves are servants of corruption.

The right kind of adult leadership and parental authority does not interfere with, but rather is essential to healthy growth and development. Only where a careful balance of love and control exists can children grow with self confidence and develop into productive citizens able to face the responsibilities of adulthood.

Concern must be manifested over angry, unloving, destructive discipline. Let's be careful though lest we throw the baby out with the bathwater. Valid concern over child abuse and authoritarian extremes must not be permitted to lead us to the elimination of needed authority and discipline. One extreme is as damaging as the other. Children are not little adults. They need leadership. Someone must be in charge. Someone will be in charge. In God's order of things this prerogative belongs to loving, concerned parents.

Hopefully Americans will not sell out to this crowd of self-appointed authorities who would liberate us from the values and mores which have anchored our society throughout its history.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

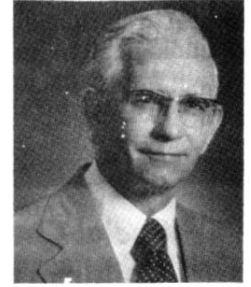
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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

Social Challenge: Is Marriage Obsolete?

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We live in a perplexing time. This is perhaps the understatement of the decade. This nation of ours has been in the midst of social upheaval since the end of World War II. This turmoil has created an unhealthy environment and society in which to live. That its effect if being felt in increasing proportions in the church of the Lord is too self-evident for successful refutation. It is to this particular area of thought that we shall mainly address ourselves in this article.

Generally speaking, we have a generation on our hands that seems to want to change everything. Most of the sought-after changes are seated in the philosophy of the times and is an outgrowth of the despicable expression: Do your own thing. This slogan means little more than social anarchy. They really mean to let everyone do as he pleases. Whether a thing is right or wrong does not seem to be under consideration. This view has been devilishly followed by, what is feared to be, a vast majority in our nation. Are we really so surprised to find this outlook also making its appearance in the church? Certainly we would not expect marriage and the home to remain unscathed in all this satanic change. In fact, if these advocates of error have their way, marriage will become a thing of the past since the view of some already is that marriage is out-dated, not in step with the times—OB-SOLETE.

Contemporary Examples

I well remember in my boyhood in Virginia how that every now and then it would become known in the community that certain ones were living together in an unmarried state. They were regarded as scum—low-down and common. Those people were avoided by the other people of the community as being unworthy of social fellowship. Today "living in" is the expression for the same ungodly arrangement. Only the terms have changed. The sin is exactly the same. But my point is that back then honorable marriage was the only thing acceptable in the eyes of society. That general outlook is no longer predominant.

In the days of World War II there were many cases of conception outside of wedlock. Young couples, overcome with passion and the idea of being separated perhaps never to see each other again, yielded themselves on the bed of fornication. Even so, boys in those days, in most cases, did the honorable thing and married the girl with or without the shotgun. Though wrong had been done, the consensus of thought was that "marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will

judge" (Heb. 13:4). Again, the society of the times recognized marriage as the honorable estate that it is.

As we moved into the fifties, turbulence and unrest began to gather on the horizon. The music began to change from the sweet, nostalgic, tender kind to an animal beat that matched the disorder of contemporary thought. It is very likely that this kind of music played as prominent a role in the changing scene as anything did. The beat went on and on until it rose into a mad, frenzied, sensual, crescendo resulting in the decade of rebellion—the 60's. It was every one for himself. This gave rise to the idea of each "doing his own thing". Law and order were regarded as the "establishment". "Kick the establishment" not only was the social order of the day but the repercussions were felt in every religious group in the country as the idea spilled over into the religious groups. They were saying that we must have a new order, a new society without restraint. Fulfill yourself. Think and say what you will. Liberty is license. Do as you please. Down with the establishment!

In this hotbed of rebellion, selfishness, sensuality, and hostility first one thing and then another was attacked as being outmoded, outdated, irrelevant to the times—OBSOLETE.

And the beat still goes on and it appears that it plans to continue and wax worse and worse. We were all shocked a few years ago to hear ideas going around about "trial marriages". We were even more amazed when Judith Viorst advocated "open marriage" in *Redbook* in 1973 setting forth the doctrine of "swinging" husbands and wives as a way to enhance marriage.

Add to this the even more corruptive book "Creative Divorce", a best-seller, which says divorce is not the end but the beginning of a new life and a freer, more self-assured you.

Then came the outspoken philosophy of "no marriage" at all. America was gullible. The songs told the story and the people lapped it up with a frenzy. Marriage licenses were scorned as \$2 pieces of worthless paper.

Glen Campbell's song—"Gentle On My Mind" graphically describes the "no marriage, no ties, no responsibility, no commitment" theory. The lyrics mock the idea of a marriage license. The song declares that he has no hooks in his hide and he can pick up his bedroll and leave any time and with this thought in the back-roads of his memory it serves to keep her gentle on his mind. Did someone tell me Campbell was a member of the church?

But how can members of the church frown on the song when many of them went down and bought the record? They bade him godspeed and helped him win his gold record by selling over a million copies. However, this is only one song. Songs of the same type are now legion and have gone from bad to worse.

We can see from all this how in the last 35 years the discussions have moved from premarital sex (fornication) to no marriage at all. Now they speak of so-called "meaningful relationships" with no view to marriage at all which are in reality without meaning.

The very existence of society itself has always been predicated upon the basic unit of society known as the

home and marriage. God set this in order when he performed the ceremony for Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Since then no society or culture in the history of civilization has survived which reached a point in its history where moral corruption and sexual permissiveness have been tolerated and allowed to become the order of the day.

In an extensive study of eighty-eight civilizations, J.D. Unwin, an anthropologist, showed that in each culture they began with codes of strict sexual behavior patterns and ended with a society crying out for complete freedom to express their passions. Each society which yielded to this moral corruption perished without exception. History is indeed a strong witness.

The Christian is found moving within this corrupt society from day to day. The influence of the world is relentless. The radio sends forth its jungle rhythms which are little more than heathen fertility rites. The bookstands blatantly advertise sex all over the covers of the filth books and some that purport not to be filth. They sell millions of dollars worth each year. In our homes we are bombarded with the "free love" and "no marriage" idea without letup as program after program portrays one torrid bedroom scene after the other involving unmarried couples.

The talk shows are playing their part. It is noteworthy in their bold discussions, which go on day after day about anything and everything, that those who dare to speak up in favor of marriage, marital fidelity, and who lift up their voices against ungodly concepts are talked down, laughed at, and booted to scorn.

At school our children are subjected to teaching and, sometimes teachers, who advocate free love and no marriage. The young people are just urged to learn how to take care of themselves during sexual experiences so as not to get pregnant or contact disease. Then when girls do get pregnant the whole area sets up a howl about teen-age pregnancy and this gives them the needed thrust to introduce sex education into the classrooms. When one is so naive as to cry out "flee fornication" they look at you and act toward you as if you were a fool. "Save yourself for marriage" you advise and some, reared in the classroom of the times, say "so who wants marriage." Even Christian teenagers have been known to raise the question "What's wrong with living in?"

Is Marriage Obsolete?

Society is moving toward the position that marriage is obsolete. The equal rights amendment, if ratified, not only opens up the way for the legal role of men and women to be equal but has the potential of alternating the roles of husbands and wives. This alternation of roles in itself will contribute its part to the breakdown of marriage and the home. When the headship of man is destroyed and the subjective relationship of woman to the man is disregarded, God's order in marriage has been destroyed. This alternation of roles and utter disregard of the husband-wife relationship has already taken place in some quarters without ERA. With some marriage is only a legal contract to overcome loneliness and to provide some measure of financial security through community property. The permanence of the home, as God would have it, has been

disregarded for many years as indicated by the climbing divorce rate. God's arrangement of one man and one woman for life, except for the cause of fornication, has been junked. The loose attitude toward divorce has contributed greatly to the "no marriage at all" concept. The practice was already with us in fact and in recent years has "come out of the closet" so to speak. We are no longer dealing in abuses of marriage such as bigamy, communal marriage, homosexual and lesbian marriage, adultery in marriage. We are talking about whether or not marriage in any form will be around. If some have their way, it will not.

