

Gospel Truths

*Standing
for the
Truth of
the Gospel*



Volume I Number 4

April 2010

Modernism and the Deity of Christ

by H.E. Phillips (Deceased)

MODERNISM, a system of philosophy that denies the deity of Christ in its broad sense, has been at work in every major denomination to undermine faith in Christ as the Son of God and the inspiration of the Bible. This system denies the miracles of the Bible, the resurrection of Christ, the creation of man by God, and his eternal destiny as taught in the word of God. In the more limited sense modernism includes any doctrine that does not originate in the word of God.

Modernism has charged that the apostles of Christ deliberately twisted and perverted



the prophecies of the Old Testament to provide their proof that Christ was the promised Messiah and the Son of God. Modernists have made every attack possible on the different phases of the life of Christ in an effort to completely discredit the infallible proof that he is the Son of God.

The virgin birth of Christ is perhaps the first place the system of modernism attacks the deity of Christ. Whose Son is he? Was he born of a natural father, or was he born of a virgin by a miracle? If of a natural father, all his claims are false and we have no Saviour. But if he really was born of a virgin, he is truly the Son of God and

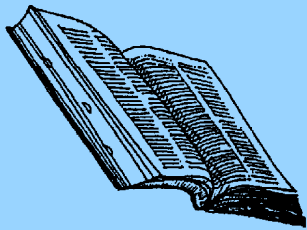
Continued Page 4

In This Issue

Modernism and the Deity of Christ -H. E. Phillips - Page 1
Repentance and Acts 2:38 - Editor - Page 2
The Revelation of God's Word - Gailen Evans - Page 5
Things Written for Our Example-Micky Galloway- Page 6
Giving - Geneva Brown Smith - Page 7
Do We Receive Holy Spirit Baptism When We Are
Baptized - Paul K. Williams - Page 9
Why the Catholic Doctrine of Transubstantiation is False
Glendol McClure - Page 10

Doctrinal Differences . . . - Don Martin - Page 13
Men Who Should Not Preach - Donald Townsley - Page 15
A Policy Statement of GOT Foundation
Peter McPherson - Page 16
"The Brotherhood" - Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. - Page 17
Blaming God - James R. Dunigan - Page 18
The Bible the Book of Truth - Foy E. Wallace, Jr. - Page 24

Gospel Truths



**“Love . . . Rejoices
in the truth”
I Corinthians 13:6**

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**Standing for
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EDITORIAL . . .

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Repentance and Acts 2

ID the word “repentance” have the same definition in Acts 2 that it has today? Did Thayer, Vine, Baeur – Gingrich - Danker (and others who wrote lexicons and dictionaries of New Testament words) define *koine* Greek words with the same meanings they had then? I am told they did. Was repentance with its meaning applicable to those people in Acts 2? Obviously it was. Peter told them to “repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” There is no doubt that they were responsible for doing whatever the word “repentance” demanded.

Being sorry that you have committed sin but remaining in that sin is not “repentance” it is “penitence.” “I am sorry for my sins, but I will continue in them.”

The definition of the word “repentance” is: “To change one’s mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence one’s past sins” (*Thayer*, Page 405).

“In a religious sense, implying sorrow for unbelief and sin and turning from them unto God and the gospel of Christ” (Edward Robinson’s *Lexicon*, Page 458).

“Repentance is the turning from sin” (*Hasting’s Bible Dictionary*, Page 790).

“Grief that arises from a love to God, and is accompanied with a hatred of sin, a love of holiness, and a fixed resolution to forsake sin...” (*Cruden’s Concordance* - Page 394).

Let’s observe one example in the Old Testament that involves *repentance*.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh by the Lord to tell the Ninevehites to repent. We read, “And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’”⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.⁷ And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water.⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, **let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.** (bold letters mine for emphasis – jts)⁹ Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?” (Jonah 3:4-9). Yes, the people of Nineveh repented. What did

they do? *They turned from their evil ways.*

How did they (or we) know what is evil? Jesus tells us. "And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²²thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'" (Mark 7:20-23). We recognize the things that Jesus enumerated as sinful. Therefore, Jesus said that things that are *sinful* are *evil*.

Adultery and Acts 2

Recently I have read several articles from some of our brethren trying to circumvent God's law on marriage, divorce and remarriage today. Their reasoning is, "surely there were a number of people in Acts 2 who had been married a number of times. We have no record of them being told to leave their spouse in order to obey the gospel." (This of course is conjecture on the part of those making this observation since the text says nothing about such people being in that number). Let's suppose for discussion's sake that the conjecture is correct.

If there were people who were living in this condition in Acts 2 (having been divorced and remarried), then according to Jesus they were living in adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Was that evil? In the passages cited above in Mark 7, Jesus listed both *adulteries* and *fornications* as evil. But what is said in the quotation from Jonah 3 about what must be done by those who were practicing "evil." They were commanded to "repent!" What did they do? According to the meaning of the word "repent," "*they turned from their evil ways.*" What did Peter tell the people in Acts 2 to do? "Repent!" According to Jesus in Luke 7 "murder" is evil. If there were murderers in Acts 2, what did they have to do? "Repent!" (turn away from, quit doing what they were doing). What about those who may have been "thieves?" They too were told to "repent!" "But where are the examples," we are asked, "of anyone being told to give up their wives in Acts 2?" In the very same passage that those who were murderers were told to quit committing murder and the thieves were told to quit stealing – Acts 2:38 "repent!"

"But, if someone is baptized aren't his sins washed away?" Yes, **if** that person *believes* that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, **if** he *confesses* his faith in Christ as the eunuch did in Acts 8, and **if** HE *REPENTS* (quits sinning) his sins are washed away by the blood of Christ

when he is baptized. ALL of the above acts must be performed by a convert BEFORE he can be saved.

Peter didn't just say to those people in Acts 2:38 "be baptized for the remission of sins." He said, "REPENT and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

Please answer the following questions:

If two people are living together in a homosexual arrangement and they are baptized, will they have to quit living together?

If a man and woman are *living together* and are committing fornication are baptized, if baptism washes away sins even while they continue in the sinful condition, would this couple be scripturally right if they continue to live together?

To say that one can be sorry for sins and yet continue to practice them after baptism (because baptism washes away sins) is to pervert the purpose of baptism. It makes baptism change the nature of a sinful act. If one is scripturally right while remaining and continuing in the same relationship *after* baptism that was sinful *before* baptism, that would mean that the action in baptism *forgives past* sins and *future* sins.

What about a couple that wants to be baptized that are living in an adulterous relationship? Will their marriage after baptism be all right? If so, that would make the act of baptism a *divorce decree* (making the divorce *scriptural*) and a *marriage ceremony* (making the marriage *scriptural*). All this for a couple that has been practicing adultery in an *unscriptural marriage*! God forbid!

There have been a dozen or more positions invented by brethren trying to justify those who have divorced and married another. All have been shown to be unscriptural. The position in this article is a perversion of Scripture just as others have been. People will be lost who pervert the Scriptures as well as those who practice the doctrine proclaimed therein. Only two categories of *once married people* are scripturally qualify to marry another – the one who has put away his mate for fornication, Matthew 19:9; or the one whose spouse has died, Romans 7:2-3. We need to be satisfied with what God has said on this as well as all other subjects. ☞

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his word is sure (Matthew 22:44-45).

To deny the virgin birth of Christ is to place him among the great teachers of his day, except it must imply that he was immoral and deceptive in all his teaching. It denies that he had a pre-existence with the Father, which he claimed. He was a deceiver if not born of a virgin because he claimed to have been so born. The prophecy of the Old Testament has not been fulfilled, Christ is not the Son of God, and his word is not true if he was not born of a virgin. The word of God declares him to have been born of a virgin. To know the truth is to be free; without it no man can be saved (John 8:32).

