

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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ON COURTESY AND CANDOR

I know that "balance" is one of the most important things in life. But the suspicion has sneaked up on me that sometimes folks who plead for balance are just too lazy to figure out which side they are on. I am suspicious of the fellow who never hears any two people disagreeing but what he offers this sage opinion: "I think **both** of you are right. What we need is a balance between what each of you is saying." This fellow, and those like him, apparently operate with a split-the-difference philosophy of judging ideas: the truth is always the "Golden Mean" between whatever alternatives have been presented. But **is** that always the way to get at the truth?

For example, I have in mind to say some things about "courtesy" and "candor" in discussing religious differences. I might merely repeat the axiom that we need both courtesy and candor, that "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4: 15) is what is right. But I am not going to do that. At least, not just that. Rather, I want to say that the balance between courtesy and candor tends to be, upset (at least in our society) **more** by "excesses" of courtesy than those of candor. The reason why that is so has something to do with human nature, I think.

Courtesy. The desire to please and not to offend comes as standard equipment on most human beings. The need to be liked and accepted is basic enough that we naturally shrink from being discourteous. There are exceptions, of course. Some individuals seem to find that belligerence and rudeness comes very natu-

rally to them; but they are conspicuous exactly because they are exceptional. The majority of us are eager to please, and the pressure that puts on us to be tactful and mannerly is basically good.

There is not a thing in the world wrong with being gracious. It is instructive and refreshing to read about the Lord that "all bore witness to him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Lk. 4: 22). And Paul wrote, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4: 6). Not a few of us could do with some lessons on **how** to be gracious even when that is what we are **trying** to be. While the impulse to say things in the right way may be instinctive, the "know how" may elude us if we do not work at acquiring it.

When we have the opportunity to discuss differences of understanding, whether with a non-Christian neighbor or a fellow-member of the Lord's body, we need to be conscious of how important it is to speak in a way that respects the dignity of the other person as a human being. And if we are honestly wanting to persuade him to our viewpoint, we need to use every skill we have ever learned in "seasoning" our speech to make it as palatable as possible. But, to repeat, most of us have a natural inclination to do that, even if we do not always execute the inclination very skillfully. For every time when we fail our religious neighbor in the matter of courtesy, there are many more times when we fail him in another way.

Candor. As a teacher, I must confess that I never cease to be astonished at how frequently people do not "get the point" of what is being taught. No doubt a part of the problem is that we sometimes assume more background understanding than our interlocutor actually has. We get to the end of a discussion and find that our main point has not really registered because the other person did not know something initially that we assumed he did know.

Very often, though — and I am more convinced of this the more I deal with other people — our basic affirmations do not get across simply because we are not being as direct as we **think** we **are**. If our subjective feelings are the "instrument" by which we get a "reading" on how frank we are being, we often get a false

reading because our feelings incline so much in the direction of not giving offense. As a general rule, if we intend other people to understand exactly what we are saying about the truths of the gospel we need to be **more candid**, rather than more courteous. It is not that courtesy does not matter. It is that courtesy will tend to take care of itself, while candor will not.

I do not find a person in the NT who strikes me as having any more direct a personality than Paul. Yet we find him being concerned that even he might pull back so much in deference to courtesy that the gospel would not be communicated clearly: "And (pray) for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel ... that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6: 19, 20).

Unless I have grossly misread my own experience, the great need of our day is for clarity in conversation about Jesus Christ. In an environment where discussion of substantive religious differences is socially stigmatized, the pull of courtesy away from candor is strong indeed. We may not always get the balance exactly right, but most of us would get it more nearly right if we said what we mean more candidly. To be sure, what some people call candor is nothing but malicious bullying — but who can deny that what we sometimes call courtesy is nothing but cowardice and compromise? When souls are at stake, failures of candor are eternally more costly than failures of courtesy, simply because the gospel must be **understood** to be obeyed. A man may **not** obey the truth if he does not like it; but he **cannot** obey it if he does not understand it!

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Editorial

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REPENTANCE AND GOD'S MARRIAGE LAW

It is argued by some that if people in unscriptural marriages must sever that relationship upon obeying the gospel, that penance is being exacted rather than repentance. Brother Homer Hailey holds this view and has stated it clearly. I believe he is wrong about this.

The Catholic doctrine of penance imposes some penalty which must be carried out in expiation for sin and that is tied together with the doctrine of absolution granted by a priest who is thought to fulfill the extended role of an apostle in forgiving sin. The intricacies of this doctrine are not taught in the Bible and the attempts to defend it rest upon a misuse of the scripture.

But the Bible does teach repentance. The word METANOEO, translated repent, literally means to perceive afterwards, implying change. It denotes a change of mind which results in amendment of character and conduct. John preached "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3: 8). On Pentecost those who had been guilty of the blood of the son of God were told to "repent and be baptized" "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38). Scriptural baptism was contingent upon genuine repentance. They could not undo what had been done, but they could resolve in their change of heart, not to be guilty of such a thing again. On Solomon's porch Peter told his audience to "repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3: 19). Notice that the blotting out of sin was conditioned upon repentance. On Mars Hill, Paul made it clear that repentance is a universal mandate of God who "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). Peter said God would have "all men to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3: 9).

The doctrine that an alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ and that therefore in baptism all previous marriages are forgiven so that the one baptized may now remain with his present marriage partner, regardless of the cause of all previous divorces, is fatally flawed in that it nullifies repentance. In fact, if the doctrine is true, then the previous marriage state was not sinful anyhow, for sin is not imputed where there is no law. If no law, then there is no transgression (Rom. 4: 15).

It is contended further that there is no such thing as "living in adultery." But Paul wrote the Colossians and listed "fornication" along with other sins and then said "in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Col. 3: 5-7). In that same context he listed "inor-

dinate affection" or unlawful lusts, a reference to homosexuality. Some had "lived" in that sin. In Col. 2: 11-12 Paul showed that these sins of the flesh had been removed by the "circumcision of Christ" when they were buried with him in baptism. Question: Was it required that these change their practice? Or did their baptism purify the state in which they lived so that they could continue in it? What did repentance demand?

This doctrine raises all sorts of questions. If the alien is not amenable to the law of Christ, then should he be a polygamist, upon what ground could it be argued that he must give up all his wives, but one, upon obedience to the gospel? Polygamy was tolerated under the law of Moses and under the "moral law" under which it is argued that alien sinners still operate until they obey the gospel. If a man can keep wife number three when his first two marriages ended in divorce without the cause of fornication, then why could not a polygamist keep three wives upon obeying the gospel? Where would repentance be in all of this? Would it be penance for the polygamist to give up these extra wives? Or would repentance demand it? I believe this is a fair question.

The gospel invitation is offered to every kind of sinner. Jesus came to "seek and save that which is lost" (Lk. 19: 10). They that are sick need the Great Physician. Such passages as Col. 3: 5-7 and 1 Cor. 6: 9-11 treat a wide range of sinful conduct on the part of those described before they became Christians. The blood of Christ was able to cleanse every sin. It still is. But, baptism does not sanctify any sinful action or relationship. Murder is still murder whether before or after baptism. Drunkenness is sinful, before or after baptism. Homosexuality is sinful before or after baptism. Polygamy is wrong before or after baptism. Violation of God's law on divorce and remarriage is wrong before and after baptism. **Baptism does not wash away wives!**

Baptism is for those who have truly repented of their sins. What good does it do to baptize a man who is a thief who has no intention of giving up thievery as a way of life? What good would it do to baptize a murderer who is totally impenitent? What good would it do to baptize a polygamist who has three wives and fully intends to keep them all? What good will it do to baptize a woman who has her third husband when the first two were not put away for adultery when she fully intends to remain in that condition? There may be times when we do not know all the circumstances in the lives of those who present themselves for baptism. All we can do is be sure they know what God requires of a sinner for the remission of sins. I once refused to baptize a man who came forward during a gospel meeting in Richmond, Virginia and told me he wanted to be baptized. Why? Because he was clearly intoxicated. We talked with him after the services and offered to be of whatever help we could, but when he sobered up we saw no more of him.

