

Gospel Truths

Standing
for the
Truth of
the Gospel



Volume I Number 5

May 2010

What is Hades?

by H.E. Phillips (Deceased)

THE word *hades* means “unseen” and refers to the abode of the dead.

It means “the realm of disembodied spirits,” or the “unseen world.”

There is no inherent idea of punishment in this term itself, even though the wicked are tormented in *hades* (Luke 16:22-24). It describes the realm where all the spirits abide between death and the resurrection. The word is translated in the King James Version by the word *hell* (Luke 16:23; Acts 2:27), which may not be clear in our present day use of the word. As we use the word it usually connotes the eternal abode of the wicked after the judgment.



To properly understand the term *hades*, it must be observed that there are three entirely different states of the human spirit distinct from each other:

The first is union with a physical body. This state is life on earth which terminates in physical death.

The second state is that in which the human spirit is separated from its physical body. This begins at death and ends with the resurrection of the body. Hades is emptied of all its inhabitants at the resurrection (Revelation 20:13).

The third state commences with the reunion of the spirit and the resurrected spiritual body, and continues forever (I Corin-

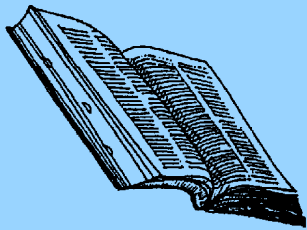
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Gospel Truths



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

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***Standing for
the Truth of
the Gospel***

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EDITORIAL . . .

J. T. Smith, Editor

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A “Grace Church” - A Review

IN this issue I am going to review an article by Denny Boultinghouse by the above title. This is an effort to show what happens when brethren are “weaned’ on the doctrine” “where there is no pattern” and “spoon-fed” on the teaching “we don’t have to have scriptural authority for all that we do.”

Brother Boultinghouse wrote:

“‘Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I’m found . . .’ (1) I knew I was lost, but I had no idea how to find my way; so I just wandered around until I found this big map. (2) By looking at the map, I was able to figure out where I was and how to get where I was going. I made adjustments in my course, and now . . .’ I once was lost, but now I’m found..’

“This is just how some people view Christianity. The only problem with that viewpoint is that it is (3) heresy! In the above scenario, we are saved without Jesus. His death was unnecessary, and he did not have to pay the penalty for our sins; he just had to have good aim when he dropped the map out of the sky. In the above view, it is more important to know how to read and interpret the map than to trust the finished work of the Savior.

“Studying a map and then taking a different road is not grace. Grace does not focus on map reading. Grace is undeserved! It is unmerited. We arrive at the proper destination, not because we follow the map well, but because we place our trust in the Savior. This is the message of the Bible. The Bible does not tell us to trust the Bible to save us; it tells us to trust Jesus. Our faith must not be in the map or in our ability to read the map, but in the man Christ Jesus. He must be the focus and foundation of our faith. Only then can we receive grace.

“The message of grace must be the message of the church. But sadly, some would pull us away from a grace focus. To some, a church that emphasizes grace is disparagingly called ‘a grace church,’ as if that is a dirty name.

“Do critics ever accuse your church of being a ‘grace church’? If they do, wear that designation with dignity. It is not something to be ashamed of. Would you really want to be part of a church that was not a grace church? I wonder, if you are part of a ‘works church’? You see, if you are not a part of a grace church, you are not a part of the biblical church of Christ. Rather, you are a part of a denomination of the worst kind because your church focuses on the works of men rather than the finished work of Christ at the Cross.

“A grace church boldly proclaims grace as foundation to all else. People at a grace church understand that they do not deserve salvation, but that it is a gift of God. While they understand that salvation is conditional upon a biblical response of faith, their faith is in Jesus and not in their own response. The message is the work of Christ at the Cross. The message is not how well we repent, but how unworthy we are. The message is not how well we grow and mature, but how well Jesus paid the debt we owe.

“A grace church will help its people stay on the path; it will be diligent in seeking ways to extend the love of Christ.”

The above is brother Boultinghouse’s article in part. I have num-

bered the points to which I wish to reply. The numbered paragraphs that will follow will correspond with the above numbered points. One thing “jumps out” at you as you read The “Grace Church” article. The entire article was written without a single passage of Scripture being used to prove his point. It is a well-written ridicule of those who preach both The Man *and the plan* - God’s part and man’s part in salvation.