In Genesis 3:15 God promised to bless all nations of the seed of woman. This is the only mention of the "seed of the woman." In Isaiah 7:14 a sign was to be given that a son was to be born of a virgin, and Matthew 1:23 quotes this prophecy and applies it to Christ. Now if Christ was born of a natural father, there is no sign and the prophecy has not been fulfilled. Both the prophecy and the fulfillment unite to declare the virgin birth of Christ, and thereby declare him to be the Son of God.

But why is the virgin birth denied? What would the modernist gain by trying to prove that such did not happen? If God created the first man by a miracle, why is it thought to be impossible that Christ should be conceived without a natural father? But that is the very point! Modernists simply will not accept a miracle. The virgin birth is biologically impossible, therefore, it did not happen.

Besides denying the virgin birth of Christ, modernism denies that Christ lived a perfect, sinless life. Some of them say that such a life of Christ was fabricated by some idealists of the second century who adored a Jew by the name of Jesus Christ, and this developed into the present doctrines of what is called "Christianity." They do claim that he was a good moral teacher (and then deny it in denying the virgin birth), and a good humanitarian of his day.

These good traits of Christ are not admitted by all modernists. Some declare that he adopted the "immoral ideas" (?) of the Old Testament and actually stood in the way of mental and moral progress of his time. Some of these have said that he actually lived an immoral life with Mary and Martha in their own house. They claim that he was striving for world power, but was stopped when the Jews and Romans found out his true person and put him to death. Some claim that his conduct in defying some of the Jewish laws grew out of the fact

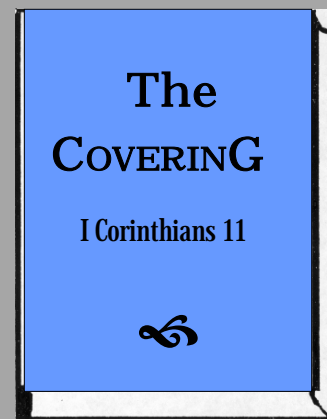
that he knew that his father was really a Roman soldier and that he was born out of wedlock.

Such denials and charges are the most vulgar blasphemy that mortal man can utter. It is sickening to every believer in the word of God. I can have absolutely no respect for any man who entertains such ideas. He does not deserve to breathe God's fresh air, or to live in the presence of God's creatures who were made in His own likeness.

You may now think: "Why should we be concerned with such ridiculous information? No religious person would ever think of such nonsense." Oh, but that is just the point! Many religious people have accepted many of these ideas. Modernism has invaded and infiltrated most of the denominations of the day. The denominational church schools are producing many thousands of these "pastors" each year who do not believe in the deity of Christ nor the verbal inspiration of the word of God. There are many of them in the liberal wing of the Christian Church, and some of these ideas are beginning to take root in the minds of the ultra-liberals among some churches of Christ. It begins with a disregard for the word of the Lord, then a denial of the verbal inspiration of the New Testament, and finally the denial of the deity of Christ himself.

Taken from Studies of the Bible on the Internet 

The Covering of I Corinthians 11



Order From: The Preceptor Company
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The Revelation of God's Word

by **Gailen Evans**

Galatians 1:11,12 — “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but **it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

Before questioning any precept found in the pages of God's Word, one needs to stop and think: “What would I say to this if God had spoken it to me directly?” This is a serious question, given the lack of respect shown for God's Word today. In the Scripture cited above, Paul certified that the gospel, which he preached, did not originate in the mind of man. Though he did hear Stephen preach (Acts 7:59-8:1) and had personal contact with Ananias and Barnabas (Acts 9:10-18,27), he was in no way indebted to them for his knowledge of the gospel. Paul also affirmed that he did not receive the gospel by means of some course of instruction. The apostle received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

What did Paul mean by the phrase “revelation of Jesus Christ”? The term “revelation” as used in the Scriptures means a disclosure, an uncovering, ... unveiling something hidden, so that it may be seen and known for what it is. (ISBE) Thus, we are to understand that what Paul preached was disclosed or made known to him by Jesus Christ. There could be no higher source than the One Who declared that “All authority in Heaven and on earth” had been given unto Him (Matthew 28:18).

In Acts 1:8, Luke records Jesus saying to the apostles: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This was the fulfillment of what He had promised them in John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” and also in John 16:13-15: “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own (authority), but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare (it) to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare {it} to you.” Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit

would guide them into ALLTRUTH - and that the things He told them, would in fact come from the FATHER (i.e., God's Word)!

Although Paul was not with the other apostles when this promise was given, he identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and claims the same source for the gospel, which he preached. In Ephesians 3:3-5 Paul reminds them “how that by revelation (God) made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.” Paul's knowledge of the mystery of Christ was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, just as it had been revealed to the other apostles and prophets. Though he received no instruction from the other apostles, when he met them, his gospel agreed exactly with theirs. (Galatians 1:17-24)

It is upon the revelation of God's Word that we base our understanding of the authority, which resides in the written Word today. It is not authoritative because of its antiquity, but because of its origin. Paul commended the brethren in Thessalonica for the way in which they received the preaching of the Gospel. (I Thessalonians 2:13) “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but **as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.**” There can be no doubt that Paul believed his preaching to be the Word of God - and not the word of men.

Whenever we read from the pages of the Bible, we are hearing the voice of God. With this in mind, we need to approach the Bible with the same reverence due God. When the Law was found, and Ezra opened it upon the pulpit of wood, we are told in Nehemiah 8:5 “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.” This they did out of respect for the One Who gave the Law. Merely standing up, however, does not show all of the respect due that which comes from above. We must also set our hearts to do what God says. After the reading of the Law by Moses,

he told Israel: "Set your hearts on all the words, which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe — all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 32:46) Ezra had the proper approach to God's Word. We are told in Ezra 7:10 that "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."

Once again, when you are reading from the Bible and find something that you really don't like, stop and ask yourself: "What would I say to this if God had spoken it to me directly?" Would you try to reason what He said away? Would you try to pretend you didn't hear? Would you try to twist what He said in order to make it suit you? Be serious now! What would YOU do? In all honesty, you would probably fall flat on your face in His presence, and willingly do anything He commanded of you, without reservation or hesitation! The same should be true whenever we hear Him speak today through His Word, the Bible. We need to be ready to obey Him with the faith of Abraham, which caused him to offer up his only begotten son when God said DO IT! We need to obey Him with the persistence of Noah, who spent 120 years building an ark for a flood that God said would come - when there was no reason for anyone to believe that it would ever happen! We need to obey Him with the love that motivated David to say in Psalm 40:8 "I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart." David had a deep reverence for God's word. "Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may know Your commandments." (Psalm 119:73) "Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." {Psalm 119:104,105} "Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The entrance of Your words give light; it gives understanding to the simple." (Psalm 119:129,130) May our desire always be to appreciate God's revealed word and do our best to follow it's every precept! ☞

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Things Written for Our Example

by Micky Galloway



LD TESTAMENT history clearly exhibits that God is, and always has been, true to his promises. It also makes known the principles of righteousness that He requires of we who are in Christ. In Abraham, we see a life of faith, one who "by faith obeyed



to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance... not knowing whether he went." (Hebrews 11:8) In Joseph, we learn of God's providence (Genesis 45:5-8; 50:20). In Elijah, we learn the meaning of courage as we see him on Mount Carmel, challenging the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18). Such studies contribute to our understanding of faithfulness in the Christian's life. Let's strive to emulate the faithfulness of these and other Old Testament worthies (Hebrews 11).

The apostle Paul used Old Testament history to teach the Corinthians the importance of being faithful to God (I Corinthians 10:1-13). In verses 11 and 12, he said, "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Truly, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Romans 15:4) Let us learn the lessons from history. Christians can be rejected just as easily as the Israelites, who had received so many of God's blessings, were rejected when they became unfaithful. The abundance of special blessings did not ensure God's unconditional acceptance of these people. God's people today are the recipients of "exceeding great and precious promises" (II Peter 1:4), but this is not a guarantee of unconditional salvation. Using Israel as an example, Paul warned the Corinthians that the same thing could happen to them.