What Does God Say?

Well, God ordained marriage as good and honorable for all and nowhere in His Word has he repealed or altered His arrangement. "From the beginning it hath not been so" and Christ indicated that under the New Covenant marriage would be restored as God originally instituted it. The New Testament will continue in force until Christ returns therefore marriage will continue until then according to God's Will.

The New Testament reveals only one alternate lifestyle with the exception of marriage and that is a single life of celibacy as in the case of the apostle Paul. Paul chose this alternate to marriage. This lifestyle waives the right to any sexual indulgence whatsoever. The only arrangement for the fulfillment of sexual desires is found in God-ordained marriage. Paul said he had the right to marry if he should choose. "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife..." (I Cor. 9:5).

In Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus said, "... Have ye not read, that he that made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

We, as Christians, must demonstrate by word and example God's plan in marriage. We need to teach it to our children at home within the framework of marriage. Elders and preachers must feed the church on a diet of God's Word which emphasizes and re-emphasizes marriage, its significance, and its permanence. We cannot allow the devil to take over and destroy the oldest institution in the world, the home. We can and must resist him. The devil wants marriage to fail and even to disappear from the scene altogether. God intended it to endure and continue until time shall be no more.

And so we say "Thy will be done." Amen, and amen.

**Social Ills
Mirrored
in the Church**



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Solomon observed that "there is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). He was referring to the analogous cycle of events between nature and humanity. The hearts of men with their desires, pursuits, and complaints do not change from generation to generation. Human nature is such that the main features of life and character remain fairly constant in every age and clime. The only force that can set a man apart from the lusts of the world is the word of God operating in him "both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). But even among the servants of God, the evil influence of the world is constantly present, trying to motivate rebellion against divine law.

There is nothing new in the church mirroring the social ills of the world. This has been true from the beginning. No congregation has ever been completely free of the world's contamination. But the immediate environment of some churches is obviously worse than that of others. The city of Corinth was so depraved that even the pagan world took note of it, whereas Jerusalem, though steeped in sin, had a relatively superior moral climate. Even so, a church does not necessarily mirror the evils of its environment in proportion to its depth. This is evident from the seven churches of Asia, each of which had a somewhat similar environment but reacted differently to it. It is the character of a church and not the nature of its surroundings that determines the degree to which it mirrors the social evils of the world.

The extent to which the world's social ills are present among the people of God varies from one generation to another, and from congregation to congregation within a given generation. But social ills may become so infectious in one era that moral degeneracy spreads so as to endanger the whole church. Paul indicates this in foretelling a general departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3) and in enumerating the moral evils that, at least in part, would characterize it (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Morally speaking, our nation is passing through one of the worst periods in its history; and the church seems to be reflecting more of the nation's social ills than at any time since the beginning of the Restoration movement. There is no doubt some connection between the two, but this is not an inevitable result; nor is the church justified in bending its moral principles to accommodate the increased evil in its environment. Paul made not the slightest concession to the depravity of Corinth; so far from it was he that he prohibited the brethren there to associate with one of their number who mirrored the social ills of Corinthian society (1 Cor. 5:11).

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The reflection of the world's social ills that is apparent in the attitude and actions of brethren today is by no means confined to institutional-social gospel oriented churches. It also includes those that traditionally have been more conservative in respect to Bible authority. And it isn't just the worldly fringe in those churches that are affected; loose morals are evident among influential leaders as well. There appears to be a calculated effort on the part of some to rationalize immoral behavior, or to overlook it as of no particular importance, or to pass it off as a personal matter between an individual and God, not subject to church discipline. But by whatever means it is done, the end result is the same: an increasing acceptance of the world's social ills as "normal" among members of the church.

The evidence for this is more observational than documental. Much of it at present is somewhat covert in nature. Very few advocates of slacker morals are willing, at this point, to argue their case openly, either in the press or pulpit. But personal knowledge of instances could fill many pages, as any observer knows. However, there are some exceptions to the reticence; some indications of the moral drift are openly demonstrated. And others, while still latent, are waiting in the wings to make their appearance when the time is right.

One of the most obvious concessions to the social ills of the world is seen in the **growing number of adulterous marriages** among members of the church, and the **increasing acceptance** of these as divinely approved. Perhaps no moral error has risen so fast, nor found such rapid favor with brethren. There have always been a few brethren with "funny ideas" about divorce and remarriage, but now their ranks are increasing. Well-known and highly-respected men are openly advocating theories that for all practical purposes make just about all remarriages acceptable. Regardless of the motives or sincerity of these men, the result is that many Christians are adopting the world's view of divorce and remarriage. The most oft-wedded star in Hollywood must be acknowledged as scripturally joined to his seventh wife by the standard some are defending. If there is any morally uplifting thought or hope for the future in such a concept, I'm too dense to see it.

It is being claimed in some places that there is no prohibition to the remarriage of either party after a divorce for whatever reason. There are even those who will acknowledge that a remarriage is unscriptural and then affirm that those who enter such a union "may continue in the marriage without further sin." If such teaching continues to gain "grass roots" acceptance among us, the church not only will mirror the world's perverted view of marriage, it will blend so harmoniously with it that the reflection cannot be distinguished from the original article.

The world's favorable view of **sexual permissiveness** is also reflected in the church. Our young people are under constant pressure from the worldly philosophy that says premarital sex is fine, so long as it is an expression of love and nobody "gets hurt." "If a couple is really in love, and intend to marry, then sexual relations are all right," they are told. And a good many

older members of the church have fallen for it, along with some of the young. But there is no Biblical principle that permits any form of premarital sex under any circumstances at any time. It is only natural that sexual permissiveness would also include dancing, petting, indecent and provocative clothing, prurient literature and entertainment, and immoral speech. Even the world's loose attitude toward homosexuality is finding soft spots among our brethren. There are published reports of at least one organized effort to get "church of Christ homosexuals" recognized as faithful servants of Christ.

The **proper role of the sexes in the home and the church** likewise shows signs of attrition. The widely disseminated propaganda of the Women's Rights movement and kindred philosophy are having an impact on the church. This is helped along by the economic pressures and social changes that are taking more women out of the home and thrusting them into the world of commerce and industry. Ellen Goodman, the syndicated columnist, is probably correct in saying recently that women cannot have it both ways. Referring to Anita Bryant's broken marriage, she wrote: "The lady tried to be a leader in the world and an obedient follower in the marriage. But these are two ways that you can't have it any more." And never could, she might have added. Any person who deals much with troubled marriages can testify to the increasing number of Christian homes where a disregard for the divinely appointed place of the man and the woman in the relationship is a root cause of the problem. There also appears to be a growing agitation for women to have more "voice" in the affairs of the church, as in the business meeting for example. Some would even open the assembly of the church equally to the public participation of men and women.

There is also a **growing permissiveness** in the church toward **social drinking**. The first time I heard a gospel preacher profess to see "no harm" in a Christian doing a little social drinking, I was shocked. That was many years ago and my shock-absorber is stronger now, but I am distressed and saddened nonetheless by what I think I see happening with reference to social drinking today, especially when "men of God" go along with it, or simply look the other way, when brethren drink a little for relaxation, excitement, or conviviality. Many brethren seem to be finding what the editor of this journal calls "moral loopholes" to justify the social use of alcohol. There have always been a few "sipping saints" around, but most of their sipping was done on the sly. Now the practice is coming "out of the closet" and is openly defended in some quarters.