1. I wonder how this person knew he was lost before he found “the big map” (Bible)? Not only would one not know he was lost, but even if someone told him he was lost without the “map” he would know nothing about the grace of God that has been extended toward him by God. God sent His only begotten Son into the world to die for the sin of the world. “or God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Denny correctly says, “Grace is undeserved! It is unmerited.” The Hebrew writer explains it in this way: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). But you see that is what the “map” (Bible) tells us. And, if we are going to follow “the map” we will find that Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

2. He says, “By looking at the map, I was able to figure out where I was and how to get where I was going. I made adjustments in my course, and now . . . ‘I once was lost, but now I’m found.’” Also, “by studying the map and taking a different road is not Grace.” But, that is exactly what Paul says is involved in grace. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11-12). God’s grace “teaches us” Paul said. What does it teach us? It teaches us that we are on one road (the broad road that leads to hell - Matthew 6:13 - as we are involved in ungodliness and worldly lusts) and that we should take another road (the narrow road that leads to life everlasting - Matthew 6:14 - by living soberly, righteously and godly).

Paul further affirms that God’s grace is shown in giving us “the big map.” “If indeed you have heard of the

dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, 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” (Ephesians 3:2-5). The mystery of Christ (that which was concealed in the Old Testament) has been revealed in the New.

The Man and Not The Plan

Notice again, brother Denny says, “The Bible does not tell us to trust in the Bible to save us; it tells us to trust Jesus. Our faith must not be in the map or in our ability to read the map, but in the man Christ Jesus.”

Again, in contrast to this Paul said. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Romans 1:16-17). Paul said that in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God from “faith to faith.” The word “to” in this expression is from the Greek word *eis*. As it is used in Acts 2:38 to set forth the idea “in order to,” so it is used here. The faith (the system of teaching, Galatians 3:24-25; Jude 3) is “in order to” our faith. Paul expresses it this way in Romans 10:17, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” brother Boultinghouse to the contrary notwithstanding.

3. This is a pretty serious charge to make against someone. If what one is teaching is heresy then that person will be lost. However, on this point I am complete agreement with Denny. If anyone tried to be saved “without Jesus,” it would certainly be an effort in futility. Although I agree with the conclusion, I do not agree with how he arrived at the conclusion.

Some brethren seem to think if you agree with “taking the right path” that you have left Jesus out. In other words, if you make every effort to do what God has instructed, someone thinks you believe one will be saved by works or law keeping.

I personally know of no one who believes that when one makes every effort to keep all the commandments God has instructed us to keep that he is being saved by his works apart from the grace and love of God, The Christ and the Holy Spirit. In fact Paul points out this very thing when he said in Romans 4:4 “Now to him

who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” In order to be saved by works, one would have to live a lifetime doing all the works God has required and never fail in one. No one, except Christ has ever done this. This fact does not, however, exclude works that God requires on our part.

In Hebrews 5:9 we read, “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9). “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). “Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:35). What are God’s works of righteousness? “My tongue will speak of your word. For all your commandments are righteousness” (Psalms 119:172). Yes, according to Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul said we are saved by grace through faith. But what kind of faith is it? “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6). James also tells us the kind of faith we are to have. “But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18). There are *works of righteous* that will not bring about acceptance by God. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:3). We must submit to God’s righteousness (His commands) - not try to establish our own righteousness. And even when we do all that is required Jesus said, “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do’” (Luke 17:10).

By God’s grace Christ came into the world to save those who will believe and obey Him. Believe The Man, obey His Plan - that’s salvation by grace through faith. If a church is “a grace church” it is also “a works church” that is a church that accepts God’s grace and shows it with a “faith which works by love” (Galatians 5:6). ☞

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thians 15:44). Hades will be destroyed when the third state begins (Revelation 20:14). Christ now has power over death and hades and will abolish them at his second coming (Revelation 1:18).

The Spirit of Christ Went to Hades

When Jesus died he went to *hell* (hades) (Acts 2:27,31). Are we to suppose that Jesus was tormented in hades? Certainly not! He told the thief, with whom he was crucified, that he was going to “paradise,” which is a transliterated word meaning “a garden,” or “a place of pleasure or comfort” (Luke 23:43).