Brethren, we have placed great stress on scriptural baptism and for that none of us should apologize. But there is a great need to stress Bible repentance. This is a prerequisite to Bible baptism. Without it, baptism is invalid. I freely admit that we have to accept the word of those who say they understand what the will of the Lord

is and that they are acting accordingly. But we have too many who are counted among the saints who have never made any change in life. Some have been converted to baptism but not to the Lord. True conversion involves a change of heart which is manifested in a changed life.

When James D. Bales wrote his book, NOT UNDER BONDAGE, I wrote him that one of the errors of his position was that it denied repentance its fruit. That is the same error our brother Hailey has made and that is made by those who stand with him in arguing that the alien sinner is not subject to the law of Christ and that God's marriage law only applies to those who enter the kingdom. No earthly priest can forgive sin, as is taught in Catholicism in relation to the notion of penance. But there is a high priest in Heaven who does forgive sin and when he forgives, he treats the forgiven sinner as if he had not sinned. But never forget that he forgives the genuinely penitent who have resolved to stop doing whatever is offensive to God. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" (Note: This article was prepared for a special issue of GUARDIAN OF TRUTH dealing with the position of brother Homer Hailey as set forth in his recently published book, THE DIVORCED AND REMARRIED WHO WOULD COME TO GOD. The publication of this book ought to settle the dust as to whether or not these views are just privately held and only occasionally discussed in response to questions. Actions by brother Hailey in 1989 in which he did openly preach and teach on this subject brought on public response from several, including this writer. Regrettably, some influential brethren, who say they are opposed to brother Hailey's views, clouded the issue by focusing attention on the man and away from the issue by charging that this well-loved brother had been "attacked" and by sidetracking the matter into a discussion of the question of fellowship and its limits. To this day NOBODY has written in an unkind manner about brother Hailey personally. The same cannot be said with reference to those of us who have written against this doctrine. Motives have been impugned all over the place. We have been charged with "unheroic attacks" and accused of "slobbering" on brother Hailey in personal expressions of affection for a brother who is much loved and appreciated for many good reasons. All such expressions were simply genuine efforts to indicate that opposition to his doctrine was not a personal attack on the man. I am personally outraged by these unbrotherly remarks and call upon those who have made them to offer apologies. Such would not only be the right thing to do, they would also help to put this question in proper focus on the doctrine and not on men.

I suggest to our readers that you obtain a copy of the special issue of GUARDIAN OF TRUTH dealing with this subject and keep it for your own study. — Editor).

**"Go into all the world
and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

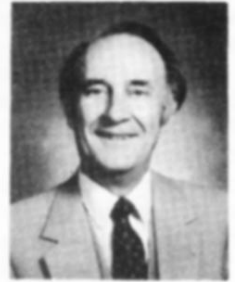
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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ARMAGEDDON MANIA

QUESTION: *The Persian Gulf War has set off a barrage of speculations from denominational preachers that this conflict is the forerunner of Armageddon. Would you comment on their suppositions?*

ANSWER: Truly, the modern soothsayers and spiritual gurus have cranked up their doomsday machine in high gear since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. To listen to these crafty diviners you would think that Armageddon is on every page of the New Testament. But not so! It is found one time in Rev. 16: 16, a book that is apocalyptic, figurative and symbolic in nature. The battle, therefore, is not physical, but spiritual. It is a conflict between righteousness and wickedness.

No battle is fought in Rev. 16: 12-16, but rather the forces are *gathered together* for the battle. The war is fought in Rev. 19: 11-21 where Jesus comes from heaven on a white horse, followed by his heavenly army who are also riding white horses. Jesus smites the nations with a sword coming from his mouth. I can't imagine Jesus riding a literal horse, having a literal sword in his mouth, when he returns from heaven. Common sense tells us this is figurative language.

The word "Armageddon" is an allusion to the Old Testament hill of Megiddo which overlooked the Plain of Jezreel. Many battles were fought there. Deborah and Barak defeated the kings of Canaan (Jud. 5: 19), king Saul was defeated by the Philistines (1 Sam. 31), Jehu slew Ahaziah (2 Kings 9: 27), and Josiah perished at the hands of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23: 29-30). The valley of Jezreel is triangular in shape, measuring about 20 miles by 15 miles by 15 miles (*Discovering the World of the Bible*, LaMar C. Berrett). To gather the armies of the world into this small area to fight World War III is absurd.

Ray Summers (Baptist) correctly stated, Thus Megiddo fitly symbolized the worldwide distress of righteousness and evil engaged in deadly combat... If one expects this to be a literal battle (Armageddon, wew), he must expect the army to be headed by a committee of three frogs. Both figures are symbolical; neither is literal" (*Worthy is the Lamb*, p. 189). The frogs are mentioned in the context of Rev. 16: 16.

Adam Clarke (Methodist) wrote, "But what is the *battle of Armageddon*? How ridiculous have been the conjectures of men relative to this point! Within the last twenty years (before 1826, wew) this battle has been fought at various places, according to our purblind seers

and self-inspired prophets! At one time it was *Austerlitz*, at another *Moscow*, at another *Leipsic*, and now *Waterloo!* And thus they have gone on, and will go on, confounding and being confounded" (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1035).

In his book, *Armageddon Now*, Dwight Wilson (Assemblies of God preacher and professor, and a pre-millennialist) wrote, "The current crisis was always identified as a sign of the end, whether it was the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War, the Second World War... The revival of the Roman Empire has been identified variously... Speculation on the Antichrist has included Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, and Henry Kissinger... Such loose literalism when considered as a whole is no more precise than the figurative interpretation of which these literalists are so critical" (p. 216).

Today it is war with Iraq, or subsequent events following the war, that will release Armageddon upon us. These wizards have learned nothing from the total failures of their predecessors. Neither has the general public! Many seem to be just as gullible and as easily duped by these false prophets as were those who have gone before them. For example, the sale of Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, has increased by 83% since the Persian Gulf Crisis (*U. S. News & World Report*, Nov. 1990).

Jehovah characterized our times when he said through Jeremiah, "The prophets prophesy falsely... And my people love to have it so" (5: 31). "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (23: 21).

Moses said when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord and the thing follow not, he spoke it presumptuously and thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deut. 18: 22).

This premillennial view of Armageddon is totally false. It has not the slightest biblical support. Rather it is grounded upon a novel and relatively recent scheme of theological presuppositions. It must be rejected!

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WHO IS THE LORD THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIS VOICE?

The subject of this study is Pharaoh's question to Moses when he came with God's order to "let my people go" (Ex. 5: 1-2).

The who or what of a person or thing, from the standpoint of power, importance, authority, or position, determine another's action, reaction, or response. This is true in every relationship of life. Children's response to the requests, orders, or commands of parents is more ready and sure, than to those of strangers. The same principle holds true with students and teachers, citizens and law officials, workers and management.

The question of Pharaoh in our text is understandable and logical. He knew nothing of Israel's God. Why should he alter his course or change his actions on orders from someone he didn't know? In order for Pharaoh to obey the voice of the Lord, he would need evidence that would convince him that God is: that he had power over him; power to make or destroy, even over the idolatrous and imagined gods of Egypt. What followed in his dealings with Moses and Aaron was designed to answer the question he had raised.

The Evidence

Evidently, even the Children of Israel needed their faith reaffirmed in Jehovah for God told Moses that what he was about to do to Pharaoh in effecting their deliverance would enable them "to know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." (Ex. 6: 1-8). These same things would cause the "Egyptians to know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them" (Ex. 7: 5).

In addition to the evidence of God's supremacy in turning Moses' rod into a serpent, that devoured the rod-serpents of the magician's enchantments, there followed the plagues of Ex. 7-10.

The plagues were turning water to blood, land and houses overrun with frogs, lice on man and beast (which the Magicians could not imitate, causing them to say "this is the finger of God" (Ex. 8: 18-19), swarms of flies, a grievous murrain among cattle, horses, camels, sheep, etc., boils upon man and beast, hail throughout Egypt, except Goshen, locusts, darkness "that could be felt," and last, death of the firstborn. Thus, Pharaoh learned the answer to his questions. He learned who the Lord was and why he should obey His voice.