The context of I Corinthians 10 is crucial. The word "for" (vs.1) demands that we connect it with the previous two chapters. Chapter 8 warned them concerning the careless exercise of their Christian liberties. Chap-

Continued Page 8

"The Older Women Likewise . . . That They Admonish The Younger Women" (Titus 2:2-3)

Woman's Page

Giving

by Geneva Brown Smith



HE was a lady in her mid fifties, a Christian and a successful business-woman. She owned and managed two rest homes for elderly people. This within itself was enough to keep her busy, but it was just the tip of the iceberg. Living in a small town in the Mid West and being financially "comfortable," she was well known and active in community events. She had in the past been an active member of a denomination, but always felt that something was lacking in their doctrine and practice. When she somehow (or through God's providence) was invited by a friend to attend services of the church, she heard a sermon that peaked her interest. She just had to go back! The denomination she was in just did not preach that way! This preacher was preaching all of the truth! After attending several services and re-reading her Bible (for she was already an excellent Bible student), she became a Christian.

This lady lived by a philosophy that is not often seen in our day. She believed (correctly) that it is impossible to out-give God. She was very generous in her contributions to the work of the local church. She also gave financial aid to many young preachers who were just starting out. Often when she had done a good work that became known, she would just wrinkle her nose and say, "I got two new patients in my rest home this week. I knew it would come from somewhere. You just can't out-give God. I have tried it many times."

Christians are instructed to give. In First Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

Christians are commanded to give cheerfully. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:6).



What About Alms?

In our town there are many professional beggars. They like to show up just after services to beg. They prey on the generosity of people who are trying to follow the teachings of Christ. Some make a lucrative business out of begging.

Articles have appeared in our newspaper describing those who carry signs reading, "will work for food." One group was exposed as driving late model luxury cars and carrying large amounts of cash. This neither negates nor diminishes our responsibility to give, however. In the matter of alms, unless one is able to identify a scam, I suppose it is better to give something and risk being taken advantage of than to fail to give when it is one's duty.

The word "alms" in the original is connected with mercy, pity, etc. There are instructions in the Bible regarding the giving of alms: In Matthew 6:1, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of our Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of man. Verily I say unto you. They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

Conclusion: There are various reasons why people are in need today. We live in a wonderful country where most people can find work if they really want it. Many of the ones who beg do not want to work. We have no obligation to them. In II Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." Keeping this and all of the other Scriptures in mind, it becomes the duty of each one of us to try and sort out those for whom we are responsible. May God give us the wisdom to do so.

ter 9 reinforces this with Paul's own example of self-denial and forbearance. He recognized the need for self-discipline: "lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." (I Corinthians 9:27)

Consider the abundance of the blessings God showered on Israel. With a mighty hand, He delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Paul does not want the Corinthians, many of whom were Gentiles by birth, to be ignorant of the great lessons to be learned from Israel's history. The Israelites ALL had the privilege of being "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The word "all" is repeated five times in the first four verses of I Corinthians 10. This emphasizes that the entire Jewish nation was privileged to have a covenant relationship with God. This "baptism unto Moses" obligated them to recognize his divine commission and to submit to his authority. This voluntary act suggested their willingness to submit to Moses' authority as God's chosen leader. Truly, being Moses' disciple was considered a great honor (cf. John 9:28). They all experienced the miraculous receipt of food and drink during the long journey, through a barren wilderness, toward the Promised Land (Exodus 16,17,20).

"Howbeit with most of them, God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." (I Corinthians 10:5) We can't help being impressed with the contrast emphasized here. All of this great nation (perhaps three million people), started out on the same level of divine favor. They all began the journey toward Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, with the same miraculous deliverance. They all ate the same food and drank the same water, both of divine origin. They all shared the same prospect of reaching Canaan. However, "with most of them God was not well pleased." All but two, Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:30), who were twenty years old and older when they left Egypt, forgot God's goodness and forsook Moses' and God's commandments. Of this vast multitude, only two were permitted to enter the Promised Land. A nation of people who had been the recipients of God's richest blessings was scattered in death throughout the wilderness. As a warning to the Corinthians, and to Christians in all generations, Paul called attention to the tragic and pitiful failure of an entire generation and the dreadful consequences of their disobedience.

In spite of God's blessings, the Israelites sinned and proved themselves unfaithful. What did they do? By

learning why many in Israel failed to enter the rest God provided, we can avoid making the same mistakes. Paul mentioned several specific places where they fell short.

1. They lusted after evil things (Numbers 11:4-35; Psalms 106:7, 21). Their concept of what God had prepared for them never seemed to rise above the physical. They tired of manna and wished for the meat, melon, leeks, and onions of Egypt.

2. They committed idolatry (Exodus 32). As they journeyed to Canaan, instead of looking to God, they looked back to Egypt (Acts 7:39) and built and worshiped a golden calf. God was sorely displeased, and 3,000 Israelites died.

3. They committed fornication (Numbers 25:1-9) as they played the harlot with the women of Moab and worshiped their idols. As the result, 24,000 died of a plague.

4. They tempted the Lord (Numbers 21:4-9). They tried God's patience as they journeyed from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea. They were reluctant to go around Edom, and they complained, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." God sent fiery serpents to bite the people, and many of them died.

5. They continually murmured. As a result of this sin, on one occasion 14,700 died (Numbers 16:41-50). This followed on the heels of the deaths of the 250 who followed Korah (Numbers 16:31-35). The entire generation (except Joshua and Caleb and those who were under 20 years old) that left Egypt with great hope died during 40 years of wilderness wandering. "Because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19), they could not enter into the Promised Land

Down through the ages, this example of Israel's failure became a familiar warning to the Hebrews. "Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness..." (Hebrews 3:7-19) God said, "I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." (Cf Numbers 14:20-35) The Hebrew writer warned: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The danger of apostasy—the danger that "rises from an evil heart of unbelief"—was as real to the Hebrew Christians as it was to their fathers in the wilderness. The pity is that today's Christians who, by keeping their hearts with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23), could avoid this same tragedy, often do not.

The danger of apostasy is as real now as it was for

the Hebrews and the Corinthians. God has blessed us so richly. He has delivered us from sin's bondage (Romans 6:26ff; Colossians 1:13). Sin's bondage is far more wretched than was Israel's bondage in Egypt! He has allowed us to be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3ff). Being united with Christ is the greatest of honors. Through His word, God graciously leads us as we journey toward a heavenly Canaan where we will receive the promised "rest." "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any-one of you should seem to have come short of it." (Hebrews 4:1) The fact that we enjoy rich blessings in Christ does not guarantee receipt of the "rest" reserved for the faithful.

Unfortunately, Christians today ignore the lessons to be learned from the past and, in spite of God's blessings, commit the same sins. We compromise our efforts by holding hands with the world and approving sinful things because they are socially acceptable. Too often, fornication and adultery are found and tolerated within the church (Cf. I Corinthians 5:4, 9; Galatians 5:19). We tempt God by calling into question the need to adhere to the "doctrine of Christ" (Cf. II John 9-11). We try to transform Him into a god who accepts everything and condemns nothing, who fellowships all kinds of beliefs and those who teach them. When we suffer, we grumble and complain, failing to give place to the chastening of the Lord (Cf. Hebrews 12:4-13; Revelation 3:19). We think the only way to worship an idol is to erect and bow before an image of stone or precious metal. Indeed, idolatry is the act of putting other things before God (Cf. Matthew 6:33). How foolish are man's thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9) when he seeks to justify his idolatry (Cf. II Chronicles 25:15; 28:22-23).

We do not have to fall. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." (I Corinthians 10:12-13) Our temptations always bring with them, a way to escape. Faithfulness is necessary, and it is possible. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them." (Hebrews 2:1). Let us not fall as Israel did, but with God's grace and Christ's strength, let us learn to use discipline and self-control to successfully overcome the world and its evil. ☞

Do We Receive the Holy Spirit When We Are Baptized?

by Paul K. Williams



THE discussion between Brothers Thomas Warren and Guy N. Woods concerning the Holy Spirit and the Christian (*Gospel Truths*, March 2010) touched on interesting and important questions. The most important is the question above, and it can be answered very simply, "No. The Christian does not receive the Holy Spirit when he is baptized."