Very few congregations are not troubled with a **drug problem** among its young people. The pressure of their peers for them to "try it" is tremendous. This, together with the belief that the use of some drugs is harmless and the conspiracy of protective silence among the users, makes it easy for young people to get caught up in the practice before their parents or the brethren are aware of it. What is especially disheartening is that in many cases the church and the home have contributed to the problem by failing to properly teach the danger and sin involved in the use of drugs. However, an even more disturbing aspect of this is the

attitude many older Christians have toward the use of the milder drugs. Some pretend the problem doesn't exist, or regard it as a little harmless "wild oats" sowing; and they oppose any corrective measures taken by the elders in dealing with the problem. Consequently, churches become riddled with drug-using youths that make a mockery of the church's stand against the world and its evils.

The disintegration of family relations is another social ill reflected in the church. This is seen in marital unhappiness and bickering, parental neglect and abuse of children, disobedience of children to their parents, and neglect of aged parents. Perhaps contributing to this (but an array of social ills within themselves) is the reflection of the world's love of self, money, and entertainment. "Do your own thing." "Get all you can as quickly as you can in whatever way you can." "Eat, drink, and be merry." All too often, these are the philosophies that motivate members of the church.

Why is it that the church is mirroring so many of the social ills of the world to such a great extent? There are two basic causes, as I see it. First, the church, both in pulpit and pew, is drifting away from the strong stand it formerly took on moral issues. And second, the church is losing its missionary zeal. Whenever Christians get slack in their personal interest in saving the lost, they get careless in their efforts to save themselves.

But regardless of what causes may be identified, the lack of self-control and dedication to moral purity are the tap root of the problem. Alexander Campbell put it well when he said: "When I see a 'Christian' toiling from year to year to keep cast with the world ... I am compelled to fear that he has not found in Christ the pearl of great price—that he has drawn a blank rather than a prize in assuming the Christian name." Too many of us today have "drawn a blank" when it comes to striving to be like Christ. We are often more interested in the outward marks of Christianity than in living a life of personal righteousness.

Instead of trying to "keep cast with the world," should we not rather be striving diligently for purity of heart and life? In contrasting the pure with the impure, Benjamin Franklin wrote: "How transcendently are those whose hearts are pure above (the impure)! Their intentions are pure; their desires are pure. Their aims are holy. They have an abiding consciousness of the purest, holiest and highest designs. They are not perfect and do not think they are, but they know they **desire to be**. They are **trying** for perfection. These are pure in heart; and happy **now**."

The world does not find reflective material in one who sets his mind on things above and who purifies himself after the example of Christ. The world will not be mirrored in the church when the lives of its members are immovably fixed on reflecting only the image of God's Son. It will be too busy mirroring Christ to find the time to be a mirror of the world.

Sensual Challenge— Hedonism

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While the word "hedonism" is not found in the English text of Scripture, we need to be impressed that it is a Biblical subject. It is a Greek word that has been made a part of our language. Being a Greek word, and since the New Testament was written in Greek, it can be found in the Greek text. It is translated "pleasure" in our English text.

Passages

Please observe some New Testament passages and how the word "hedonism" is used in those verses.

(1) **Luke 8:14** — "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures (hedonon) of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

(2) **2 Tim. 3:4** — "traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure (philedoni) more than lovers of God."

(3) **Titus 3:3** — "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures (hedonais), living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

(4) **James 4:1** — "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts (hedonon) that war in your members?"

(5) **James 4:3** — "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (hedonais)."

(6) **2 Peter 2:13** — "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure (hedonen) to riot in the day time."

What Is Hedonism?

Elton Trueblood said, in his "foreword" to *It's A Playboy's World* by William Banowsky, "Hedonism is the philosophy which holds that the pursuit of pleasure is life's highest purpose" (page 9). Banowsky said "hedonism is not a specific set of acts, but a philosophy of life — an attitude toward pleasure" (page 37). W. E. Vine says "pleasure, is used of the gratification of the natural desire or sinful desires" (page 871). Thayer says "pleasure" (page 276). Webster says "1. The doctrine that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life and that moral duty is fulfilled in the gratification of pleasure—seeking instincts and dispositions. 2. The manner of life of a hedonist; a living for pleasure" (page 382). Thus, hedonism is the philosophy that pleasure is the sole or chief good for man in this life and the pursuit of pleasure is the ideal aim of all conduct.

All hedonist do not contend for pleasure from the sensual. They acknowledge pleasure can be derived from such things as fame, art, knowledge, friendship, sympathy and reputation.

Please Renew Promptly!

Kinds of Hedonism

Hedonism might be divided into (1) lower and (2) higher hedonism. The lower concerns itself with physical states and activities, while the higher concerns itself with intellectual interest.

It can be further divided into (1) egoistic and (2) Universalists hedonism. The egoistic kind regards what is good for each person as his own pleasure, while the universalistic regards good as the pleasure of all concerned and moral conduct to be what promotes the welfare of the greatest number of people.

One of the challenges to faith is hedonism, a sensual challenge. Since the ancients did not necessarily regard hedonism as sensual, how did it come to be so regarded?

As is often the case, the pupil takes a matter far beyond what the teacher ever thought of doing. The followers of Aristippus came out of his Cyrenaic School of Philosophy and reduced his teachings to one of self-indulgence. Albert Barnes makes the following observation: "By pleasure, however, Epicurus did not mean sensual and groveling appetites, and degraded vices, but rational pleasure, properly regulated and governed But whatever his views were, it is certain that his followers had embraced the doctrine that voluptuousness and the pleasures of sense were to be practiced without restraint. Both in principle and practice, therefore, they devoted themselves to a life of gaiety and sensuality, and sought happiness only in indolence, effeminacy and voluptuousness. Confident in the belief that the world was not under the administration of a God of justice, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of every passion (*Notes On The New Testament*, page 483).

We need to be reminded that one can be a hedonist, given to pleasure, without being sensual. Many activities that brethren engage in are not sensual and within themselves may be right. Fishing, golfing, boat riding, camping, taking trips, etc. within themselves are right. Yet brethren can become so given to the pleasure of these things that they have no time for God or the brethren. Often the services of a local church are hurt by brethren being hedonists. When they have some time, they hardly ever think in terms of what they can do for the Lord, but rather think of where they can go and what they can do to fulfill their pleasure.

Sensual Hedonism

While the above is so and hurts the cause of Christ, the challenge to the faith, of this article, is the sensual challenge of hedonism. When the sensual is followed, the flesh rather than the Spirit controls one's life. Observe some ways this is done.

(1) **Drinking.** Many live to drink. Such is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). In modern society drinking of various alcoholic beverages is the way of life, at home, at the office, at parties, and some churches even encourage such. He or she who does not so drink is considered odd and not having pleasure. Drinking is often the forerunner to other hedonistic practices.

(2) **Reading.** Much of what is read is not only for pleasure but is sensual pleasure. Many read books that are not designed to help them improve themselves.

Look at the pornography business that profits off the sensual desires of mankind. This not only includes such well known magazines as *Playboy* and *Play girl*, but also includes many of the paper back books on the news stands that are printed by the thousands and contain one sensual story after another. Many have no time to read the New Testament or a good religious paper like this one, but will spend time and many dollars a year for cheap, sensual books that will not improve oneself.

(3) **Dress.** People have to wear something and it is not wrong to wear what is in style as long as it does not violate New Testament principles of righteousness. It is certainly right for both men and women to dress so as to look well and socially accepted within principles of righteousness. However, to see that much of the clothing of today is designed with the sensual in mind, just pick up some of the well known national mail order catalogues and look at the way some of the clothing is described. Such terms as sexy, provocative, enticing, sensual, alluring are used to describe the clothing. The very nature of the clothes is not to cover the body, but to attract the look and interest of the opposite sex and appeal to the sensual side of man. There was a time when such clothing was limited to the home, backyard and streets, but for shame such is making its appearance within some of the worship services of saints. Much clothing is designed with sensual pleasure in mind.

(4) **Dancing.** The dance is one way for sure to arouse the sensual hedonistic side of mankind. Such is condemned in the Bible under the heading of lasciviousness, if no where else. People who have normal physical bodies can not dance for long periods of time with the opposite sex without their passions being aroused. This is not to say that everyone who has ever danced is immoral. But how long can one dance, even with their own husband or wife, without wanting to do more than just dance? How long with someone else's husband or wife?