The Question in Later Generations

Because of man's tendency to forget God, there have been in every age, including ours, those who raise the question, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" What evidence is now available that should answer the question for us? I believe we have just as strong and convincing evidence today (an enlightened and knowledgeable age) as was given to Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

Look, for example, at the universe, coupled with modern scientific findings and knowledge. It has ever been true that the heavens "declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19: 1). Today's technological findings confirm the existence and power of God more clearly than ever before. The earth and firmament is characterized by design, and design demands a designer. When we look at a computer, sky-scraper, book, automobile, space ship or station, our question is never does it have a designer, but "Who"? The claim that all design in the universe is by accident or some cosmic explosion is neither logical nor scientific. The "who" of the universe is plainly stated in Ex. 20: 11; Jno. 1-3; Ps. 33: 6; Gen. 1-2.

Think now about the Bible. Here is a book (combination of books) written by 40 writers, over a period of some 1500 years, containing doctrine, history, prophecy, morals, and with one general theme (The redemption of fallen man), yet completely harmonious; without one erroneous statement, contradiction or unfulfilled prophecy. No other book, or set of books, ever written can even come close to these features. In spite of the efforts of men to undermine and destroy, it still stands in all its glory. All archaeological and geological findings of later years have only confirmed its accuracy and inspiration. The Bible is a miracle as great as anything done in Egypt in the days of Pharaoh.

Look also at man: his reproductive system, the functioning of the brain, his heart/lung circulatory system, and many other features. To think he came through an evolutionary process from lower life form is neither scientific nor reasonable. Evidence that man came from a creator is such that cannot be denied.

Truly, the universe, man himself, the Bible, and Jesus Christ (proven by unmistakable evidence to be "son of man" and "son of God") are miracles as great as, or greater, than anything done in Egypt. They are sufficient, when properly understood, to convince any reasonable person of the reality of God, and this faith settles the matter of why we should hear and obey Him.

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THE IRONIES OF LIFE

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In Ecclesiastes we learn much about life from the wise man, Solomon. While it was all right to pursue every proper goal, he came to realize that earthly things aside from God and service to Him were without lasting meaning. It was good even to enjoy the fruits of one's labor but that alone did not completely satisfy. This book is a strong argument for the dual nature of man, that is, body and spirit. Both of these demand attention. Neither may be ignored. To do so is to create a void or vacuum in one's life and development.

One can see humor, if he will, in the irony of life. When we were young, my wife and I used to wish we had money enough when on a trip with the kids to stop overnight at a motel and even to stop to eat at a hot dog stand. Usually we had a sack of "knick-knacks" to chew on as we would drive "straight through." But we did not have the money so we could not stop.

Things changed, the children went to college, married and left home. Now funds were available for a few "extras" but you know what? Though the money was now available, now we were **on a diet** that left much to be desired. A self-respecting hog would not eat some of the "things" we have eaten since the discovery of "cholesterol." So we still had to pass up what we could then afford because of a weight problem.

Now we could stop overnight at the motels but by the time we unloaded, ate a bite at the nearby "salad bar," called someone in the family to let them know our whereabouts in case of an emergency, prepared for bed, all the sleep was gone out of our eyes. Then we slept fitfully, dreading to reload the car and afraid we might oversleep.

We longed for a nice car and the opportunity to take a few trips to see the beauties of this wonderful country in which we live. Cataracts developed making our driving limited and with Wilma doing most of it.

Now we had a variety of good clothes but the weight problem kept us fluctuating so that the clothes were either too tight or too loose.

Often we just broke down and laughed and laughed at

the irony of it all. Why not? Solomon said "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine" and he also said "there is a time to laugh" as well as "a time to cry."

But, like Solomon, we reached one and the same conclusion. "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (**Ecclesiastes 12: 13**).

Brethren, let us seek the things which are eternal! This is what really matters.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND HOW RELATIONSHIPS ARE AFFECTED

T. Doy Moyer
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We have considered how traumatic it can be emotionally for a child whose parents have divorced. There will be deep emotional scars that will go with that person the rest of his or her life. Many will try to hide it, but it will still be there. Let us consider here another aspect of that child's life that will almost certainly be affected: Relationships

Children learn about relationships with others from their parents. They learn about how to treat friends and neighbors, how to deal with brethren in Christ, and how to handle the marriage relationship. If the parents do not hold their marriage together, then the child will doubt his own ability to hold together relationships. The first relationship to decline will probably be with his own parents. Children are to "honor your father and mother" (Eph. 6: 2), but this will be extremely difficult for them to do after a divorce. A child feels let down, and might feel that the parents have lost their right to tell him what to do. He may feel that the parents are living a double standard and wishes to be no part of it. It may turn him against the church because he sees what he perceives to be hypocrisy in his own parents. Thus, the child loses respect for parental authority and flies in the face of all they have tried to instill in him. And when a child loses respect for parental authority, he soon loses respect for **all** authority, including God's! What a frightful outcome!

Since the child has lost confidence in holding together relationships, he will probably feel very apprehensive about getting married himself. When he does marry, evidence shows that he will be more likely to divorce than those who come from stable families. The American Family Association reported in their journal in May 1988, "The children of divorced parents are much more likely to end their own marriages through divorce than are the children of intact families. In a study recently conducted at the University of Texas at Austin, researchers examined the data from 11 national surveys and found that divorce rates among children of divorce ran well above the divorce rates for children who lived with both parents... In trying to explain this phenomenon, the UTA team rejects the hypothesis that mar-

riages of children of divorce are neither better nor worse than other marriages but that the children of divorce are simply more willing to divorce if problems develop. Rather their analysis suggests that "the marriages of the children of divorce are, on the average, unusually likely to become unsatisfactory and not just unusually likely to end in divorce." The researchers incline toward a lower commitment-to-marriage' of the data. Doctors Glenn and Krammer stretch out this explanation in their conclusion: The children of divorce tend to be hesitant and cautious about marriage during adolescence often saying that they will not marry. However, they are just as likely to marry at an earlier age on the average. Thus, they seem to be strongly impelled toward marriage while at the same time often feeling highly apprehensive about it. It seems likely, therefore, that when they marry they often hedge their bets against failure by withholding full commitment to the marriage."

So we can see that what the child learns about marriage from his divorced parents is something he will likely take into his own. He has learned that marriage is not as important as God says it is. And he has learned that divorce is indeed an "out" when things just don't go the way he wants it. He will withhold full commitment to that marriage and be more likely to end the marriage when problems come. Parents, have you thought seriously about this?

Relationships with friends and others will suffer also. The child might feel that he cannot trust anyone since the ones he was closest to have let him down, and will therefore withdraw into a shell of isolation and loneliness. This leads to a minimum of friends and, as already seen, sharp skepticism about marriage. This is tragic itself, but the most important relationship that will suffer is the one that the child has or will have with God.

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BLIPS, BLUNDERS, AND BYGONES

A lot of our differences are just little blips on the big screen of life, and like the old song said, we should "let bygones be bygones forever."

But when blips turn into blunders and adversely affect the lives of people, those blunders need to be accompanied by repentance and "fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3: 8).

Hezekiah was willing to let bygones be bygones, and invited Israel to attend the passover feast at Jerusalem, along with Judah. But Israel had blundered, and all the compromise or concessions that Hezekiah might make would not change that fact. Hezekiah admonished Israel for their trespasses, urged them not to be like their stiff-necked fathers, and to get themselves on back to Jerusalem where they belonged (2 Chron. 30: 6-9).

The apostle Paul was not one to harbor a grudge, and when the participants in a controversy were ready to be reconciled, he was willing to let bygones be bygones (2 Cor. 2: 10). Yet, on another occasion, when the Roman magistrates made a blunder with respect to their civil law, Paul held their feet to the fire until they resolved the matter (Acts 16: 35-40).

In the controversy over missionary societies and mechanical instruments of music, churches were divided, brethren were alienated, and the cause of Christ suffered untold harm. Most of those involved in that controversy have gone on to their reward, and a lot of blunders were never rectified.