That is clearly seen from the conversion of the Samaritans in Acts 8.

Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: **Acts 8:15** who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: Acts 8:16 for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

I used to say, "This is talking about the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. We receive the non-miraculous gift when we are baptized." But I was talking nonsense. The Bible doesn't talk about the "non-miraculous" gift of the Holy Spirit. A person either received the Holy Spirit, or he did not. And the only way a person received this gift, other than the apostles themselves and the household of Cornelius, was for an apostle to lay his hands on that person.

Notice that in Acts 2:38 Peter separated the purpose of baptism from the promise of the Holy Spirit. He said, "be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Then he added the promise—**TO THEM**—"and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." On that occasion there were twelve apostles present to give that gift by the laying on of hands. The fact that the Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit when they were baptized shows that Peter's promise was not a general

one to all people who will be baptized until the end of the age.

The other interesting question is concerning the “seal” of the Holy Spirit. In what can be called Paul’s hymn to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit he writes:

Ephesians 1:13 in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:14 which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The fact that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit was proof that they were accepted by God in the same way that the Jews were. The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household (Acts 10 and 11), then was given to Gentile Christians by the laying on of Paul’s hands (Acts 19). This was God’s seal that they were His people, the same as Jewish believers. A non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit which cannot be seen, heard, felt, or tasted cannot be called a “seal” or “earnest.” But the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit was just that.

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Why the Catholic Doctrine of Transubstantiation Is False!

by **Glendol McClure**



HE false Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation is best defined in their own publications. On page 273 of the *Baltimore Catechism*, we read the following:

“The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, the Lord Christ is contained, offered, and received. (a) The whole Christ is really, truly and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. We use the words ‘really, truly, and substantially’ to describe Christ’s presence in the Holy Eucharist in order to distinguish our Lord’s teaching from that of mere men who falsely teach that the Holy Eucharist is only a sign or figure of Christ, or that He is present only by His power...”



Recently, there was a discussion with an erring brother who now believes, supports, and defends this false doctrine. He wrote, in part:

“I reread what the Lord wrote in the Bible, and began to see that if the Scriptures are all truth, and if we are not to transgress or go beyond the Scriptures, my opinion must be wrong. How? Christ says that the bread and juice are his body and blood. He doesn’t say it’s a representation of his body and blood. To confirm this I asked a Greek [sic] scholar. The language, it turns out, distinguishes between representational phrases and phrases speaking of an actuality. It turns out that the Greek does not support the argument that Christ was speaking metaphorically. In fact, it supports the opposite opinion. This truth made me rethink a lot of the prin-

Hicks – Smith Debate

This debate between J. T. Smith and Olan Hicks focuses on a study of divorce and remarriage. Smith affirms that the Scriptures teach that only persons who have divorced their mates for fornication and those whose mates have died may, with God’s approval, marry again. Hicks affirms that the Scriptures teach that all divorced people, including those whose former mates are still living, may, with God’s approval, marry again.

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ciples on which the Church of Christ rests its doctrine.”

It is interesting to note that Bible scholars, such as Albert E. Barnes, William Hendrickson, Matthew Henry, J.W. McGarvey, and Phillip Y. Pendleton, deny what this erring brother’s unidentified “scholar” claims. On page 658 of the *Fourfold Gospel*, by J.W. McGarvey and Phillip Y. Pendleton, we read:

“The Catholics and some few others take our Lord’s words literally when He says, ‘this is My body.’ On this, they found the doctrine of Transubstantiation, i.e., that the bread and the wine, when blessed by the priest, become literal body and blood. There are many weighty arguments against such a doctrine, but the main one for it is found in these words of our Lord. But Jesus could not have meant them literally, for his body was untouched and his blood unshed on this occasion when he spoke them. Moreover, in the twenty-fifth verse of Mark chapter 14, Jesus calls the wine ‘the fruit of the vine,’ when according to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, it had been turned into blood and hence not wine at all.”

On pages 738-741 of *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, by E. W. Bullinger, in commenting on Matthew 26:26, he writes:

“So in the very words that follow ‘this is (i.e., represents or signifies) my body,’ we have an undoubted Metaphor. ‘He took the cup...saying...this is my blood.’ Here, thus, we have a pair of metaphors.”

Let us now examine the Roman Catholic dogma of Transubstantiation in light of the scriptures. In so doing, we will see that this doctrine is utterly false for the following reasons:

1. This doctrine destroys the nature of the institution as set forth by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:23-29. The Lord’s Supper is a memorial, a “sign” of something signified. The false doctrine of Transubstantiation destroys the memorial and the “sign.” Jesus had not yet been crucified when He instituted the Lord’s Supper. Claiming that the bread becomes the literal body of the Lord, and the fruit of the vine becomes His literal blood, *“takes away the memorial and the sign and puts the object commemorated, or the thing signified, in its place.”* (*Bulwarks of the Faith*, by Foy E. Wallace, p-186)

Did Jesus take His own flesh and blood and give it

to the apostles? Since He was present with them, such a thing is not plausible. His very presence makes it both improbable and impossible. So, the elements (the bread and fruit of the vine) of the memorial supper are the same now as they were then.

2. The false doctrine of Transubstantiation is contrary to Bible language. Remember, the supporters of this doctrine often argue: *“He [Christ] didn’t say it’s a representation of his body and blood.”* So, we will now apply this faulty “reasoning” to other of Christ’s statements found in the Scriptures and see how they weigh:

When Jesus said, *“I am the bread,”* (*John 6:41*) did He mean literal bread? Remember, as argued by supporters of this doctrine, He didn’t say, *“I am a representation of bread.”*

o When Jesus said, *“I am the vine,”* (*John 15:5*) was He a literal vine? He didn’t say, *“I am a representation of a vine.”* Therefore, if Christ was a literal vine, then His disciples had to be literal branches, because He said, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches.”*

o When Jesus said, *“I am the door,”* (*John 10:7,9*) was He a literal door? He didn’t say, *“I am a representation of a door.”*

o When Jesus said, *“I am the good shepherd,”* (*John 10:11,12*) was He a literal shepherd? He didn’t say, *“I am a representation of a shepherd.”* We might also ask, were the “sheep,” the “shepherd,” and the “wolf” mentioned in these verses literal or figurative?

o When Jesus taught, in *Matthew 5:13-14*, *“Ye are the light of the world,”* did He mean the disciples were literal lights? If so, I wonder what kind—candles, lamps, torches, etc. Remember, He didn’t say, *“Ye are a representation of light.”*

o When Jesus said, *“Ye are the salt of the earth,”* did He mean they were table salt, rock salt, kosher salt, or block salt? Which? Let them tell us. Remember, He didn’t say, *“Ye are a representation of salt.”*

By using Catholicism’s own faulty “reasoning,” it is easy to show the foolishness and fallacy of such quibbles. In the passages cited above, Jesus used figures of speech (metaphors) in His teachings, just as He did when He instituted the memorial supper.

4. The false doctrine of Transubstantiation is contrary to science. If, after a Catholic priest blessed the bread and the fruit of the vine, a qualified scientist analyzed them, what would be the outcome? Would the scientist agree that the bread and fruit of the vine are the literal human flesh and blood of Jesus? Or, would the test show it to be bread and the fruit of the vine? Catholic theologians speak of the “Real Presence,” but the Lord Himself, and the apostle Paul, commanded Christians to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine *“in*

remembrance of me.” (Luke 22: 19; I Corinthians 11:24)

When Jesus took the cup and said to His disciples, “*drink ye all of it,*” was He referring to the literal cup or the contents of the cup (*the fruit of the vine*)? Remember, He didn’t say “*this cup is a representation of the fruit of the vine.*” So, according to Catholic reasoning, Jesus meant for them to drink the literal cup! Now wouldn’t that be hard to swallow, *literally*?