(5) **Drugs.** In addition to alcohol as a drug, there are many other drugs that are being used by people today. Most of these drugs come from outside the drug store. The use of them produces much the same effect upon people that alcohol does. Many of those under the influence of such satisfy every passion they have of a sensual nature. Many of the things they do are so bad that the only way they can be persuaded to engage in them is by being drugged.

(6) **Sexual Relations.** God in His word has provided for man to satisfy his sexual desires within the frame work of marriage (I Cor. 7:1-5). All other is sin. There is much error being taught within the body of Christ today on marriage, divorce and remarriage that would in one way or another encourage that which God does not. All one has to do to see the hedonistic attitude here is just look around at what is going on.

These areas we have mentioned, and others that could be mentioned, reveal the sensual pleasures to which some turn in their hedonistic attitude. Such destroys one's faith, one's usefulness to God and one's usefulness to the local congregation where he is a member. His faith is challenged and by sensual hedonism he fails the test.

The Challenge of Materialism

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I have no imagined crown of scholastic primacy with reference to a study of materialism. However, I would like to reveal what I believe to be the precarious position of many in dealing with mammon. One of the greatest challenges of humanity through the years has been materialism. It has become the "god" of America and eats into the vitals of the soul. The Lord said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). The word mammon is from "mamonas" which is a common Aramaic word for riches. Henry Thayer says on page 338 of his lexicon that it means "what is trusted in." Paul says, "for the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). It should be observed that the love of money causes two things. First, it causes one to err from the faith, and second, it causes much sorrow in this world.

The first scandal in the church was over money. Ananias and Sapphira lied about the money they were pretending to give to the Lord (Acts 5). The Lord obviously struck them dead immediately after they lied about the money. Several years ago I read from a modernist who said these people died from a coronary thrombosis. Strange, indeed, they both died from heart failure right after they had lied to both Peter and God! This modernist was trying to circumvent the miracles of the Bible by giving a logical explanation for their deaths. Some of my brethren argue that God is not concerned about money. I answer by saying if this be so why is there more in the Bible about money than about baptism? The truth of the matter is that God is concerned, not only, about your giving on the first day of the week but also your general attitude toward the dollar. There is both power and prestige in money. This is why we have so many scandals in our government.

People use the power of money to buy what they want. A case in point is Simon in Acts 8. Simon who had bewitched the people of Samaria with his sorcery was converted by Phillip. He continued as a Christian for a short time and was overcome by the devil. After his fall, he offered Peter and John bribe money for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which only the apostles had received. Peter refused the bribe by saying, "Thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8:20). There can be no doubt that Simon had bought his way many times with his money. This would be one of the few times he had failed.

Since we have observed the negative side of mammon, let us notice the positive side. The Lord did have a treasury, and Judas carried the bag (Jno. 13:29). It is

true he turned out to be a thief, but he did carry the money bag. It is reported in John 4 that Jesus sent his disciples into town to buy meat. This was while he was talking with the Samaritan woman. I suppose Jesus could have performed a miracle every time he needed food but he didn't. If he sent his disciples into town to buy food they had to have money to buy. Paul tells us to be content with food and raiment (1 Tim. 6:8). It isn't a sin to have money. As a matter of fact, it isn't a sin to have big money. The Bible condemns an improper attitude toward money, whether large or small.

When Paul wanted to show the wonderful qualities of love, he personified it in 1 Cor. 13. When the Lord wanted to show the deceptive nature of money, he used personification. He depicted mammon as a god whom we may serve. More people in this world bow down to mammon than the true God of the universe. Some think of money as being only bad. This is not true. If brethren are rich and use that money as God wills, much good may be accomplished. When rich men give as they have been prospered, it enables elders to spend much money in the proclamation of the gospel. I know of some rich Christian men who have done much for the cause of God. It is true that many have succumbed to the temptations of mammon, but not all.

Some feel that money will cure all their problems. I heard two men talking in front of a Texas bank a few years ago. One said, "John, how are you today?" John replied, "There ain't nothin' wrong with me that a million dollars won't cure." The attitude of John is the attitude of millions. However, most of these people have never had a million so they really don't know. Permit me to introduce you to a man who had billions. His name is Solomon. It is said that Solomon was so rich that silver "was nothing accounted of in his days." Hundreds of devices and gimmicks have been concocted through the years to achieve wealth. Solomon probably tried more than anyone. He said, "Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom above all that were before me in Jerusalem." He tried every conceivable pleasure. Cheering himself with wine, he exploited mirth to its fullest. If money and prosperity insure happiness, then Solomon could not have missed. Obviously, the provisions of his table for one day were, oxen, sheep, harts, gazelles and fatted fowl. He had men-singers, women-singers and musical instruments of all sorts were lavishly employed. Yet, at the close of his life he had said it was "vanity" and vexation of spirit and a striving after the wind.

Many people in the church bow to mammon when they fail to put the Kingdom of God first. Many use their money to purchase everything in this world before giving a dime to the Lord. The philosophy of some is, "Lord, if I have any money left, I will give you a little." People are so enamored with new houses, new cars, new furniture, new clothes until they find it difficult to give to the Lord as He directs in his word. Materialism is like high blood pressure; one can have it and not know it. We must practice eternal vigilance in order to meet the approbation of God with reference to this world's goods.

Christian friend, we are all stewards of God. This means we are held accountable for the way we use our

time, money and talent. In Matt. 25 when the Lord called the one talent man in for his final council, we have an interesting conversation. The one talent man felt the Lord was a "hard man" gathering where he had not strewed. The Lord thundered back this reply "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury—cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Christian friend, we learn from the above that it isn't wrong to draw a reasonable amount of interest on your money. God expects us to work while it is day because the night will come when no man can work. The test and challenge of many is when God pours out his material blessings upon them. This increases their stewardship and adds to their responsibility. May God help us to understand that we brought nothing into this world and we certainly cannot take anything out. There are no pockets in a shroud.

Religious Challenge: Denominationalism

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I am obviously writing about a subject that is a realistic one indeed. A recent survey showed that by definition there are more than 1200 denominations in the United States. So, before we go any further in our study, let's find out what is meant by the word "denomination."

Denomination — "(1) The act of naming. (2) A name; denomination. (3) The name of a class or group; classification. (5) An organized group of religious congregations." (*American Heritage Dictionary*, Page 353).

Denominationalism — "(1) The tendency to separate into religious sects or denominations. (2) Advocacy of such separation. (3) Strict adherence to a denomination; sectarianism." (*Ibid.* Page 353).

Under the heading of "names," one of the synonyms is "denomination." "A denomination is also a categorizing name and is applied to persons or things, often religious groups or monetary units, having close relationship." (*Ibid.* Page 871).

Sectarian — "Pertaining to or characteristic of a sect or sects." "Sect-middle English secte, from Old French, from Latin secta, 'following,' from sectus, archaic past participle of *segi*, to follow. (1) A group of people forming a distinct unit within a larger group by virtue of certain refinements of distinctions of Belief or practice. (2) A schismatic religious body. (3) Any small faction united by common interests or beliefs." (*Ibid.* Page 1173).

Denominationalism is indeed a great challenge to the faith of every Christian. Many radio and television programs are presented for the purpose of trying to promote some particular denomination (PTL Club, 700 Club, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, etc.), and which, if listened to on a regular basis, will cause us to "pick up on" their phraseology, thus finding ourselves using unscriptural words and expressing unscriptural ideas, almost unconsciously.

Jesus warned about this very problem when He told His disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matthew 16:6). The disciples thought he was talking about bread and the leaven in bread. However when He explained it to them, "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:12).