Beginning about the Mid-1950's, churches were once again divided, brethren were alienated, and the cause of Christ was once again crippled with permanent scars. This time, the division was over human arrangements in evangelism, organization, edification, and the mission of the church. And many of the participants in this battle are still among the living.

Some of us were lied on, accused of dividing churches, of not believing in helping poor orphans/preaching the gospel/cooperation, and maligned as "do-nothing Antis." Good, sound congregations and preachers were blackballed, backbitten, and subjected to quarantine.

In recent years and months, some of those brethren who were directly and indirectly responsible for such blunders have evidently had a twinge of conscience, and have indicated that they would like to let bygones be bygones, and allow peace and unity to prevail once

again. Possibly such things as runaway liberalism, the Crossroads movement, and a nearing judgment have helped to account for some of this change in attitude. The "let 'er rip" attitude toward the body of Christ so prevalent 30 years ago has been replaced in some hearts by at least a tentative "let us rise up and build."

And, as far as I am concerned, I'm willing to let bygones be bygones. Long ago, I prayed for the Lord to forgive those preachers, brethren, and congregations who knifed me in the back, helped spread false accusations, and canceled meetings on me. I decided that I was no better than other messengers of God who had been mistreated, and could not allow malice, hatred, and a desire for revenge to prevent me from getting on with the business of preaching the gospel.

When you remind brethren that they were the ones who divided the body of Christ and went off after their Samaritan idols, and that they need to repent of their sins and come all the way back to Jerusalem, their ardor for peace and unity cools off considerably, much like the rich young ruler (Mk. 10: 17-22). These may sound eager at the prospects of eternal life (v. 17), but they simply aren't willing to pay the price.

It is a wonderful thought when two people, two congregations, or two nations are willing to let bygones be bygones and dwell together in unity (Ps. 133: 1). But the only way we can atone for a blunder is through repentance, prayer, and a genuine effort toward restitution and reconciliation (Ezek. 33: 15; 1 Jno. 1: 9).

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Dick Blackford

P.O. Box 83
Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473



FROM THE PREACHER'S NOTEBOOK

Many preachers keep a notebook of random thoughts on a variety of subjects that they intend to use in a sermon or an article sometime. Many of those tidbits never see the light of day. Others write articles like this one and present those unrelated reflections. Here are a few from this preacher's notes.

Prayer

Do you really realize the benefits of prayer? When you pray to God you never get a busy signal. He never puts you on "hold." "You are never interrupted by "call waiting." You can talk as long as you want. And the call is toll free. What a bargain! What an advantage! What an incentive! Don't break the habit of praying (1 Thes. 5: 17).

Long-Winded Song Leaders

With this clock-watching generation we are living in, preachers become more sensitive to complaints that they are preaching too long. I regret that some are afraid they may hear too much gospel. Be that as it may, sometimes preachers get blamed unjustly. We now have songbooks that have several songs that stretch out over two pages and some songs have 5 or 6 verses. Some leaders feel they need to lead all of the verses all of the time. Many would object if a preacher felt he had to read all of the verses if he quoted from a particular chapter. Since I like to sing, I have no problem with singing all the verses. But since I also preach I feel the need to point out that preachers are not always the reason why the service lasted longer than you wanted it to.

Inherited Guilt—Racial Guilt?

Should we be held accountable for the sins of our ancestors? Some think so and have tried to make me feel guilty. The Bible teaches otherwise—"the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezek. 18: 20). Thank God, I am not guilty of what my ancestors did to the Indians five generations ago in killing many innocent people or running them off of the land. (I don't know if any of my relatives were involved, but that is beside the point I am making). Nor is any Indian living today responsible for what his ancestors did in scalping many innocent men, women, and children, or burning their homes. Neither should I feel guilty for the sinful way many Negroes were treated by white men who captured them, mistreated them, or made them slaves. Nor should any black person today feel guilty over the way cannibals treated many white missionaries who went to the native lands of their ancestors. We should all deplore

man's inhumanity to man. Let us equally deplore the attempt to blame generations that had nothing to do with things that occurred long before they were born. The judgment will not be based on collective guilt. If so, nobody has a chance. We will be judged on a personal basis for what we have done (2 Cor. 5: 10). No Christian should have a part in radical and lawless groups such as the KKK, Black Panthers, etc.

Sermon Requests

While lighting up a cigarette, a lady asked me to preach a sermon about these wild Jehus who speed and drive recklessly up and down the highway. Another person who has a weakness for backbiting asked me to preach on smoking.

I have worked with congregations that had a question box in the foyer. One night per month I would endeavor to answer questions that were submitted. At one place I soon learned that the box was being abused by those who were not asking for information so they could be edified. They were using me to "get at" somebody else in the audience. They lacked the nerve to do it themselves. Brethren, these things ought not so to be. It is refreshing when someone requests a topic because they need it — which doesn't happen too often.

The Rewards For Debating

Those who have participated in public debate seem to be unanimous in saying that the work is never harder and the pay is never poorer. And in some cases there is little appreciation. It is true that there aren't many rewards for defending the faith in this life. Those who are set for the defense of the faith in debate can't be doing it for financial reasons, in most cases. We should be "set for the defence of the gospel" that we might be partakers of His grace (Phil. 1: 16, 7).

Write Letters

One source of reaching the public with Bible truth on moral and religious issues of our day is by writing letters to the editors of our local newspapers. I am convinced this has not been utilized enough by Christians today.

The letter may be trimmed by the editor for brevity but the main body is usually kept in tact. We should take advantage of every opportunity to teach. A lot of fuzzy thinking in religion and morals appears in our newspapers that need answering. Christians should be ready to answer (1 Pet. 3: 15). One advantage to "letters to the editor" is that it is a free forum. If you are not good at writing letters don't be ashamed to ask for help from a fellow Christian who may be a better grammarian and speller. Try to cut out excess verbiage and speak directly to the point.

I also urge more writing to the syndicated advice columnists, such as Abby and Ann Landers. Though the chance is slim that such a letter will be printed, if enough Christians write, some of them will get through and be printed. Millions will have the opportunity to hear some truth.

One word of admonition. Do not write in such a manner as to be unbecoming to the gospel (Phil. 1: 27). Try to shed more light than heat.

CONCLUSION: I hope some of these remarks will be worthy of your consideration and helpful to you.

CHRISTIANITY IS PRACTICAL

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Faithful Christians do well to occasionally have their grand estate in Christ reaffirmed. Not only does it strengthen one's own faith, it better prepares him to show the alien his condition out of Christ and compare it with what he could enjoy in Christ.

One of the difficulties with which we have to contend today, it appears to me, is showing folk that the "here-after," not just the "here and now," is worthy of one's attention. Particularly do young people have trouble becoming really concerned with eternal matters in a society where the getting of "things" consumes the greater part of man's attention and energy, physically and mentally. Christianity often seems to be translated by them as applicable only to something which seems to them to be far removed and with which they are not presently concerned. But that it is applicable to the "here and now" we shall see.

Christianity is practical. But to properly appreciate the proposition, let's look at the terms. By Christianity, this article means the religion of Christ, true religion as revealed in the New Testament — not some watered-down version of it as seen in denominationalism and among many who claim to be "of Christ." We shall be using "Christianity" and "godliness" as interchangeable. By practical, we mean that it is useful, workable, capable to being turned into use or account as opposed to that which is only theoretical or speculative. The religion of Christ is a taught religion—"teach... baptize ... teach them" (Matt. 28: 19-20); "the thing that thou hast heard... commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others" (2 Tim. 2: 2; "they shall be all taught of God" (John 6: 45) — but it is a system of teaching that is practical or useful because it meets definite needs.