In order to prove this doctrine false, it is not necessary to cite scholars, although I did. But I did so to show that bringing up what some unidentified “scholar” says, carries no weight. All we have to do is go to the scriptures to see the true meaning.

o In *Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25,* and *Luke 22:18,* Jesus spoke of the “*cup*” as being the “*fruit of the vine,*” or the cup’s contents.

o In *Matthew 26:29,* Jesus said, “*But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.*”

o

These verses show that He commanded His disciples to drink, *not* His literal blood, but the “*fruit of the vine.*” When Paul wrote the Corinthians concerning their abuse of the Lord’s Supper, he said they were to “*eat this bread, and drink this cup.*” (*I Corinthians 11:26, cf. vs. 27,28*). According to Catholic doctrine, Paul should have commanded them to “*eat of His flesh and drink of His blood.*”

5. The false Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation violates the Scriptures by withholding the cup.

In 1415, the Council of Constance decreed that only the bread should be administered to the people, and that the priest should drink the wine for the people. This practice is contrary to divine scripture. Reread *I Corinthians 11:23-29* and the gospel accounts. Paul commanded, “*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*” Nowhere does it imply that anyone was to *feed* them the bread or *drink* the fruit of the vine for them! When Jesus instituted this supper, in His own memory, He commanded them *ALL* to partake of it, saying, “*drink ye all of it.*” (*Matthew 26:26*) Mark says that Jesus “*gave it to them: and they all drank of it.*” (*Mark 14:22-23*)

Compare the order in which they partook of the Lord’s Supper, as revealed in the scriptures, with the Catholic tradition—a priest takes a small cracker or

wafer and puts it on the recipient’s tongue (an unsanitary practice); then, the priest drinks the fruit of the vine for those who are present. Is this partaking of the memorial supper or being fed only the *bread* portion of the “supper?” The Bible teaches that the first-century disciples met on the “*first day of the week*” to “*break bread,*” implying that *all* partook of both elements of the memorial supper (*Acts 20:7; Acts 2:42; Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 10:16*). This unscriptural Catholic tradition disgraces the Divine memorial that Christ instituted!

6. The false Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation was not declared a Roman Catholic Article of Faith until 1215 A.D., by the Fourth Lateran Council! This is almost 1200 years AFTER the Lord’s church was established. I wonder why, if they believed and practiced this doctrine, all of the “infallible” popes (who claim to speak *ex cathedra*) during the time period before 1200 A.D. didn’t declare Transubstantiation an Article of Faith?

7. The Catholic false doctrine of Transubstantiation violates the commands of divine Scripture found in Acts 15:6-30. The Gentile disciples were commanded to “*abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication and from things strangled, and from blood.*” (*Acts 15:20,29*) So, according to this false doctrine, Jesus commanded what His inspired apostles forbade, thus pitting scripture against scripture.

Finally, this false doctrine is in the “another gospel” category. Of the Galatians, the apostle Paul wrote, “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*” (*Gal. 1:6-9*) Nowhere in Scripture do we find the words/phrases, “Transubstantiation,” “Holy Eucharist,” or “Real Presence.” Therefore, this false doctrine is not from Heaven, but of men (*Matthew 21:23-27*)! When this doctrine is tried and tested against scripture, it fails the test. He who teaches this false doctrine, “*hath not God*” and is “*accursed*” (*II John 9; Galatians 6:9*)! And, “*he that biddeth him [them] God speed is partaker of his [their] evil deeds.*” (*II John 10,11*) ☩

Doctrinal Differences Among Too Many Preachers Among Us Today

by Don Martin

I continue to be amazed at all the doctrinal differences among too many preachers among us today. It seems that on occasion it is difficult to find but only a hand full of preachers who pretty well are in complete doctrinal harmony on major subjects. I personally believe such a condition is sad and reflective of a number of possible and actual conditions.

Let me rush and say that I do not believe the remedy is good "Church of Christ Seminaries." As an ordained Baptist Preacher, I was exposed to their seminary concept and practice. To my dismay, I have encountered many times the same basic mentality among some churches of Christ. **Florida College** to some serves as "Our Seminary." Special preacher training schools (see addendum 1) are conducted across the country, often by men who themselves are doctrinally flawed in some serious areas. Hence, their deficiencies are often passed on to their students.



To be to the point, I find no biblical authority for seminaries or preacher schools, as such. What do the scriptures teach as to how men are to be trained to preach and whose responsibility is it? Consider Paul's answer:

"1: Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2: And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy. 2).

One reason for all of the doctrinal diversity, I have observed for years, is the special interest groups among us. Yes, the special interest groups are alive and well. "Churches of Christ" fall into a number of classifications, often having nothing to do with doctrinal purity but party loyalty. There are what we call institutional Churches of Christ, those who use their treasures for matters not authorized, the support of human institutions, simply put. Then there are non-institutional churches of Christ, those who do not support orphanages, etc. Some are so shallow that the only requisite for soundness is a church that does not contribute to

human institutions. There are the "Jesus was a man, just like you and me" sector, for lack of a better term. There are the one cuppers, no located preachers, no Bible classes groups (not always the same). Many of non-institutional churches of Christ are characterized by those for Florida College. While they do not send monies (not the churches) to Florida College, as individuals they support the institution. Many of these people view F.C. as vital to the soundness of churches of Christ and look to it for the production of preachers (seminary concept) and elders. Another group has seriously now come into existence known as the Guardian of Truth Foundation. The **Guardian of Truth Foundation** and **Florida College** have been warring enemies; albeit, of late, I understand there has been talk to unite to fight their common enemy, those who oppose privately founded institutions to corporately preach the gospel.

Yes, in all honesty, we have many different doctrinal loyalties among us. However, do some serious research and I think you will find that a lot of the doctrinal divergence pertains to various group loyalties. One preacher whom we (Holly Street were I recently preached and served as one of the elders) supported for years was straight down the line on such issues and marriage, divorce, and marriage to another. However, when he was appointed to be a staff writer for **Truth Magazine**, a production of the **Guardian of Truth Foundation**, he suddenly expressed a loyalty to defend the President of the foundation in his teaching of multiple causes for divorce (compare the one cause of Scripture, Matthew 5: 32, 19: 9). A sizeable percentage of the men today who are demanding allowance for the multiple causes for divorce doctrine are men associated with this foundation. **Florida College** has through the years also had certain idiosyncratic doctrinal loyalties, based on the particular teachers at the college at a given time.

Then there is the incidence of men preaching who simply were not even in the beginning qualified. We worked with a man who was a cult member (another

segment of “churches of Christ,” ran by a female in Denver). He was also a homosexual and confessed to being such. He, while still battling with homosexuality decided he wanted to go into full time preaching. When I made a counter announcement that I did not believe, I had extensively worked with him, he was ready, I met swift and strong opposition: “You have no right to oppose his desire to preach...!” While many do not practice the seminary mentality, some have gone to the other extreme, allow anybody in the pulpit who wants to be there, no exception (cp. James 3:1). This man “moved his membership” to a local church a few miles from us and the resident preacher there (well known and respected) had him in full time preaching in a short time. The man effected problems across about three states before he finally got out of preaching.

The scriptures command that we all “speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you...” (I Corinthians 1:10). However, the reality is there is too often extensive division on many doctrinal topics of serious importance. Cultural backgrounds can and do often contribute to differences, albeit, they should not. Educational gradation can result in differences and also maturity levels. I believe it is shameful at the various states we have in churches of Christ today. I have now had over two hundred written debates or exchanges, if you will, on the Internet, the majority with preachers within churches of Christ. Not that such is automatically the criteria, but I represent what most preachers used to believe and teach (cp. I Corinthians 4: 17). You name it and somebody believes and teaches it today.

How can we return to basic doctrinal soundness?