There is, of course, recognition of the fact by many in the denominational world today, that there were no denominations in the first century when the Lord's Church was established. For example, we read in Mr. Edward T. Hiscox's *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, "In the days of the apostles when there was but one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism, and no different denominations existed ..." As you can see, this admission by Mr. Hiscox is devastating to the denomination of which he was a member, as well as all other denominations. And, if space permitted, that statement, or one similar, could be multiplied many times by those who are members of something that they admit did not exist in the days of the apostles. In Matthew 15:13 Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

Many things challenge our faith. But perhaps none is so subtle as denominationalism, because the majority of the people who make up the denominational world are morally upright, good neighbors, husbands, wives, parents, and perhaps even "pillars" in the community. In fact, many of them would die for "their faith" more readily than many who are supposed to be true Christians. I would certainly not minimize the above mentioned things as being essential to one being a Christian. The problem is not in living right and doing good, but the problem is in "following" and espousing a doctrine that is peculiar to their denomination rather than simply following the Word of God. Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

Denominationalism is a challenge to our faith because much of the doctrine that is taught by them appeals to the fleshly appetites. Many social activities are planned and paid for by many denominational churches. They pay their social and educational directors to plan such activities. Also, many of the things people like to do (like the wearing of immodest apparel, smoking, dancing, social drinking, mixed swimming, etc.) is either encouraged, condoned, or overlooked by much of the religious world. But John said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,

and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Peer pressure is also a powerful thing, not only among young people, but among adults as well. All of us want to be accepted and not be "made fun of" or ridiculed because of what we believe, teach, or practice religiously. Denominationalism, for the most part, teaches that "one church is as good as another," and, "after all we are all striving for the same place. So, let's join hands and go along together." Obviously this would eliminate much of the "peer pressure" that is brought to bear on the Christian who believes in The One True Church of the New Testament. But remember that Jesus said, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Also, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven..." (Matthew 5:11-12).

Denominationalism is a challenge to our faith because of the truth that is taught by them. Denominational error is kind of like rat poison which is 98% corn meal, and 2% poison. So much of it is so good that we tend to minimize the bad. However, as the 2% poison will destroy the rat, so a little bit of error will cause us to be lost eternally. From the beginning of time, God has not allowed man to add to or take from His Word. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). In the Revelation letter He warns, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **And** if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

Denominationalism is a challenge to our faith because of the knowledge that many in the religious world have of their doctrine. Many of those in the denominational world study the Bible diligently, in order to be able to substantiate their doctrine, while those who are Christians fail to read and study their Bibles so as to be able to "... earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). As a result, many "Christians" are "overwhelmed" by the Bible knowledge of some of their denominational friends and are "afraid" to try to "cross spiritual swords" with them. However, we need to remember what Paul commanded in II Timothy 2:15. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

It has been said that nothing ruins a good friendship **like** the discussion of politics and religion. Many Christians are so afraid of losing friends that they not only will not "talk religion" with them, but if the friend comes to the services will "warn" the preacher

or teacher not to name or talk about a certain denomination for at least two reasons. First they do not want to have to defend what is taught, and second they are afraid their friend will be offended. However this raises at least two questions. Does the Christian think his friend will go to heaven even though he is a member of a denomination? Does the Christian think that one church is as good as another? His answer to both questions should be NO! If a person realizes what constitutes the church, he cannot in any sense believe that Christ's church, which was purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28) can be equated with any denomination. Individuals are purchased by Christ's blood (Rev. 1:5), and thus blood-bought individuals make up or constitute the Lord's church. He is the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

Denominationalism is also a challenge to the Christian's faith because not only are there many people who call themselves by man-made names that make up denominationalism, but according to the definition, **there are those among churches of Christ who qualify.** Denominationalism or sectarianism is "any small faction united by common interests or beliefs." Obviously one would have to close his eyes to the facts to deny that such exists in the Lord's church. In fact, Paul warns against this very thing. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

Conclusion

Many other things could be said on this subject. **But** I believe this is enough to **help** us see the **dangers** of denominationalism and how every Christian's **faith** is challenged by it. Let us beware lest we, **through one** means or another, be drawn into denominationalism.

Give Me That

Prime-Time Religion

By Jerry Sholes

An inside look at the Oral Roberts operations from one who served for three years as a television writer for the Roberts TV program. The author was interviewed recently on the TV program, *Sixty Minutes*. You will be enlightened and shocked at the magnitude of this big business parading as religion.

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Religious Challenge: Oriental Philosophies

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Fifteen years ago, a Christian living in the United States rarely had any personal contact with Buddhists, Hindus, or Muslims. Unless he traveled outside this country, his faith in Jesus of Nazareth was hardly challenged by these religions of the East, and he had little practical need to know about them. Today that is no longer true. The philosophies of the Orient have not only reached American shores, but their popularity here has grown rapidly. In a widely read article by J. Gordon Melton, *Good Housekeeping* magazine reported in March of this year that there are fifty-six different Buddhist "denominations" in the United States. To be included in the list, each group had to have at least two "congregations" or one "congregation" with no fewer than two thousand members—so it seems likely that there were additional smaller groups which were not reported. The same article listed forty-six Hindu and twenty Islamic groups in America. These statistics indicate that the Oriental philosophies are in fact a present "challenge to faith" for Christians in the United States. It is therefore important for members of the Lord's church to examine these religions and be prepared to discuss them in a responsible way when the opportunity arises.

The expression "Oriental philosophies" is a considerably broad term. It covers a great variety of religions and ways of thought prevalent in Asia and especially India. Usually Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are considered the major Oriental philosophies, or Eastern religions, though there are many others, some of which have millions of adherents. It would clearly be impossible in an article of this scope to discuss in detail even these three religions, much less the others like Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Zoroastrianism. Consequently, the interested reader will need to look for additional information on these religions in a good encyclopedia, like *Britannica*, or books on world religions. Two of the best are: John B. Noss, *Man's Religions* (5th ed.; New York: McMillan, 1974) and Huston Smith, *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper / Row, 1958).

Hinduism

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna, one of the Hindu incarnations of God, says to his disciple, "In whatsoever way men approach me, even so do I receive them, for even the paths men take from every side are mine" (Gita 4:11). One of the gigantic differences separating Hinduism and Christianity is illustrated when this statement is placed alongside one by Jesus of Nazareth, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Lit-

tle comment is needed on this contrast. If Hinduism is correct, man may approach God in whatever way he chooses. If, however, Christianity is correct, the way chosen matters greatly since there is, in fact, only one way by which God can successfully be approached: the way of Jesus Christ. Hinduism does not claim to be the only valid religion, but Christianity does. Any discussion, therefore, between the Hindu and the Christian must deal with the truth or falsehood of the Christian's claim that his is the only way of salvation.

The word "salvation" suggests another broad area of disagreement between Hinduism and Christianity. According to Christianity, man's basic problem lies in the fact that he has sinned and is cut off from God (Isa. 59:2; Eph. 2:1,12). Salvation is salvation from sin (Mt. 1:21). Hinduism, on the other hand, says that man's problem has to do with his knowledge. Man has somehow "forgotten" his true nature and his consciousness is clouded with the darkness of ignorance. He already is united with God, but he does not know that he is. Therefore, salvation is enlightenment or the regaining of the knowledge of one's real self. To this end, Hinduism provides a variety of ways to purify and elevate the consciousness.

The claims of Jesus of Nazareth are directly opposed to those of Hinduism. Man's difficulty is more serious than a mere lack of consciousness of his real self—it is that he bears true moral guilt for his sins, sins which must be atoned for to be forgiven. And Jesus claims, not to offer only one possible way of salvation, but the only way. Said he, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24).

Buddhism

Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born around 560 B.C. in northern India. He grew up in a wealthy Hindu family, but as a young man experienced a life-changing "enlightenment," after which he became known as the Buddha, or the Awakened One. He founded an order of monks and his teachings became the basis of later Buddhism. Buddha's basic message is summarized in what are called the Four Noble Truths: 1) Life is suffering, 2) The cause of suffering is desire, or selfish craving, 3) The cure for suffering is release from desire, and 4) Release from desire can be accomplished through the Eightfold Path of right knowledge, right aspiration, right speech, right behavior, right livelihood, right effort, right mind-fulness, and right concentration, or absorption.