1 Timothy 4: 6-11

Please read this passage carefully. Space will not permit a lengthy exegesis, but note that Paul advises Timothy to "refuse profane and old wives' fables." This is in contrast to his being "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" which will enable him to "exercise himself unto godliness." "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is (the here and now), and of that which is to come (the hereafter)." The "all things" in which godliness is said to profit is to be understood as meaning **the life that now is and that to come.**

Christianity Is Practical Because It Meets the Needs of This Life

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 19). "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and

glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84: 11). The needs of man are many, and they are as varied as they are many; but all man's needs — whatever is really necessary will be supplied. There is not a worthwhile interest of man that godliness will not promote.

Godliness will promote the health of the body. Abstinence from evil which harms is expected (1 Thes. 5: 22). Moderation and temperance in all things is advised (Phil. 4: 5; 1 Cor. 9: 25), and physical exercise is profitable (1 Tim. 4: 8).

Godliness is favorable to a clearness and vigor of the intellect as it sets before one the relative value of objects. The value of the soul is set over against the value of the world (Mat. 16: 26). The use of the mind is encouraged in study and investigation (2 Tim. 2: 15; cf. Prov. 1-6).

Godliness offers a recipe for happiness. For those who "would love life and see good days," it is not a "do your own thing" philosophy of humanism. It rather involves compassion, loving as brethren, tenderheartedness, humble-mindedness, a returning of blessing for evil and reviling, a controlled speech, doing of good, and seeking peace while trusting in God's approbation (see 1 Pet. 3: 8-12).

Christianity promotes a peace of conscience by leading to a faithful performance of one's duties in all relationships of life (cf. Acts 24: 16; 1 John 3: 18-21). There is instruction for the husband-wife relation (Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 18-19; 1 Pet. 3: 1-7; 1 Cor. 7: 1-5). The parent-child relationship is dealt with (Eph. 6: 1-4; Col. 3: 20-21). Under the figure of the servant and master, the employer and employee may learn how to treat each other (Col. 3: 22-4: 1; Eph. 6: 5-9; 1 Pet. 2: 18; Tit. 2: 9-10). The citizen learns of his relationship to his government and how to fulfill his duty to it (Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Pet. 2: 13-17; 1 Tim. 2: 1-2). Nor is one left uninformed as to how to live before and treat his fellowman generally (1 Pet. 2: 11-12; Mat. 7: 12). The relationship of the creature of the Creator is one of obedience and worship (Eccl. 12: 13-14; John 4: 23-24).

Godliness will produce a good name (Prov. 22: 1), because it leads to honesty, industry, and sobriety as a course of life, or "lifestyle" to use the current "buzz word."

There are the promises of physical needs being met (Mat. 6: 33; Phil. 4: 19; Psa. 37: 25).

And, finally, in meeting the needs of the life that now is, godliness offers comfort in trial (Deut. 33: 27; Psa. 46: 1), calmness in death (Psa. 23: 4) and immortal peace beyond the grave (Rev. 14: 13).

Christianity is Practical Because It Provides for the Life to Come

Infidelity makes no promise of future happiness. Madelain Murray O'Hare and her ilk live only for the "here and now." A life of sin and lust promises nothing but remorse at death and in death. And though many things (beauty, wealth, fame, power) hold flattering hopes of happiness here, they offer nothing of eternal bliss. Nothing but godliness can so promise. A life without aim is like a ship without a rudder, but godliness offers aim and direction in life (Col. 3: 1-2), and its

promise of eternal life (1 John 2: 25) is a stabilizing force (Heb. 6: 13-20). The hope we have in Christ is not in this life only (1 Cor. 15: 19). We hope for something far better (2 Cor. 4: 16-18).

Truly, Christianity is the only really sensible way for one to live. It enriches this life and promises bliss in that to come. Yet with all its promises, many defer it to the last period of life or reject it altogether. And some who once accepted it return to the weak and beggarly elements. How tragic! How sad!

A Faithful Saying

Paul's estimate of the promise in 1 Timothy 4: 8 is found in verses nine and ten. It may be depended upon as true and it is worthy of being embraced. And that which godliness affords is worth one's labor and even the suffering of reproach. These things command and teach."

**Things Most
Certainly
Believed**

Julian R. Snell

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Lawrenceburg, Tennessee 38464



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOB JOB QUESTIONS LIFE

For the benefit of those who are reading this series for the first time we remind that our title presumes upon the understanding that Job was not a man living in the gospel age. He was an Old Testament patriarch who lived hundreds of years before Christ. However, since the Bible is the unfolding of God's eternal purpose, human redemption, we must recognize that every book of that sacred volume is in complement to this purpose. Within the Old Testament there are types and shadows which look to the New Testament for the anti-type and substance. At times these references are glaring, at other times they are subtle, but in either case there is the ultimate pointing to Jesus Christ. We are examining some of these questions and statements from Job to point to the answers found only in Christ.

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job. 14: 14). These words are in the first of the three cycles of speeches. Here is but part of Job's rather lengthy answer to Zophar found in chapters 12, 13, and 14. The friend, Zophar, has harshly reaffirmed the view of the others, namely, suffering is because of sin. In fact Job has been told he is not getting what he deserved, "Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (11: 6).

Job injects a bit of satire as he responds to this. "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (12: 2). Then he declares his determination to appeal to God. His friends are dismissed and in the course of that appeal the challenging question of Job is raised.

Job seems to imply, if I could be sure bearing of all my trials would be some easier. "All the days of my warfare, would I wait, till my change come" (14: 14b). Evidently Job did not expect an affirmative answer to his question, for as it is raised out of a dark and bleak outlook, he only momentarily expresses a note of hope before lapsing back into gloom.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" is only a question, but what a question. The ages leading up to Christ do not give a definite answer. Clear insight evades even the most inquiring minds, revelation does not uncover until, from Bethany Jesus is heard: "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11: 25). Job's consciousness of life was by the large based on experience. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (14: 1-2). For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (v. 7). Does this not seem to argue, in my experience there is more hope for trees than man. They are cut down but sprout again, appear dead but water brings to life. But, what with man, "man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost and where is he? (cf. v. 10).

Are men generally given to thus think of life? Job is baring his soul, truly expressing how he felt. Admittedly, he is viewing solely from the physical, yet, he seems to recognize he is more than the dust. Bound to this limited perception, there seems to be the nagging need to cleave to something more. Does giving up the spirit mean man is nothing more than dust, or, does the spirit continue to live? This represents a perennial cry, largely raised and answered without proper consideration of spiritual facts.

The real meaning of Job's question must be understood. His question is not, "will the dead come back to life?", rather, "does one physically dead, still live?" If the flower is cut off, is man still alive? The real issue which was so perplexing to Job is the continuity of life. Is life more than the present? Can it be that death is indeed but a change? Our character seems to say, I could bear anything if I thought I would still live. With this sigh he passes back into gloom, however, this challenging question rings forth from pensive men of every forthcoming age. Without the gospel man's view of death would continue to be a dark one and we along with Job would yet be wondering "is this all?"

Is there an answer to the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Not in the book of Job. God in dealing with Job offers no explanation of pain. He did not answer any question asked. However, He did make his glory pass in review before Job and this quieted the inquiries of our man, no more questions. Our search of the Old Testament does not offer definite and final proof of immortality. Glimpses, suggestions, yes, but nothing definitive. The answer to Job's question came finally in Jesus, and is to be found in the gospel. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1: 10). "Brought to light" rather than created, by the gospel,

brought into clear visibility.

Job said, "If a man die shall he live?" Jesus answered, yes, "he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11: 25). Here is a clear affirmation of the continuity of life rather than resurrection. For whom? "He that believeth in me" Jesus says. Those who have fellowship with God never die, life continues even though the body returns to the dust of the earth. Indeed, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1: 7).

Hopefully, Job causes us to realize that there is more to life than three score and ten. The real meaning lies beyond this and when understood it puts a different complexion on our being as we realize our "now" is leading to "then." Life's ultimate meaning lies beyond death of the body. Jesus says, "if a man dies he lives" but only if "he believes on me." Even though the newspaper may announce the death of the saint, and indeed it someday will, don't you believe it. That individual is more alive than ever before. What comfort is this fact.

LESSONS FROM CORNELIUS

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Before reading this article, the reader is advised to first read Acts 10: 1-11: 18. This lesson, basically, has to do with attitudes, yours and mine. The "beatitudes" of Matt. 5: 3-12 are expressive of attitudes, for the most part. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5); this is a familiar verse, and directs as to our attitude.