The answer is simple, respect the authority of the Scriptures and only allow men in the pulpits who are doctrinally sound! (cp. I Timothy 1:3.) A significant portion of preachers in “churches of Christ” today have no business in the pulpit. Do we not understand that there are qualifications for preachers? (Cp. I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, etc.) Many are simply men pleasers and hirelings. These men take flight at the first sign of doctrinal or moral threat. Jesus taught:

“11: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12: But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (John 10).

Many churches are totally vulnerable to all sorts of

doctrinal variation and deviation introduction due to hirelings in the pulpit. We have too many “Church of Christ Preachers” who simply protect their careers and see how many meetings they can schedule. These men never deal with issues within churches. They preach and write endlessly, but never say anything of substance or pertinence (see addendum 2). Beloved, these reasons and more that we could mention are why “we have so many differences among preachers today”!

Addendum 1: I am not referring to the simple arrangement of the local preacher working with men, meeting in a class room at the church building where he labors.

Addendum 2: Thank God for faithful men who love and teach the truth and oppose all that is contrary to the truth. “May their tribe increase.” ☞

Answering the latest efforts to justify the religious role of the Guardian of Truth Foundation —

Foundation's Passing the Torch

By Gene Frost



Responses to

Tom Roberts' lecture in the Truth Magazine Lectureship 2009, titled “The Pillar and Ground of Truth (Timothy 3:15).”

Tom O'Neal's article, “Gene Frost's and J.T. Smith's Human Institutions,” distributed at the Lectures and recommended in *Truth Magazine*.

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Men Who Should Not Preach

by Donald Townsley



HE word of God has much to say about preachers and preaching; their qualifications are very important. Men who preach the gospel should be Christians in the fullest sense of the word. I believe that the word of God also points out that there are some men who should **not** preach. Let us look at this subject and make a list, with the gospel as our guide, of men who should not preach.

1. Men who do not love God supremely and do not put Him first in their lives (Matthew 22:37).

2. Men who do not **know** the will of God (Acts 22:14; Ephesians 5:17).

3. Men who are afraid to preach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20: 26 -27).

4. Men who have a desire to please men and strive to do so (Galatians 1:10).

5. Men who see preaching as a way to make material gain (II Peter. 2:3; Titus 1:11).

6. Men who will not pay their honest debts (Romans 12: 17).

7. Men who do not set a godly example before others (I Timothy 4:12).

8. Men who love to have preeminence and cannot work under godly elders (II John 9; Hebrews 13:17).

9. Men who do not love the brethren (John 13: 34 - 35).

10. Men who are “eaten up” with jealousy of other preachers, elders, or other brethren (Galatians 5: 20 - 21).

11. Men who are given to hate, revenge and bitterness (Ephesians 4:31; Romans 12: 19).



12. Men who cannot learn contentment (I Timothy 6: 6 -8; Philippians 4: 10 - 11).

13. Men whose wives are discontent, worldly, jealous, carry gossip, or who have no real devotion to the cause of Christ (I Timothy 2: 9 - 10; Titus 2: 4 - 5; I John 2: 15 -16).

14. Men who are **not willing** to make real sacrifice (Romans 12: 1 - 2; II Timothy 2:3).

15. Men who are not able to “bear up” under constant problems (II Timothy. 4:5; 2:3).

16. Men who cannot preach the vital truths of the gospel just as stern and unrelenting as they are written in opposition to error and sin,

week-in and week-out (II Timothy 4: 2 -5).

17. Men who can be “bluffed off” preaching what needs to be preached by guilty members who squirm under the fire of the gospel of Christ (II Timothy. 4: 2 - 4).

18. Men who will not deal with vital issues that face God’s people (I Timothy 4:1-6).

19. Men who have “eyes full of adultery” (II Peter. 2:14), who “creep into houses” (II Timothy.3:6) and beguile unstable women (II Peter 2:14) into adultery (I Corinthians 6:18; I Timothy 5:2).

20. Men who are not willing to “take hold” and deal with vital subjects which directly affect his hearers in the work-place, in business, home and social life; subjects like **honesty, immodesty, fornication, drinking, cursing, divorce and remarriage, etc.** (Romans 12:17; I Timothy 2:9; I Corinthians 6:18; Matthew 19:9; Galatians 5:19-21).

Our conclusion is in the words of H. Leo Boles:

“No hypocrite can preach the truth of God with the power and persuasion that should ever accompany the preaching of the gospel.” ... “No preacher can preach the gospel as it should be preached unless he preaches because his heart is in the work, and not for ‘filthy lucre’s sake’, but of a ready mind.” (Gospel Advocate, March 31, 1932).

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A Policy Statement of the GOT Foundation

That Has Never Been Repudiated, That Never Will and The Never Can Be

by Peter McPherson

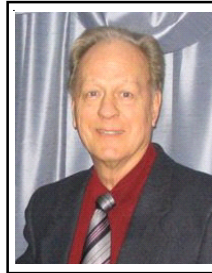


RECENTLY brother Mike Willis e-mailed an article to brethren from his brother Cecil. In that article from November 8th 1973 issue of the *Truth Magazine* under the title “Something You Can Do” regarding the gospel work in the Philippines, brother Cecil Willis penned with obvious zeal, the following:

“If you would like to have a part in such a work, you can pay for the shipment of tracts or other printed material as requests for them come in. The Cogdill Foundation is a tax exempt organization, and contributions sent to the Cogdill Foundation are tax deductible on your federal income tax form, just as are contributions to private educational institutions. If you wish to make contributions to be used: to send free tracts or other printed materials to brethren in foreign lands who cannot afford to pay for them themselves, we will be glad to ship them to those requesting them. Or if you wish to have tracts sent to specific individuals, we will be glad to handle and ship the tracts you purchase.”

First note that “The Cogdill Foundation” is now “The Guardian of Truth Foundation.” Second, I would like it to be clear that I have not an ounce of personal ill-will toward our now deceased brother Cecil Willis; or toward any other associate of the GOTF. My purpose is not to misrepresent. My purpose here is to simply note what brother Willis stated some 37 years ago and to point out that that statement, to my knowledge, has never been

repudiated (despite serious objections). A simple repudiation, if the GOTF believes that such a statement is in error, is all that would have been necessary. But no, as we have come to see, by the GOTF receiving individual donations and then putting on evangelistic and worship services, it is in fact practicing that very kind of thing today – only they have toned down a wee bit the bold statement of Cecil’s. In reality they could not repudiate



his request without condemning their dual-role that they practice today (“dual role” – that of a legitimate business book store AND of providing for and engaging in collective evangelistic work that God has designated to be done by His bodies, the local churches, I Timothy 3:15).

In Cecil’s plea for American brethren to help in the gospel work in the Philippines he clearly has *TCF* (now the GOTF) acting as a go-between. A go-between, in evangelism, from the sending persons and to the receiving persons. Individuals were asked to send contributions to the *CF* for evangelistic tracts and then “we” (the *CF*) would handle and ship the tracts.” And “we” (the GOTF) will be able to send you a receipt for your contributions. The principle of direct support to the needy individuals and/or preachers in the Philippines can now be done via a human institution, the GOTF. Hence the makings of an individually supported Missionary Society.

And, the GOT Foundation’s present *mission statement* is in full agreement. Here is their mission statement: “*We are a group of Christians aspiring to teach the word of God, to inform brethren regarding the Lord’s work in various parts of the country, and to strengthen and encourage Christians. In addition to the bookstores, we also publish Truth Magazine...*”

That is a clear statement of theirs that the GOTF is acting as an evangelistic society. The only additional comment that I will make on this is that it is a joke that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is *merely* “...a group of Christians” or individuals (as they would have you believe). When it is known that the GOTF is in fact an



Continued from Page 15

“If churches today are to continue their mission, they must be taught...by preachers who are clothed with the humility of Christ and have the courage of their convictions. All the churches should be praying that God will give us God-fearing, truth-loving, earnest, faithful men for preachers and teachers of His word.” (Gospel Advocate, April 7, 1932).