It is possible to say that Buddhism, as conceived by its founder, is not a religion, but a philosophy. There is in Buddhism no personal God, no soul of man, no religious authority, and no worship. There is, in fact, no supernatural element in Buddhism. It is true that in later years the followers of Buddha attributed deity to him and the characteristics of a religion began to appear, but Buddha himself denied being divine and insisted that he was merely a teacher. In its original form, therefore, Buddhism is a practical philosophy directed toward the solving of man's problems through individual effort.

What must the Christian say about Buddhism? He must say that it, like Hinduism, misses the point of man's real problem. Man is a personal being created in

the image of a personal God (Gen. 1:26). His entire purpose in life is to love and obey God (Eccl. 12:13; Mt. 22:36-37). Having refused this harmonious relationship with God, man is estranged from his Creator and stands under the penalty of God's wrath (Rom. 1:18-21). Ignoring the personal element in man's relationship to God, Buddhism wrongly diagnoses man's dilemma and can offer only a superficial solution. In the face of Buddha's offer of enlightenment through self-discipline Jesus says, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (Jn. 17:3).

Islam

Unlike Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam is akin to Judaism and Christianity in certain ways. Muhammed, Islam's founding prophet, claimed descent from Abraham through Ishmael, whereas the Jews descended from Abraham through Isaac. The Koran contains accounts of many incidents in the Old Testament, and its doctrinal and ethical precepts in some cases are similar to Biblical teachings. The differences between Islam and the Judeo-Christian tradition, however, are large and important.

Muslims consider Muhammed, born in Arabia around 571 A.D., to be the Seal of the Prophets, the last and greatest of God's spokesmen. Through Muhammed was revealed the Koran, a book believed by Muslims to be inspired and completely authoritative. Muslims accept the Old and New Testaments of Jews and Christians, but they believe these books possess two defects: they were revealed during an early stage of man's spiritual "childhood" and are therefore preliminary and incomplete, and they have been corrupted in their transmission down to modern times. The Koran, it is believed, is free from these imperfections and is to be trusted as God's pure, complete, and final word. Regarding Jesus of Nazareth, Muslims believe that he was a prophet of God and even accept his virgin birth, but they refuse to accept the fact that he was divine, thinking that this would amount to saying there are two Gods instead of one.

Much of the Christian's response to Islam will have to do with the question of the finality of the revelation contained in the New Testament. The question may be simply put: Is the New Testament God's complete and final revelation to man, or is the Koran? Several New Testament texts indicate that the Christian faith is the culmination of God's revelation and nothing further is to be expected. Jude spoke of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jd. 3). And Paul the apostle wrote, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:8). It is an either or proposition. If the claims of the New Testament can be substantiated, Islam and all other alleged latter-day revelations are not genuine.

Conclusion

Peter the apostle urged his readers, "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and

fear" (1 Pt. 3:15). The Christian is under obligation always to be prepared to give a good defense of this faith. Whether it is in an encounter with Hinduism in the form of a Hare Krishna advocate in a shopping center parking lot or in a discussion with an Islamic student studying in an American university or wherever, the true believer in Jesus Christ needs to be equipped to meet challenges to his faith. Being able to do so in a mature fashion requires a thorough knowledge of the Bible. It also requires taking the time to learn at least the fundamentals of the various rival faiths which confront the Christian. All of this demands an expenditure of time and effort. But the child of God who has not thoughtfully considered the foundations of his own faith and girded his mind for action in the arena of life (1 Pt. 1:13) will very likely end up a spiritual casualty when his beliefs are challenged. Like those described by Paul, he will be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14).

How is the Christian to respond to devotees of the Eastern religions? With love and compassion. And with the truth. If the New Testament Scriptures are what Christians believe them to be, they are able to produce conviction in the heart of every sincere searcher for God's will. When all is said and done, the Christian need never do more than put the unbeliever in touch with the Scriptures. If the unbeliever has eyes to see, he will see there the grandeur of the person of Jesus Christ, his moral purity, the authority of his teaching, and the fact of his resurrection. There he will learn that "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" (Ac. 4:12). And there, it is hoped, he will be prompted to say as did Thomas, "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28).

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The Challenge of Entertainment Without Morals

Eugene Britnell

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Those who are interested in our physical health often encourage and motivate us to eat pure, nutritious food by repeating the statement: "You are what you eat." Someone has suggested facetiously that if that be true many of us are garbage cans! But we know that there is truth in the statement, for not only is nutrition essential to good health, but many physical problems are treated and often cured by what we do and do not eat.

Man is not wholly material, and as Jesus said, he does not live by bread alone. To be strong morally and spiritually, we must also be concerned about our spiritual diet—what we see, hear and believe. We cannot feed on a diet of filth, vulgarity and negativism and remain strong and healthy spiritually.

That man needs some diversion, relaxation and recreation from the toil and strain of everyday life should be understood and admitted by all. This is true of both the body and mind. The Lord Jesus Christ became tired, weary and hungry, and he often sought seclusion for rest, meditation and prayer. Paul taught that there is some benefit in bodily exercise when he said, "For bodily exercise profits a little" (I Tim. 4:8, NKJ).

While all that we have said is true, it is equally true that our hedonistic society has become extreme and unreasonable in its desire and demand for entertainment. It is much easier to fill a stadium which seats fifty thousand than a church building which seats three hundred. Even that which is wholesome, necessary, and morally right becomes sinful and destructive to spirituality when it becomes excessive and uncontrolled.

Paul declared that some of the Israelites were guilty of idolatry, and the proof which he offered was that "the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (I Cor, 10:7). Eating, drinking, playing—what an accurate description of modern America! He also said that the time would come when people would be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4). For many, that time has arrived.

We see the need for entertainment, but we have been warned of the dangers of too much or the wrong kind. We feel that the vast majority of Americans, including many Christians, are guilty of both. We have too much entertainment without morals.

Of all the forms of modern entertainment, nothing has ever captured the attention and influenced the thinking of the American people as that electronic medium we call television. Many have become literally addicted to this modern marvel of communication. Authorities tell us that the average viewer watches

about four hours each day. It would be wrong to stare at a blank wall that long! But much of television is far more destructive than a blank wall. Many of the programs are filled with murder, sex, cursing, drinking, homosexuality, violence, infidelity and blasphemy.

As the silent majority watches and complains to the wrong people—if at all—television is becoming progressively worse. The National Federation For Decency has monitored 800 hours of television by 450 trained volunteers in eight states. Comparing 1979 with 1978, profanity increased by 45.47 per cent; drinking alcohol in prime time increased by 77.83 per cent; a total of 87 per cent of all programs contained either sex and/or profanity; a total of 87.45 per cent of all sex was depicted outside marriage. Many movies which were shown as x-rated in theaters a few years ago are now presented in the homes of America by television.

Even the advertising on television, which must be entertaining or at least attention-getting to be effective, is degrading and insulting. Families cannot watch many of the commercials without being embarrassed. Hardly anything is avoided and no part of the body is private. It seems that those who produce and pay for the advertising will do about anything for money, so long as the public will watch and buy.

Radio, which has been a part of America's development, entertainment and information for more than half a century, has become, to a great degree, entertainment without morals. This is true more of the music than anything else. Rock music, which to some (especially our youth) is entertainment, is simply rotten! Much of it purveys a message of sex, drugs, immorality and rebellion. And the rock stars nearly always live what they sing.

May we give you some samples of the lyrics of some of the rock music hits. A song called "White Rabbit" by The Jefferson Airplane on RCA says: "One pill makes you larger / And one pill makes you small / And the ones that mother gives you / Don't do anything at all / Go ask Alice when she's ten feet tall. And if you go chasing rabbits / And you know you're going to fall / Tell 'em a hooka-smoking caterpillar / Has given you the call / Call Alice when she was just small. When the men on the chessboard / Get up and tell you where to go / And you've just had some kind of mushroom / And your mind is moving / Oh go ask Alice, I think she'll know. When logic and proportion / Have fallen so I'll be dead / And the white knight is talking backwards / And the red queen's off with their heads / Remember what the do-do said / Feed your head, feed your head."