When Christ went to hades (Acts 2:27), he also went into the hands of God, who is in heaven. Just after telling the thief that he would be with him in paradise that day, he said to his Father, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” and he died (Luke 23:46). His spirit went to paradise in hades (Luke 23:43), but he did not go to heaven that day (John 20:14).

Jesus said, “. . . upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). This is hades, the unseen realm. Peter quotes the prophecy of David concerning the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in hell (hades), nor was his body left in the grave (Acts 2:27 KJV).

“Gehenna”

The Greek word “gehenna” is translated “hell” in the KJV and refers to the place of eternal punishment. It is described as the “lake that burns with fire and brimstone” and “the second death” (Matthew 10:28; 25:41; Mark 9:43,48; Revelation 20:10,14-15). This word always refers to eternal punishment. It is not the place where Jesus went at his death (Acts 2:27). The KJV uses the English *hell* to translate both “gehenna” and “hades.” The ASV makes a difference in translating the two words, as “hell” and “hades.”

“Tartarus”

The Greek word “tartarus” is also translated “hell” in the KJV. It means a place of punishment (II Peter 2:4), and refers to that part of hades where the wicked are held in the intermediate state.

Two Places in Hades

Jesus revealed some facts about the unseen abode of the spirits of the dead in Luke 16:19-31. To call this a parable does not destroy the truth Jesus taught. It teaches that the spirit survives the body and is conscious in hades. He describes two men who died. One was named Lazarus and the other was simply called a rich man. Jesus

said Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Nothing is said about his body, but it is certain that somewhere it was buried and began to return to the dust from which it came. His spirit went to hades. The rich man also died. His body is said to have been buried; it went to the grave. His spirit also went to hades, and he found himself in torments. Both of these men were in hades, but they were in different states, described by different terms; there was a "great gulf fixed" so that one could not go from one place to the other. The place in hades where Lazarus was is called "Abraham's bosom," a place of comfort. The place in hades where the rich man was is called "tartarus," a place of torments (II Peter 2:4). The rich man was not in the place of eternal punishment because the word used to describe that place is *gehenna*, the final abode of the unrighteous and workers of iniquity.

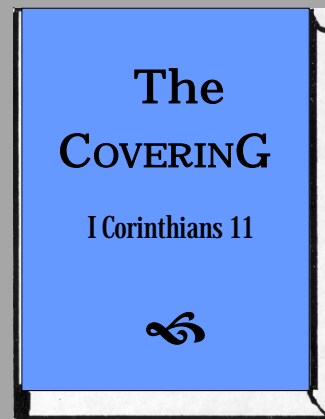
The righteous who die in the Lord are at rest (Revelation 14:13), and the wicked who die enter torment to await the resurrection from the dead and the judgment (Luke 16:19-31). When Christ comes again all the dead will be raised, some to the resurrection of damnation and some to the resurrection of life (John 5:28-29). After the judgment, which immediately follows the resurrection at the last day, the wicked will be cast into *gehenna*, which is the final punishment. This punishment is *outer darkness*, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30), the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (II Thessalonians 1:9), hell fire which is never quenched (Mark 9:44-45), and the place of torment with fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:10-11).

Guy N. Woods said in his booklet, *Where Are the Dead?* (pages 14,15), that an ingenious theory was developed by brother F. G. Allen in "Old Path Guide," and later in his sermon on *The State of the Dead*, in the *Old Path Pulpit* in which he advanced the idea that at the cross Christ abolished the compartment in hades designated "Abraham's bosom," and moved it to heaven. From that time all the faithful pass immediately into heaven at death. Others have argued that the intermediate state was abolished and the righteous go directly to heaven and the wicked go to the final and eternal "gehenna." But this theory is proved wrong by Peter's statement on the day of Pentecost, just ten days after the ascension of Christ to heaven. In showing the fulfillment of David's prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, he said: "For David is not ascended into the heavens"

(Acts 2:34). Neither the body nor spirit of David had ascended into the heavens at the time Peter spoke by the Holy Spirit, and that was AFTER the cross and the ascension of Christ into heaven.