Many sermons have been preached about Cornelius; and, no doubt, most of them were needed. However, it seems to me that his attitude is often overlooked. I am aware that the record says that he was a devout man, one that feared God, gave much alms to the people, and prayed always. But, is there more that tells us about his attitude? Let us see!

The Three Miracles

There were three miracles involved in this story, and every one of them deals directly with attitudes, the changing of the attitudes of those involved. The first miracle was to change the attitude of Cornelius (10: 3-6; 11: 13-14). He had to realize that he was in a lost condition, in spite of his many commendable characteristics. It is obvious that this miracle accomplished its purpose.

The second miracle involved the attitude of Peter; his attitude toward the Gentiles had to be changed (10: 9-20; 11: 5-10). Peter now realizes that salvation through the gospel is to be extended to the Gentile world. Reread Peter's explanation to his fellow Jewish disciples at Jerusalem, in Acts 11: 4-17; and notice how he had God in the picture every step of the way. Not only does Peter's changed attitude come through, but the attitude

of his fellows recognizes that, "God also to the Gentiles (has) granted repentance unto life."

The third miracle changes the attitude of those going with Peter (10: 23; 11: 12-13); and Peter is seen using these six brethren to verify what he is saying.

Having noticed these things, we are now ready to get our "lessons from Cornelius; and, these consist in appreciating his attitudes toward—

The Preacher

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshiped him," (Ac. 10: 25). He obviously goes too far, and is rebuked by Peter; however, his attitude toward Peter was right. To see this clearly we, perhaps, need to understand something else—Peter's function: He was a witness of the Lord (Ac. 1: 8). He was a message bearer; and, that message was the gospel (Mk. 16: 15; Ac. 10: 36ff). Cornelius needed this message (Ac. 11: 14). Indeed, "—How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, —," (Rom. 10: 15). The apostles were "sent ones," and Peter was such a man. Cornelius, then, was trying to show respect for the Lord's messenger. Remembering the Old Testament story of Saul's pursuit of David furnishes us a good example. Saul caught up with David in the cave, and David was invited to dispose of his enemy. His reply was, "I will not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed." Cornelius was trying to show the same respect for Peter. The importance of Peter was not to be found in his person, but in the message he brought. And, so it is today with gospel preachers.

The Word

Cornelius' attitude toward the Word can be seen in Ac. 10: 33; among other things he says, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." His needed spiritual food was vested in this man. God's Word is truth (Jno. 17: 17); this truth could free him of his sins (Jno. 8: 32); and, Peter had this truth which he needed. A few years earlier three thousand "gladly" received the Word preached by Peter (Ac. 2: 41); now, Cornelius has the same attitude, "speak, Lord, and I will listen." Think of the masses today, whose attitude is, "tell us what we wish to hear." Contrast that with Cornelius' attitude of, "tell me what I need to hear." What a difference it would make if the audience possessed the attitude of Cornelius, and all preachers were governed by 2 Tim. 4: 1-2! In Tit. 2: 14 we are told that Christ died for us that He might purify unto Himself a "peculiar people zealous of good works." Their peculiarity was not to be found in a name, but in that they were "zealous of good works." This was Cornelius' attitude, even before he becomes a Christian.

His Relatives And Friends

Cornelius' attitude toward his relatives and friends would put most to shame today. To see this, we read Ac. 10: 24, "and the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and called together his kinsmen and near friends." Their spiritual welfare was his concern, and he did something about it. I can almost see the urgency with this man as he requested, invited, urged, or begged them to be there. He knew that he needed to be saved, and so did his kinsmen and friends. There is a preacher coming, one who will tell all of them

words of salvation; they just must not miss it. The anxiety is obvious, they would be watching down the road for signs of Peter's coming. They did not wish to see how he was attired, his looks, or his mannerisms; Cornelius had gotten them there for the message.

Is our sense of urgency gone? Do we really realize who is in sin? (Rom. 3: 23). Do we really believe that those in sin are lost? What are we doing about it? It is little more than nonsense to talk about faith, until we have shown that we really believe these facts. Cornelius did!

Himself

We have already noticed Cornelius' attitude toward himself changing—to realize his lost condition. With him this was fact; but, not a fact to be ignored. Finally, of course, he and his obeyed to the saving of their souls (Ac. 10: 47-48).

Application

Can we moderns learn lessons from this story? Let us express this mathematically: Right attitude toward the preacher + right attitude toward the Word + Right attitude toward relatives and friends + Right attitude toward self = Success. Think of what this would mean to every evangelistic effort: Personal evangelism, gospel meetings, etc. Develop the right attitudes and successes we shall have.

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GENERIC BRAND RELIGION?

Norman E. Sewell

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One of the things which came out of the decade of the 80's was GENERICS. Perhaps they were around even before that but at least they became prominent during that decade. There was a time when you expected a BRAND NAME item to be better than an "off-brand," but with the advent of generics this changed. Part of the reason was the price. Medicines especially began to be so expensive when purchased by their brand-name, so smaller companies began to compete by producing the same medicine under a generic name and at a much lower cost. We have come to expect that, generally speaking, these generic drugs or foods will be just as good as their name-brand counterparts, but at a lesser cost. Have we also come to expect that EVERYTHING can now be found in a generic version and be just as acceptable and good as the name brand?

In the realm of generics, especially in medicine, before you can buy the generic brand your doctor must specify in his prescription that the generic is suitable for your problem. Only then can the pharmacist substitute some generic product for the original brand name. In some cases there is no generic available which will do what the brand name drug will do. This is the case in religion. In Matthew 7 Jesus said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (v. 13-14). Jesus clearly said that all roads do not lead to heaven or life, only one does. We must be careful to show our friends and neighbors this, so they may understand that getting to heaven requires more than just doing something that seems religious. The Pharisees were religious, among the most strict of their day, but Jesus said of them, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying. 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 do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 7-9). Then in the following verses when the disciples came to Jesus and said that the Pharisees were offended Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (v. 13-14). That which is not of God will not last, even though it may seem to be successful here on the earth.

There is no doubt that Jesus is the only Savior; even most of our religious friends believe this. Jesus said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6). Peter told the Jews concerning Jesus: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12). So, if we are to be saved, if any are to be saved, it will be through Jesus. Many religious people today clearly accept this as truth. There is no generic savior available; no substitute will do.

For years we have struggled with the problem of showing the world that the church which belongs to Jesus is not just a better church or denomination than others we find in abundance today, but that it is the real thing, the original, the one and only purchased with the blood of Jesus. The general attitude among many religious people has been that one church is as good as another, thus that the generic variety is just as good as the real thing. If there is no generic savior, then why should we believe that just any "generic" church will do, since the Bible shows clearly that Jesus promised to build, and did in fact build, His own church.

One passage seems to illustrate this very well. In Acts chapter 2, after Peter had preached to the Jews and some 3000 had believed and been baptized we find that the next verses describe their conduct over the next days and weeks. The last verse of the chapter says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (v. 47). As men and women were continuing that process which had begun on Pentecost of hearing and believing the word, repenting of their sins and being baptized for the remission of those sins, they were being saved. And when they were thus saved it was Jesus who added them to the church. He did not just add them to the church of their choice, but to His own church which He had built,

and purchased with His own blood. If indeed that is the church the saved were added to by Jesus then, why would any of us want to be added to some generic version today when the real thing, the original is still available. Men and women can indeed today be added to Christ's church without any substitute of generic nature.