Now if you can't see a message of drug use in that song, you simply don't understand their language!

Let me give you the words of another popular rock song, this time to show how risqué and immoral they can be. The song, "Light My Fire" by The Doors on Elektra Records, says: "You know that it would be untrue / You know that I would be a liar / If I was to say to you / 'Girl, we couldn't get much higher.' Come on baby, light my fire / Come on baby, light my fire / Try to set the night on fire. The time to hesitate is through / The time to wallow in the mire / Try it for we can only lose / And our love becomes a funeral pyre."

We could give many other examples. I have before me the words to "Sock It To Me-Baby" but we cannot print them in this paper. Be assured that they are on radio, and in the record collections of many of our young people.

Even country music, which has been the message of the common American, has become immoral. That is due primarily to the fact that rock stars have entered the "country" field to make money, and have ruined the music and corrupted its message. The majority of the hit songs are filled with cursing, love triangles, drinking and suggestive lyrics. In March of this year, Mr. Paul Harvey presented the following material on his radio network and in his newspaper columns across America. It is entitled "Reared on Country Music" —

"I was reared on country music. My first job in radio at the age of 14 was at KVOO, 'The Voice of Oklahoma,' in Tulsa.

"Chores included announcing, selling, reading news, sweeping out at night. And, on those occasions when a senior staffer got sick, I was allowed to announce a live music program: Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, Johnny Lee Wills, the Alabama Boys—those were the popular performers of that era—so you can see this was a few 'wagon greasin's' back down the road.

"They were not called 'country musicians'; they were just 'hillbilly bands.' They never presumed to label themselves 'artists'; they were just singers and fiddlers and guitar pickers.

"They did not perform 'concerts' . . . And they did not sing dirty.

"Am I wrong to be concerned about what's happened since? Historically, country music reflected apple pie patriotism, virtue, boy-girl romance. Much of today's pottage is downright porno.

"Chicago critic, Gary Deeb, calls country music 'the most sensuous form of American popular music' He says, 'For sheer sensuality and overt appeal to sexual interests, there's nothing more rancid on the air.'

"To quote in evidence some of the more raunchy lyrics is not necessary; any school ager can.

"With contemporary jockstrap jungle music utterly uninhibited and with cable television racing toward us with hard-core porn, it may seem that any criticism of country music is misdirected.

"Yet classic country music always spoke to the heart and I guess I just don't want to admit what's happening to America's heart.

"Also, history tells me that excess ultimately, inevitably invite reaction. Any individual, any art or any industry which does not discipline itself eventually, one way or another, will be disciplined. Nashville could OD on its own excesses.

"Some defend dropping the seventh veil, saying that the music industry is only 'giving people what they want.'

"Yet, we don't allow anybody to divert his sewer over your yard—just because he might want to.

"In a sardine society, where our interests necessarily overlap, each of us has to respect others' prerogatives in order to keep any for ourselves.

"When the potential for pollution is as wide as the sky, the obligation is singular.

"So before the bureaucracy descends on us with any

more regulation and regimentation 'in the public interest,' some of us who cherish the freedoms our media have been allowed have to do what we can to keep our singing tower from spitting.

"By now this has to sound to some as though Paul Harvey wants all cowboys stripped of their rhinestones and all cowgirls to look and sound like Minnie Pearl.

"No, I didn't say that. But I'll settle for that—if the alternative is for our splendid showcase for country music to become instead a Hustler magazine of the air."

Well said, Mr. Harvey, but this problem will not be solved until more of us are willing to write or call station owners, managers and DJs and express our convictions about the rotten music they are playing. Will you do this in your area?

With but few exceptions, movies are another form of entertainment without morals. Movies move, not only on the screen, but in the minds and actions of those who view them. It is difficult to go see a good movie without being exposed to objectionable previews. With the coming of television, it seems that movies are designed for those who want something worse than what is now seen at home. And the ratings are often misleading. One isn't sure whether "PG" means parental guidance or primarily garbage. "R" could mean either restricted or rotten. And the X-rated should mean that the movie has been crossed out of the desires and plans of any decent person.

To many people, gambling is a form of entertainment, but it is certainly one without morals. America has been called "the gamblingest nation that ever existed." There are three legitimate means of transferring property: (1) the law of labor, where money is paid and earned by effort expended, either physical or mental; (2) the law of exchange, where something is exchanged for its value in money or goods; and (3) the law of love, where money is given without any expectation or desire for return. Gambling does not qualify in any of these. Not only does gambling support a sinful and corrupt segment of society, but it is contrary to the true principles of human relationship. And that's true of all forms of gambling, from buying a chance on something from some church or charitable organization to betting on horses and dogs or playing in a big casino.

Dancing is another form of entertainment without morals. The entertaining part is based upon lust and its fruits. Dancing is lasciviousness and revelry, and such is condemned in the Bible (Gal. 5:19-21). Some argue that it all depends upon one's attitude or state of mind, and that the dance can be cleaned up to the point of purity and respectability. That's about like trying to clean up a clod of dirt—when you finish you have nothing left! Someone has said that the man who says that he can embrace the opposite sex on the dance floor without sinning is more than a man, less than a man, or a barefaced liar. We'll not argue with that conclusion.

No doubt there are many other forms of entertainment without morals, but in closing let us turn our attention to some principles and positive thoughts which merit our honest and sincere consideration.

On the average, the American people have shorter work weeks and more leisure time than any people who ever lived on this earth. But, and I direct this to Christians especially, what are we doing with our time? Are we using it to teach people, study the Bible and good material, minister to the weak and weary, and otherwise labor for the Master in his vineyard? I'm afraid not. We, like others in our society, have become too attracted by and attached to this life and what we can get from it. We have lost sight of who we are, our true mission in life, and our ultimate goal—to enter heaven with as many as we can influence to go with us!

Too many are using their long "weekends" to play and serve self. They take off Friday evening and drag in late Sunday. It is difficult to conduct the affairs of the church and teach effectively in classes because of so much absenteeism. Such roving, visiting, playing members are not worth much to any congregation, at home or anywhere else.

I think often of the difference between people in our time and those of long ago. You remember about Pharaoh and the children of Israel; how he increased their burdens and hours of labor. Why? Was he simply trying to punish them? Well, that was a part of it, but not his primary motive. What really concerned him was what the people would do with any spare time he might allow them. The record says that he said: "for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, let us go and sacrifice to our God" (Exodus 5:8). See the difference? If the Israelites had any time off they went to worship and serve God. Today, we get our boats, campers, golf clubs, fishing tackle, swim suits and what have you, and take off to play. Never mind the Lord's work; that can wait! And concerning Sunday, Christians have said, "That's the only day we have." I've always thought that that's the only day of the week the Christian doesn't have; it is the Lord's day!

Yes, there is time for every thing, and as we said in the beginning, we have many legitimate needs in life. There are many forms of recreation and entertainment which are wholesome and unquestionably safe. Many people find such in fishing, golfing, baseball, or other games and activities. We can relax and spend some of our time seeing and hearing clean, pleasant and rewarding programs on radio and television, or listening to recorded music. We are not advocating "all work and no play." But whatever we do, we must be reasonable and moderate in the use of our precious time, and careful in how we spend our money as servants and stewards of the Lord.

Let us return to a verse of scripture from the apostle Paul, from which we quoted earlier in this study. Having acknowledged that bodily exercise (and I think this would involve entertainment) is profitable, he turns his and our attention—by contrast—to that which is more important and which must concern every activity in life, by saying, "but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."

This teaches us that in work, play, worship, or whatever we do we should seek that degree of godliness and plane of living which will make the "life that now is" pure, pleasant, prosperous and pleasing

to our Father so that we may be assured of a right relationship with Him in that life "which is to come."