This theory reduces the judgment of God to a needless event. If all now go to their eternal abode at death, why would they have to be brought out of heaven and gehenna in the resurrection to be judged and then returned back to the place from which they were taken? The day of judgment is a day when the dead must give an account of their lives, and it is a day when the Lord sentences all to their eternal destiny in their resurrected bodies (Matthew 25:31-46). ☞

The Covering of I Corinthians 11



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Many have inquired about the debate that has been proposed by Tim Haile on the divorce and remarriage question. We are still trying to arrive at propositions that will fairly represent our positions. Will keep you informed. — Editor

Mission Journal And Humanism

by James P. Needham

A reader sent me a copy of an editorial from *Mission Journal*, Volume 14, Number 4, October 1980, in which the editor, Richard Hughes, a man I do not know, comments at length upon “the new Christian right” attack upon humanism. For many years *Torch* had an exchange arrangement with *Mission*, but it was terminated at the request of its present editor soon after he took the chair. I have had almost no contact with it since, but I see it continues on its traditional ultra-liberal track.

I take exception to several things he said in his editorial in reference to humanism and our opposition to it and I shall herein exercise my editorial right to comment upon them, even though they are now better than 4 years old. It is unthinkable that they should be un-rebutted. I find the editor’s stated purpose quite noble, but the end result falling far short of his goal. He wants his editorial to be,

“...understood as an attempt to clarify terms and issues in a thoughtful and constructive way. (page 11, paragraph 5).”

The only thing he clarifies is the fact that he is either a died-in-the-wool humanist, or he is confused as to what constitutes humanism. One thing he has made very clear: he understands neither humanism, nor the position of those who oppose it. This will become evident as we go along. I have yet to find one thing in his article that I can call constructive!

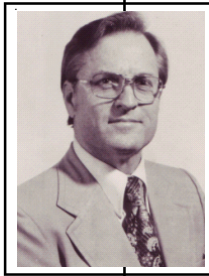
“Scapegoat”

The editor characterizes humanism as a “scapegoat,” meaning that “humanism is blamed for all sorts of evils ranging from decaying morality to the breakdown of discipline in schools to the spread of international Communism.”(p. 11, par. 3). He denies that this is the case, but cites not one shred of evidence to prove his claim. Evidence to the contrary is overwhelming to any man who will honestly examine it.

“Alleged Atheism”

The editor says, “When the politicians of the new Christian right wing lampoon humanism, they typically focus on its ALLEGED atheism.” (page 11, paragraph

6).(emphasis mine jpn). He contends that the person who, in his consideration of humanism, makes atheism his “singular focus is blind to the fact that there have been and are many kinds of humanism— Greek humanism, ethical humanism, scientific humanism, and yes, even Christian humanism.” (page 11, paragraph 7). “It is inaccurate to claim that the central thrust of the humanist manifestos is an espousal of atheism. Such a claim represents a serious misreading of these documents.” (page 3, paragraph 5). If this is an effort to disguise the atheism of humanism, it is as transparent as a window without glass in it! The editor thinks he has proven his point by quoting Edwin Wilson, a humanist author, who says,



One thing can be said...of all Humanisms that are worthy of the name: their central concern is for man, his growth, fulfillment and creativity in the here and now. (*The Humanists Alternative*, page 15).

The editor then makes this naive comment,

To put it another way, humanism is concerned for what is human, that is, for PEOPLE. Surely this is an emphasis which Christians share. Jesus did not minister in the abstract. He ministered to PEOPLE, (page 11. paragraph 3).

What the editor fails to see is that his quotation from Wilson is an affirmation of atheism, not a denial of it. Surely, humanists emphasize man; anyone who knows anything about humanism knows that, but they do so to the deliberate exclusion of God by their own admission. When humanists say “their central concern is for man,” there is more to that than meets the eye, and if brother Hughes doesn’t know that, I’d like to sell him some land in South Florida! Listen to what Humanists say about this,

“As non-theists, (a not-so-clever way of saying atheists jpn) we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, page 16). Not only do they deny that present evidence excludes the super-natural, but they have closed their

Continued on Page 8

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

Woman's Page

Home

by Geneva Brown Smith

AFTER driving Interstate 40 for twelve hours, this writer finally arrived! Home! This peaceful little town in Tennessee with its many churches and one university is not unique. There must be hundreds of them in the south. To us who grew up, attended school, church, and married there, however, there is none like it. One of the highlights of the trip was the elementary school reunion. Seeing people your own age that you remember only as children can be fascinating. Having an extra hour before church on Sunday morning made a nostalgic trip the first order of the day. Yes, the two houses our family lived in are still standing. The old high school is also there—showing the ravages of the years, but still proudly wearing its name painted across the doors at the top of the steps. For a few moments it seemed as if one could step back in time, hear the voices of the students as they changed classes, and smell the food cooking in the school cafeteria. Then the mind wandered to other events, the cheers that were sent up in the old gym, with the athletic guys who played the sports, and the cute cheerleaders. Also, there was choir or glee club, the school plays (dramas) and many other activities. That was high school! That was home!