160 Rice Way, Florence, AL ☎

Continued Bottom Next Page

"The Brotherhood"

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (I Peter 2:17)



HE word "brotherhood" here is translated from *adelphotes*. It appears only twice in the New Testament, both times in First Peter (2:17; 5:9). The King James renders it "brethren" in 5:9, but the New King James renders it "brotherhood" in both verses. Of *adelphotes* Vine says, "primarily, 'a brotherly relationship,'" and so, the community possessed of this relationship, "a brotherhood," I Peter. 2:17 (see 5:9 marg.)" and Thayer says, "brotherhood"; the abstract for the concrete, *a band of brothers* i.e. of Christians, *Christian brethren* : I Peter. 2. 17; v.9).

It is clear that Peter uses the term to refer to what Vine calls "the community possessed of this relationship" throughout the world. In 5:9 he compares the sufferings of those immediately addressed in his epistle to that experienced by their "brotherhood in the world (nkj)." In 2:17, it seems to be a contrast to "all men." Hence, when we as children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ speak of "the brotherhood" we are speaking of ourselves along with all in the world that share in this great relationship. What a great throng of people! It is this throng that Peter especially tells us to love.

It seems to me that in recent years we have lost much of that keen sense of brotherhood that we once enjoyed. Those of us who consider ourselves "conservative" and "non-institutional" have done a pretty good job of teaching that each local congregation is autonomous and independent of any other congregation in the world. We have shown that a failure to recognize this fundamental Bible principle has historically led to most of the whole-

sale apostasies of the past. We have rightly pointed out that the congregation of which we are members can exist and scripturally function as if there were no others like it in the world. We have also emphasized that each member of a congregation has a relationship and responsibility to the local church collectively and distributively that he does not have toward brethren elsewhere. I fear



that during all of this we may have developed a mentality that is a bit too "independent." As a result of this perverted sense of independence, brethren have almost isolated themselves from any real concern, contact or sense of fellowship with their brethren elsewhere – even other brethren meeting across town. An invitation can come (in some cases no invitation is sent) from faithful brethren elsewhere to their gospel meet-

ing. It may or may not be announced at the receiving congregation, but it is generally ignored because it not a function of "our" congregation. In some areas preachers of local congregations have little contact or interaction with preachers or other members of other congregations. This writer confesses his own guilt to a degree at times along these lines.

We can remember a time when a church, in an area where there were several congregations would have a gospel meeting that the house would be filled mostly with members from the other congregations. Often, we would travel miles to encourage another congregation in its gospel meetings. We were just as interested in seeing another congregation prosper in the Lord as we were to see the congregation where we attended. We showed an interest in and often inquired about how that brethren meeting at such and such place were doing. That was before we conceived that "autonomous" and "independent" meant "isolation." Have we forgotten how to heed Peter's admonition to "love the brotherhood?"

The brotherhood, of which Peter wrote, is not a brotherhood of churches organized together as a unit nor is it a brotherhood of Christians organized into a unit. It is a *relationship* that exists between all Christians. They share a common faith and have common interests. While New Testament congregations were not tied together



Continued From Page 16

entity with a tax exempt Government number, has a staff, has paid employees, and that "it" engages in the work and worship of the churches of Christ, to say that "we are a group of Christians" is in fact a facade. It is possible that they are **deluded**? (II Thessalonians. 2:11) ☞

organizationally speaking, they were tied together doctrinally because they subscribed to the same standard. Paul declared that what he taught and ordained in one church he ordained in all (I Corinthians 4:17; 7:17). They shared in a common faith.

I do not have the right to meddle in the internal affairs of another congregation nor infringe upon its autonomy. It can decide, without any interference for me, its meeting times, when it will have a gospel meeting, how it can best use its treasury, who will do its teaching and preaching, lead its singing and praying, what kind of facilities it will provide to do its work, which of its members it may or may not discipline, etc. But, because of my duty to “love the brotherhood,” I have an obligation to “speak the truth in love” to my brethren everywhere I have the opportunity to do so, just as I have an obligation to preach the gospel to every creature in the world because I love their souls. It is not interference into the affairs of other congregations when I demonstrate my love of the brotherhood by teaching them the truth and warning them of departures from the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3) and even the Bible teaching that should govern them as they exercise their autonomy.

Let us love and appreciate those of the brotherhood that we meet and work with regularly in the local congregation, but let us also broaden our scope of interest and “love the brotherhood” as a whole – enough to “correct, rebuke and encourage” (II Timothy 4:2 - NIV) as needed. ☞

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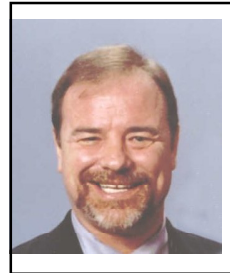
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Blaming God

by James R. Dunigan



RECENTLY I was reading the comments made from people about the death of two teenagers who died suddenly in plane crash. I am sad to hear of the loss of these two precious young people. I have no idea about their spiritual condition and pray they were prepared for death. However I saw



one man write “I don’t understand why it was God’s will for these two girls to die.” Sometimes people will lament “Why did God take this person home?” Or they might say “God needed this or that person’s ability in heaven.” I have often heard people make comments such as these. In a nutshell that say it was

God’s will this person died or was suffering. It is surprising that people think this is a true statement. To me it says that God is sitting on His throne in heaven pointing His finger at some poor person here on earth and bringing down death and destruction on that person. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The other aspects of these types of statements that concern me are, it lays blame on God. It makes sense that if you believe that it is God’s will for this or that person to die and suffer then it goes hand in hand it is God’s fault they died or suffered. Does God “call people home” as some say? Does God sit in heaven and mark a date and time on the calendar and makes sure you don’t live one moment past that predetermined time?

I know at one time or another, most of us have experienced many of the vast array of emotions that flood over us when we experience the death of a loved one - there’s disbelief and denial; there are disappointments and regrets, there’s sadness and depression; but often there’s also anger. We are downright mad! But why anger? Because deep down inside we have this awareness that death is wrong, it’s evil, it was never intended to be; we have become the victim of the worst kind of robbery, someone we so dearly loved has been stolen from us. For many people, this anger with death gets focused on God. Unfortunately, many people hold God responsible; He’s the one who sends the death angel to snuff out the life of that person; frequently this finds expres-

sion in the words, “God took my father (mother, brother, etc.). But think about it - if God is responsible for death, doesn’t that make Him a murderer? But we know that God said “thou shall not kill (murder).” Wouldn’t it be hypocritical if God Himself was a murderer? What kind of a God would He be if He was guilty of the very thing He condemns us for?

There’s some confusion about the phrase, “God’s will.” Many people seem to think that God is synonymous with “fate”- everything is already determined, “whatever will be will be” - there’s nothing we can do to change it. Maybe it’s normal to be angry with death, but it’s wrong to be angry with God. Why? Because death is not according to God’s will - **with one, single, major exception** - death is due to man’s will. Going to II Peter 3:9, please notice the “but” - it says the Lord is “not willing that any should perish but . . .” “But” what? “That all should come to repentance.” God’s will is that all should come to repentance, and this implies that we have a choice. Does everyone make this choice? No, some people choose otherwise, Adam and Eve did! God does not want death for us, He wants life. The important question is, “What do you want?” for it’s not about what God wants, or what God wills, it’s about what you and I want.

In Matthew chapter 6: 26-33 Jesus discusses God’s providential care of all of us, the animals, plants and people. Jesus never said God takes direct action in these events. When Jesus was talking about the providential care of God, He taught that God demonstrates His love for His creatures in ways that are not necessarily miraculous or supernatural. To be “called home” or death coming through “God’s Will” would be God miraculously “taking you out.” Kind of a heavenly hit man.

What mankind needs to do is stop blaming everything on God! The sooner people realize that tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, avalanches and other natural disasters are not God’s wrath, then the sooner people will be able to learn how to better prepare themselves for heaven. Death is one of the occurrences of life and to be honest it is no surprise (Hebrews 9:26-27.) No one knows how they will die. We do not know if our death will be a natural one of old age or comes abruptly at a young age. It is foolish to think that God or his angels are watching over us at times of disaster and death with the intentions of causing pain and suffering. Is God to blame? This is often the question that comes to mind when we confront real suffering in our own life

or in the lives of those we love.