When we need to be entertained, let us make sure that it is entertainment with morals.

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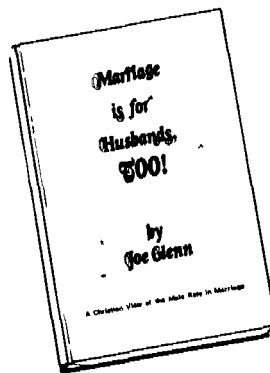
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The various issues that challenge the faith, which are discussed in this special issue of *Searching The Scriptures*, should make us conscious of the imminent dangers that threaten our very survival socially, morally, nationally and spiritually. The democratic system which we have enjoyed for over two hundred years is fast eroding because of the insidious evils that possess this generation. We must be made aware of all these dangers to the faith and understand their destructive nature to effectively divorce them from our lives. Unless we have some understanding of what is required of us as the children of God and citizens of this world, we will have no direction and purpose for the good life. It is in this setting that brother Adams assigned to me the subject that has to do with the positive side which will help us to understand what purpose our existence is to serve.

"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).

Much has been written and spoken in the last few years about the "grace of God" and what it does. It is not my purpose to discuss Grace in this article, but it is an important part of the text we have under investigation in this study. In order to appreciate the words of verses 11 and 12, we must look at the general context. Titus was instructed to speak the things that are sound doctrine: healthy, wholesome teaching. The older men and women were to be "sober" and "sound in faith," among other things, as they taught the younger women and men to be all that the "sound doctrine" required of them. As a younger man, Titus was to be a "pattern of good works" in all areas of his life, which includes his attitude, heart, words and conduct. Men and women of all ages are instructed to fashion their lives in accord with sound doctrine.

The grace of God brings salvation. That is a fact! "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men . . ." That men are saved by the "grace of God" goes without question. This unearned kindness of God toward man provided a sacrifice for sins that man could never provide. The death of Christ for every man is called "the grace of God" (Heb. 2:9). Man is saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). But "faith" comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). It must follow therefore that the grace that saves is the grace that comes through faith. And since faith comes by hearing the word of God, the

grace that saves through faith must also come by the word of God. The "word of his grace" (Acts 20:32) is the "gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Our faith in Christ and his word produces obedience, which is righteousness. "... for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). And all who go about to establish their own righteousness do not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). By the Spirit Peter said, "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35).

By hearing the "word of his grace," we believe it; thus we are saved by grace through faith. But faith that is dead (does not work in obedience) will not save (James 2:24-26). Man's faith must work the will of God. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21). We are therefore justified by his grace and have been made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7).

The grace of God that saves TEACHES: educates, instructs, trains, us to refuse to involve ourselves in the evil practices of this life, and to live above reproach in this present world. That is what these verses in Titus 2 are all about. We can have no hope of the promise of God beyond this life if we pursue a life style that is contrary to that "sound doctrine" taught in the word of his grace. The grace of God that brings salvation educates us to expel from our lives all ungodliness.

We Are Taught To Deny

UNGODLINESS. This word simply means without godliness; impiety in general. Impiety involves all in life that fails to render the proper duty toward God, both in attitude and in action.

Ungodliness is ugly from its inception, and is increased by profane and vain babblings (2 Tim. 2:16). We must eliminate and exclude forever from our lives all ungodliness and "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10). Why? "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ALL UNGODLINESS and UNRIGHTEOUSNESS of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). The description of "ungodliness and unrighteousness" in Romans 1:18-32 is a perfect picture of the children of "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).

Ungodliness must be denied entrance into the heart and life of any who expect to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Ungodliness and unrighteousness include the following sins: unthankful, a foolish, darkened heart, idol worship, lustful corruption, homosexuality, vile affections, reprobate mind, full of all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who know God's judgment upon such is death, and also upon those who have pleasure in them that do such things (Rom. 1:18-32). In every list of sins in the New

Testament will be found these sins of ungodliness and unrighteousness. Let it be understood that no one lives "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" unless he has been educated to dispose and forever eliminate from his life **ALL UNGODLINESS**.

WORLDLY LUSTS. Worldly means: "of or pertaining to this world" (kosmikos), the natural and fleshly realm. Lusts mean: "strong desires," especially "strong desires that are evil and grow out of fleshly appetites. These lusts work in our members to do evil.

It is imperative that we deny ourselves the practice of these evil deeds. Worldly lusts include the lust for unholy riches, sinful pleasures, evil habits and all kinds of wickedness. It also includes the pride of life and all that goes with it. Before we can live as God teaches us to live, we must deny to ourselves all that comes under the terms, "ungodliness" and "worldly lusts."

We Should Live:

SOBERLY. In Titus 2:12 the word is an adverb, and indicates self-restraint; it is akin to the verb form in Titus 2:6 and is translated "sober-minded." In Titus 2:2 it is used as an adjective and translated in the KJV by "temperate." The meaning is to possess control over one's mind, desires, passions, and appetites so that he does not allow himself to become subject to the worldly lusts from which he is to restrain himself.

"He must do his duty to himself before he can do his duty to others. He who does not live soberly cannot live righteously. He cannot do his duty to his fellow man until he discharges those he owes to himself." (*A Commentary of The New Testament Epistles*, David Lipscomb, edited with additional notes by J. W. Shepherd, p. 277).

In the now, present world, we are instructed by the grace of God to refrain completely from ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live **SOBERLY**. The impact of this word in this context includes all self-restraint, moderation and the sober control of all mental, physical and emotional faculties of self. The purpose of this is to avoid all lusts of this present age, and the devices and lures of the "god of this world"—Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). It also imports the idea of having the self-control to **DO** those things that are authorized by the word of God.

RIGHTEOUSLY. In Titus 2:12 the original word is an adverb (dikaaios) and has the meaning of "doing justly" and "the right conduct; of what is right; by the right standard." It essentially implies a "just" action, "righteously" conducted without prejudice or partiality. It is observing proper custom, rule or law.

The word "righteousness (dikaiosune) is used of the character and work of God, of the work and death of Christ, of the revelation of the word of God, and of those individuals who understand, believe and do the will of God as it is revealed in the word of God. The idea of "right doing" and "just" dealing is always in the word.

Unrighteousness is the opposite of righteousness. 1 John 5:17 says: "All unrighteousness is sin . . ." Anything we do that is not right or just is sin, according to the only conclusion we can reach from this verse and the definition of the word. But how does one

know what righteousness is? The standard is the word of God. "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). When men create their own systems of right, they do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3; Titus 3:5). But the one who fears God and "works righteousness" is accepted with Him (Acts 10:34, 35). But how does one "work righteousness?" I believe the answer is too obvious to allow any ground for Calvinists who contend that only the personal righteousness of Jesus is accounted to us for righteousness. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that **DOETH** righteousness is righteous, even as he (Christ) is righteous" (1 John 3:7). God's word is righteousness (Psalm 119:172). Those who work righteousness (do His will) are accepted with Him (Acts 10:35). Those who do righteousness are righteous. This is what Titus 2:12 requires of us.

GODLY. The original word used signifies a devout, pious manner of living. The noun form of the word denotes an attitude of piety toward God that seeks to please Him. It also embraces that fear and reverence of God that must characterize both our attitudes and conduct.

To live **soberly, righteously, and godly** in this present world is to maintain that scriptural attitude and conduct toward all to whom we have any responsibility. William Hendriksen gave a condensed summary of these qualities in his commentary on Titus 2:12, page 372:

- "a. **to oneself:** 'self-mastery,' making the proper use of such desires or drives as are not sinful in themselves, and overcoming those that are sinful;
- "b. **to the neighbor:** 'fairness,' honesty, justice, integrity in dealing with others;
- "c. **to God:** 'devotion,' godliness, true piety and reverence with respect to him who alone is the proper Object of worship."

Our hope of eternal life rests upon the conditional promise of God that if we work His righteousness, we will be accepted by Him. We cannot do His will unless we abandon ungodliness and worldly lusts. We then must live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

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