Yes, the original almost always costs more than the generic, but then some things are worth more than others. Why do we sometimes buy a BRAND NAME appliance or piece of furniture even though it costs more than some others? This is frequently because we know that we will get better quality, and something that will last longer than the off-brands. The faith of Jesus Christ, and the church which belongs to Him, will cost more than substitutes. Really believing in Jesus and following Him will always cost more than just paying Him lip-service. The cost of truly following Jesus is one life time, yours and mine. Many are not willing to pay this price, but would rather have something that makes them feel good now; something that caters to their whims. The sad thing is that there are many who are willing to pay the price, a life-time of service, but have agreed to pay this price for something less than the real thing, and the reward that comes from following Jesus. He is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5: 9). Whatever it costs to go to heaven will not be too much, for we can never earn that heavenly home. It will always be by the grace of God that we are saved at all, certainly not by any works of our own righteousness. But the reward, the inheritance given to us is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1: 4). Perhaps as we come to see it better we can help our neighbors to see and truly understand that in religious matters the real thing is always better than the generic.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

" . . . They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ." — Acts 14: 27

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

JOHN GAMBINO, 7111 Sunlit Trail, San Antonio, TX 78244—I am trying to reach any Christians who might know of fellow-Christians in Vietnam. My wife and I took in three Vietnamese boys in 1984. They are sons of a man who served as an interpreter for my advisory team. I have good studies with the two oldest. One of them wants to go with me to Vietnam in December. Many doors of opportunity are opening all over the world and I would like to see what opportunities there might be in Vietnam. If any reader knows of any Christians there, please contact me soon. My phone number is (512) 666-4242.

LECTURES IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Broadview Heights church, N. W. 38th & St. Clair, Oklahoma City, OK 73157 (P. O. Box 12654)—The church here will have a lectureship July 21-26, 1991 on HEBREWS—THE WORD OF EXHORTATION. Speakers will be Steve Wolfgang, A. W. Go ft" and Jim Ward. Congregational singing will be led by Dane Shepard. Services will be at 9: 30 and 10: 30 each morning. At 7 P. M. each day the speakers will make

up a panel to answer written questions, followed by 30 minutes of congregational singing and then the closing speech at 8: 30 P. M. For information about video tapes, audio tapes or housing accommodations please write to us at the P. O. Box given above.

WALLACE H. LITTLE, 520 Mary Esther Cutoff, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548—Due to present and anticipated growth in the work here, the Northside elders asked me to postpone my Philippines preaching trip until the spring of 1992. I am now returning all funds sent to me for this, and asking brethren who helped this time, or were considering it, to put my trip expenses into your 1992 budget.

JERRY BROCK, 707 Parker Dr., Clinton, MS 39856—I began work with the church at Brandon, MS in October, 1987. At that time we had 14 members and the church was able to supply \$200 a month of my support. We now have 35 members and the church now provides \$1, 000 a month of my support. We have lost 8 members to job transfers

in the last three years. I lost \$200 a month outside support in January and will lose \$500 more the last of March due to two congregations having to make some cutbacks. Any who might be interested in helping please contact me at the above address or phone me at (601) 924-4851. Those who wish to consult references may contact Walton Weaver, Leslie Sloan or Lee Roy Clark (Thorn, MS) or the church at Brandon. We meet at 109 Trickam Bridge Road, two blocks off Hwy. 80 just east of the heart of Brandon.

WORKERS FOR SPECIAL EFFORT IN EAU CLAIRE, WS
DAVID DIESTELKAMP, 1609 Drury Ave., Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703—The church in Eau Claire is planning a door-to-door effort July 29-August 9. Because the church is quite small here and the need is great we are hoping others in and outside of this area will come and help.

Eau Claire is the largest metropolitan area in northwestern Wisconsin with a population of 60,000 and with 150,000 who use city services. This is the only conservative work for 60 to 100 miles in every direction. This is a young congregation with an average of 20. July 29-Aug. 3, we will be door knocking. Aug. 4-9 we will continue that work but will also have a gospel meeting in the evening. Paul Earnhart will be preaching in the meeting and hopes to bring several members from Douglas Hills in Louisville to help. We will do our best to provide housing and some meals for those who come, but our ability is limited. In addition to four homes of members, a lodge to house 20-30 people has been reserved for Aug. 4-9. There are also camping areas and many hotels and motels in the area. Please contact us for more information if you think you might be able to help. Phone (715) 839-7800.

A. A. GRANKE, JR., 1 Cherokee St., Sumter, SC 29150—1990 was a fruitful year at Woodland. Our radio program received a favorable hearing in the community. I have not been able to arrange support to go to Millsboro, Delaware though I have been in touch with many congregations. So, I will have to abandon these plans for now. We will continue to work here in Sumter at Woodland. Since December, I have received wages of only \$900 per month. We have exhausted our savings, have borrowed money to make ends meet. Secular job prospects are not good since 3 major industries here have closed in the last year, and Shaw AFB, the area's principal employer, is largely deployed in the Middle East. Our situation is becoming desperate. Please contact me if you can help, whether on a monthly basis, only once, or even a small amount, any help will be gratefully received. I will gladly supply references of sound brethren and churches who know me well. Phone (803) 773-0828.

(Editor's note: I am one brother who knows the Grankes well. What a shame he could not get the help to go to Delaware. Question: Who else do you know who is willing to go there and work in the gospel? Are YOU ready? Why should faithful, experienced men be reduced to poverty to keep on preaching? Is it because this brother has spent so many years in South Carolina and is not widely known? Can't somebody do something?)

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES—Julie D. A. Notarte reports from Digos, Davao del Sur (Mindanao) that six have been baptized since December, 1990 at Dunganpikong. After 5 weeks of intensive study a denominational preacher was baptized. He also included pictures of 3 who were recently baptized on Samal Island on Jan. 27, 1991.

Alberto D. Vivero reports from Baybay, Leyte that in spite of damage from a strong typhoon last November 12-13, the work goes forward. On December 9 he baptized 5, including a former Missionary Baptist preacher and wife (they studied for two and a half months before obeying the gospel).

SOUTH AFRICA—Paul Williams reports from Eshowe that one was baptized. Also, two young South African preachers conducted a three day meeting at Melmoth in which three young men were baptized. On the last day of a tent meeting in which David Ngonyama did the preaching, the tent was badly damaged by wind. It is old and they are trying to decide whether it is worth repairing or if they should try to buy a new one.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA—Wayne Bailey writes "We have been without a preacher for two and a half years and are carrying on

as best we can with a small nucleus of men taking turns preaching and teaching classes. The article by Greg Litmer in the Nov., 1990 STS really hit home to me. The situation and problems he mentioned fit us to a tee.

The city of Calgary has a population of about 700,000. There are two large instrumental churches of Christ, one large institutional church and a small sound Spanish work meeting in a home, and of course, we are here. The work here began in 1968 when Dave Bradford moved here and began a new work. We purchased our own building in 1971 and moved to our present location in 1984. The other men who have worked here in preaching have been Marvin Nerland, Eldon Givens, Mike Rosser, David Spiece and Mike Hosey. In 1988 we lost about half the members to the institutional church as a direct result of some of the very problems discussed by brother Litmer in his good article. We now have a membership of 31 with attendance 35-40. We have baptized seven in the last two years, four of which are still with us. The other three have moved out of town. We offer a free Bible correspondence course and with a telemarketing machine we are calling all residents of the city.

Our building is paid for. We could provide \$1000 per month support. Additional support would be needed. The potential here is great. Naturally we are looking for an evangelistically minded self-starter who is willing to work with others. Men who have held meetings here and know of our situation are: Ed Brand, Dave Bradford, Dennis Scroggins, Bob LaCoste, Joe Corley, Joe Price, Jim McDonald and Cherrill Schmid. Who can come and help us gather the harvest?"

GERMANY—Steve Wallace reports from Ramstein that since last report four have been restored and one baptized (though he did not stick). Two members were transferred back to the USA and between now and January, 1992 they are to lose 26 people (members and families) who are being transferred out. Harry Rice was there in a meeting in October.

AROUND EUROPE—(Excerpts from report of Steve Wallaces—Tom Earp, Bill Bynum, Jeff Young and their wives and children are now in Prague, CSR. We took in Czech Bibles and lessons in Czech and distributed them on Wencesla's Square. "Those fellows have more Bible studies going than they know what to do with."

Harry Rice went to Budapest, Hungary, with Derek Chambers and taught the brethren there and distributed Bibles and correspondence courses.