Death and suffering was never God’s plan for mankind. When He created man in the beginning He placed him in the Garden of Eden where there was no death, illness or suffering, that my friend is God’s plan for us. Then Satan came along and tempted man, man failed and death and suffering came into the world. (Genesis 2-3.) Man failed God, God did not fail man. Now man strives to return to that perfect place God has for us named heaven. Christ came to this earth and died so we may once again obtain this perfect place of no death, illness and suffering (Revelation 21:4) He died so we might be reconciled with God (Ephesians 2:15-17) and once again enjoy that perfect relationship with God that man once had in the Garden of Eden. Christ came and died so He could abolish death! (II Timothy 1:9-11.) Because of Christ we can indeed ask “ O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (I Corinthians 15: 54-57.)

People think since God created everything, He is responsible for everything including bad things that happen to me and others. God did create everything that is in existence (Genesis 1) but someone else modified some of those things for evil purposes - Satan was that someone. Take note that everything that God created was good. (Genesis 1:1-25.) Even man was created good and sinless, but man sinned and ruined that which God created. God is responsible for all good that is in the world (James 1:17.) But he is not responsible for evil. Man is responsible for his own behavior; (Romans 2:6-11.)

So why do people blame God or say things like it was His will for this person to die or suffer? It is because God is an easy target. Seems that when we find ourselves in difficulties we always want to blame the one who’s in charge. God is in charge of everything, so ultimately, we reason, He’s to blame. Moreover, God won’t argue with us, at least, not immediately. Those who think in this manner forget God’s longsuffering toward us II Peter 3:9-12. We are also taught God wants no man to perish! I Timothy 2:3-5 “ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (Cf. Acts 17:30-31.) Without question, when Peter says God is not willing that any should perish, it means that God does not want anyone to die. It’s as simple as that. It follows then that because we have been created in the

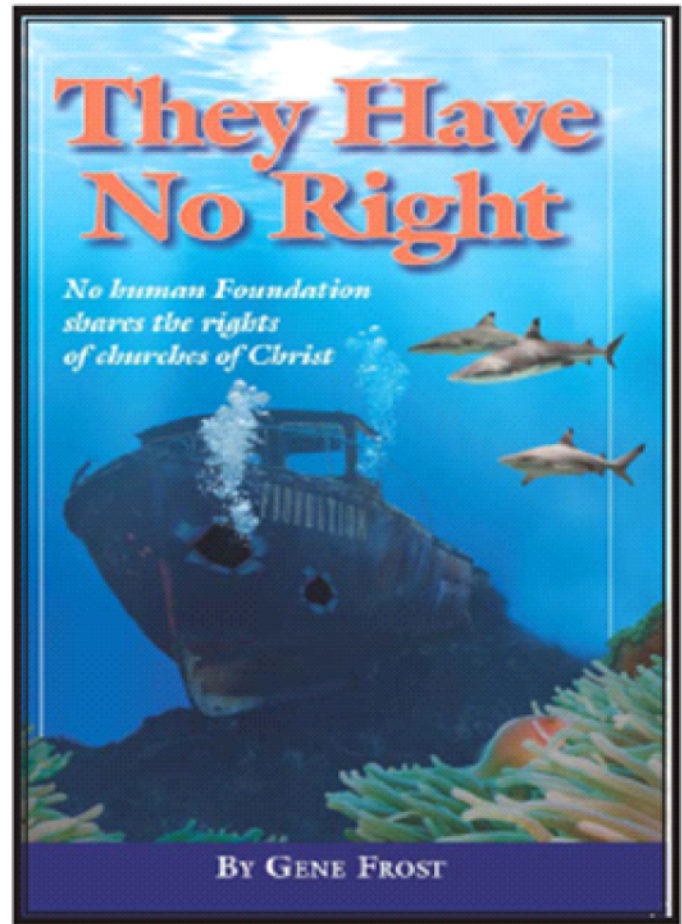
image of God - if God doesn't want us to die, and we are like Him, then no wonder we get angry in the face of death. Death is not according to God's will, but according to our choice.

It is also clear that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, it is also clear that He most surely does not will or decree their death. (Ezekiel 33:10-12.) This expression of God's will is revealed in the many verses of Scripture which indicate what God does and does not take pleasure in. It is time we stopped blaming God and stop being ignorant of Him and His will.

If we are not careful, Christians can easily become preoccupied or even obsessed with finding the "will" of God for our lives. We become obsessed with wanting to assign everything that happens to us as God's Will. It amazes me how many people are quick to assign death and suffering and all bad things to God's Will but give Him little to no credit for the blessings and good in our lives (Ephesians 1:2-4.). If the will we are seeking is His secret, hidden, or decretive will - we are on a foolish quest. God has not chosen to reveal that aspect of His will for us. What we should seek to know is the revealed will of God. The true mark of spirituality is when people desire to know and live according to the will of God as revealed in the Scripture, and that can be summarized as "be holy for I am Holy" (I Peter 1:15-16.). Our responsibility is to obey the revealed will of God and not to speculate on what His hidden will for us might be. While we should seek to be "led by the Holy Spirit," we must never forget that the Holy Spirit is primarily leading us to righteousness and to being conformed into the image of Christ so that our lives will glorify God. God calls us to live our lives by every word that proceeds from His mouth.

Earlier we emphasized the point that death is not according to God's will - with one, single, major exception. What is that exception? Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before His death on a cruel cross, Jesus prayed the memorable lines, "not my will but Yours be done." (Luke 22:41-43.) It was God's will that His own Son die. "God is not willing that any should perish," except for Jesus - that was the one death that was according to God's will. He planned that death so that no one else would need to die and so that we could obtain salvation (Hebrews 5:7-9.) That is God's true Will for you!

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THE inspired king of Israel delivered a dual avouchment for the everlasting stability and the eternal **integrity** of the words of the book of God.

“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” The word “settled” is a sublime assertion of transfixed stability—the Bible has stood the test of time. “Thy word is true from the beginning.” The word “true” is a definitive declaration of immutable integrity from the first word—the Bible has stood the test of truth.

The Bible and Science

The revelation of science is not the purpose of the Bible. Its object is the revelation of the origin and destiny of man, and to reveal the will of his Maker to him. If the Bible had been a revelation of Science, it would have been in the nature of it a premature announcement of scientific discovery, and a direct **communication** to men of matters in the realm of human knowledge which are left for man to ascertain for himself. But the Bible is *truth*, and though its language is not *scientific*, in the academic sense of the term, every reference in the Bible to science is scientifically accurate; every mention of things geological is geologically correct; and every word in it touching things astronomical is astronomically true. Thus while science searches and revises its findings, the word of God is settled and fixed. It is by reason of this fact that the Bible, though not a revelation of science, anticipates the discoveries of science. Therein lies the incontrovertible proof of inspiration. The scientific truth and accuracy of the Bible are witnesses to its divine origin as the inspired word of God.

In the cosmogony of the Bible it never mistakes fables for facts. For instance, the delusions of astrology are not confused with the researches of astronomy. The former is superstition, the latter is science. In all the writings of men certain errors and misconceptions of the times in which they lived are found in their books. What kept these errors and superstitions of the times out of the Bible? No endorsement of such is to be found in it. To the contrary, in times of such misconceptions the Bible anticipates with scientific accuracy the truth in whatever realm the reference is made. The examples of this fact are numerous. Time was when men believed that the “firmament” was solid. But in Psalms 19 the Spirit of God had David to use the Hebrew word “’expanse” for our word “firmament” in that passage, thus anticipating science. When men thought the earth rested on some sort of a foundation such as huge rock pillars, Job declared that it was hanging “on nothing “ (Job. 26:7)—poised in space—and thus anticipated discovery of gravity.

Excerpts Taken From *TorchMagazine*,
by Foy E. Wallace, Jr., January, 1951