Steve Wolfgang was in Vienna, Austria for much of November. David Owen and Roland Lewis were in Budapest for a couple weeks in November working with young Christians. Steve Wolfgang was able to find some Bible lessons in some of the East European languages which have already proved useful.

Steve Wallace is trying to raise enough help to make a trip each month to help the brethren in Vienna and Budapest. He, Bill Bynum and Tom Earp plan a trip to the Ukraine in March to hand out Bibles and literature. Wallace says "Men are planning to move to Eastern Europe. They will need support." The denominations and liberal brethren are putting lots of money into evangelizing Eastern Europe. Once tares are sown, the work will be much harder. Is it true that error can go around the world while the truth is putting its boots on? Surely not! Brethren, let's not have to be **talked into it**, let's be eagerly watching for the opportunities. Some things can't wait!

ITALY—STEFANO CORAZZA reports the first baptism in the new work in Rome, a young man of 23 with whom Stefano and Roberto Tondelli had been studying for a year. Also, two have recently obeyed the gospel from their work at Pomezia, one 65 and the other 30. Classes continue with all of these to ground them in the truth.

RODOLFO BERDINI reports on a recent series of four sermons presented by Stefano Corazza at Aprilia to help instruct the young Christians on the institutional division. Berdini said "I wanted to schedule this series of studies particularly for the young Christians who did not pass directly the sad experience of division. I think they must know the doctrinal reasons that forced us to fight the liberal thought toward Bible authority and which brought so many churches in Italy (and in the world) to reach slowly the dark bottom of compromise and unscriptural practices."

ARRIGO CORAZZA writes from Alessandria, Italy the following: "Pray for us, because we are alone and we need to be encouraged (he is many miles from any other workers in Italy, CWA). It's getting very difficult to get or replace support from U. S. churches. My father (Sandro of Via Sannio in Rome) lost several hundred dollars a month of his support and I am going to lose \$900 starting April 1, 1991. I don't really know what to do. Asking support I am sure gets tiresome to the churches, but it will be many years before we can be self-sufficient in Alessandria."

PREACHERS NEEDED

TAYLOR, TEXAS—Taylor is 35 miles north of Austin, in a rural farm community of 13, 000. The Parker Blvd. church has 25 members with many small children. We need a fulltime preacher who can raise much of his support. We can supply some. We own our building. Those interested please contact Dean Glover (512) 255-3529 or Darrell Glover (512) 856-2625.

PINE APPLE, ALABAMA — The Awin church needs a gospel preacher. We can provide \$400-\$500 per week support and a house. We are located 20 miles East of Greenville on Hwy. 10. Those interested should contact Gilbert Pugh (205) 746-2800, or Jessie Godwin (205) 746-2143.

ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA — The church here needs a full time evangelist who is sound and willing to do personal work. Partial support necessary. For more information call (904) 264-9412 or (904) 272-6888.

CLEVELAND, MISSISSIPPI — We will be needing a preacher as of June 1st. We are a small congregation of 35-40 located between Memphis, TN and Jackson, MS. Cleveland is the home of Delta State University, a community of about 20, 000 when the University is in session. There is much work needed here. The next sound church is in Grenada, 55 miles to the east. We have some members driving as far as 37 miles (one way) to meet with us. We can provide partial support. For more information please call Connley Keenum at (601) 334-6055.

PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA — The church here is looking for a fulltime gospel preacher. The church is small but owns its building. They can supply partial support and have contacts to help with some outside support. Princeton is located in the southern part of West Virginia, a beautiful and relatively inexpensive place to live. If interested, contact the church by writing to 1013 Old Athens Rd., Princeton, WV 24740 or calling Leonard Mattock (304) 425-4627.

AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS

LONNIE MEREDITH, 7906 Briarcliff Rd., Louisville, KY 40219 — I am available for appointments to preach when needed. I would prefer a one week's notice. For recommendations contact the elders of the Expressway church in Louisville.

RALPH C. SMART AT REST

Ralph C. Smart, veteran preacher of the state of Maine, died unexpectedly on February 21 in Bangor, Maine. Funeral services were conducted in Bangor on Feb. 25. For many years he has devoted himself to the work in Maine while doing what he could to assist the work in New England and in the eastern provinces of Canada. For the last several years he has lived at Milbridge, Maine and worked with the church there and made regular appointments to visit and strengthen small groups of Christians throughout that area, along with Bruce Hudson who preaches in Bangor. Our sympathy to his wife, Roberta, and to all the brethren in Maine who will greatly miss the faithful services of this good man. We have asked Bruce Hudson to provide us a more complete report and tribute to brother Smart.



OPEN FORUM WITH PREMILLENNIALISTS

There was an open forum involving nine hours of study with five of the premillennial brethren at New Albany, Indiana on February 15-

16. This came about through the efforts of Guy Roberson who preaches for the Silver Street church and Nick Marsh who preaches at the Cherry Street church, both in New Albany. In addition to Nick Marsh, Paul Kitzmiller, Vernon Lawyer, Earl C. Mullins, Jr. and George Marsh, comprised a panel which presented and defended the premillennial view. Guy Roberson, Paul Earnhart, Gene Frost, John Humphries and Connie W. Adams made up the opposing panel. Each man made a 30 minute speech, had a brief rejoinder to the opposing speech and then the panels fielded written questions from the audience. While the issues were vigorously discussed and points were pressed, a good spirit prevailed.

The premillennial division came about 60-66 years ago and was largely centered in the greater Louisville area where R. H. Boll lived then. It is still the strength of that movement. Within 40 miles of Louisville, there are 26 premillennial churches of Christ. Very little contact has existed over the years since the division. The last major contact with them was in the early 1950's at the Welch-Schreiner debate.

The present-day premillennial brethren here have largely moved away from the older views advocated by Boll toward the popular dispensationalists views of conservative denominationalism, perhaps best represented by the Dallas Theological Seminary, and by such writers as Hal Lindsey and John Walvoord. All of these men would not accept that characterization. In fact, the editor of WORD AND WORK told me during the discussion that he did not agree with the panelists on the time line chart presenting the agenda which they believe will occur before, during and after the millennium. He said he was a "post-tribulationist." Others of that persuasion who attended made it clear to some of us that they were not in total agreement with all that was said. The differences between these brethren and the rest of us in this area are deep and wide. They include the general overview of scripture and the scheme of redemption, the nature and fulfillment of prophesy, the nature and present existence of the kingdom and the events related to the second coming of Christ and last things.

The premillennial panelists believe that the temple is to be rebuilt in the millennium, the Levitical priesthood will once again function, animal sacrifices will be offered, the Sabbath will be bound and even the covenant of circumcision will be re-instated. In his speech on consequences of the premillennial view, Guy Roberson powerfully pointed out that such a view not only carnalizes the kingdom but is a reversion to the type and shadow and an abandonment of the reality which we now have in Christ.

Video tapes (priced at \$18 per set - 6 tapes) may be ordered from Rick Hubart, 5127 W. 32nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46244. Phone (317) 328-1776. Audio tapes (priced at \$30 per set - 3 tapes) may be ordered from Donald Stump, 266 Cherry St., New Albany, IN 47150. Phone (812) 945-7029.

LOCKED UP

When my late brother-in-law, Tom Icard preached at Virginia Beach, Virginia he supplemented his income by driving a van for Mental Health. One day he had to stop for gas and had to go into the second precinct and call the computer first. A police woman let him in. Tom made his call and then started out only to find the door was locked and no one was in sight. He looked around and noticed two empty holding cells. He was locked in jail! He spotted a phone, but could only remember the 911 number, but realized no one would pay any attention to a man calling and complaining that he was locked up in jail! Finally he spotted a policeman and motioned to him. The man opened the door and with a puzzled look asked "Who are you?" Tom said, "Well, before I tell you, is the food any good in here?" When he got back to the van he found a very worried group of mental health patients who wanted to know "Where have you been?" Tom said "You'd never believe it." At the end of his service for Mental Health, patients presented him with a plaque inscribed TO: TOM ICARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, GIVEN WITH LOVE. (From an unpublished manuscript by Glenda Icard)

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)