It is true in a sense that once a person has left home he can never really go back. There is a special feeling, however in returning if only for a short time.

Being the wife of a preacher and moving many times throughout the years made the thought of having a permanent home here on earth impossible. It seemed that there was always another place to preach, and another of many "homes." While reflecting on these things a different kind of "home" was brought to mind, Heaven that home of the soul. When thinking about home here on earth one almost always thinks of a place. Heaven is spoken of in the Bible in that way. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2). Our earthly home may be remembered as a mansion or a small cottage. Heaven will be a mansion. Jesus said, "In my father's house are many mansions." (John 14:3). This makes us think of beauty and grandeur. In our earthly homes, our lives may have been peaceful

or chaotic. In contrast to that, the book of Revelation tells us that in Heaven "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:4).

When one thinks of home, he often thinks of a city and a country. Hebrews 11:16 says, "Abraham and Sarah desired a better country, that is, an heavenly" Also in Hebrews 11:10, Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Verse 16 also tells us that God has prepared that city. Christians are "heirs" of that city, according to Romans 8:17. It is also spoken of in I Peter 1:4 as an inheritance incorruptible that does not fade away.



Our homes (houses) here on earth may be stately and elaborate, or they may be modest. Heaven is described as a city with walls of jasper, streets of purest gold, gates of pearl. The foundation is said to have precious stones in it. It is a city of light where there will be no need for the sun or moon. Also, there will be no night. Earthly homes are torn asunder because of sin (things that defile). Families often reap severe consequences for years because of the sin of family members. In Heaven there will be nothing that defiles. There will be no lying, infidelity, addictions, or any other thing that destroys families.

Home is a place of familiarity where loved ones live, a place where everyone knows who you are. It is not secure from that old thief, death, however. We see our loved ones die, and going back to our earthly home is never the same. In Heaven, there will be no death. A famous Shakespearean actor was hired to read the Bible so it could be recorded for people who could not see how to read. While reading Revelation 21, he became very emotional. He laid down his Bible, and left the room. His wife said, "he is weeping." When the actor composed himself and returned to the studio, he made the comment. "The language is so beautiful! If I could only believe that there was such a place, I would give all that I have." Sadly enough, he went away still an unbeliever. Many things have been written about the beauties of Heaven. Don't they make you want to go there?

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minds and tell us A PRIORI that any new evidence discovered in the future will only “enlarge our knowledge of the natural.” With this attitude, they wouldn’t believe in God no matter how convincing the evidence. Atheists chide theists for assuming the existence of God; but here we see that they assume the non-existence of God!

Brother Hughes’ attempt to disguise humanist’s atheism by saying there are “many kinds of humanism— Greek humanism, ethical humanism, scientific humanism, and yes, even Christian humanism.” (page 11, paragraph 7) is really a subterfuge, and those knowledgeable of humanism will not “buy” it. He makes this astounding statement, “If there is any one common denominator of all forms of humanism, it certainly is not atheism.” (page 11, paragraph 6). He also quotes this from CONTEXT, August 1, 15, 1980, page 4,

“...the humanities are not a single set of propositions about man and God, which all humanists pledge themselves to uphold. The humanities are the subjects of history, philosophy, the classics, foreign languages and literatures, and religion...There is no party line.” (page 13, paragraph 1).

Sometimes it is hard for me to believe what I read! I shall not accuse brother Hughes of knowing it, but the above quotation is pure propaganda! The very opposite of the affirmation is true. In all the forms of humanism he mentions, the common denominator is atheism, including those he calls “Christian humanists.” There really is “no such animal”! I challenge my brother to name a “Christian humanist,”— just one! Such a concept makes about as much sense as a French-fried ice cube! Let a well-known humanist author tell us,

Humanism cannot in any fair sense of the word apply to one who still believes in God as the source and creator of the universe. Christian Humanism would be possible only for those who are willing to admit that they are atheistic Humanists. It certainly does not apply to God intoxicated believers. (Paul Kurtz, *The Humanist Alternative*, page 117).

To seek to identify Humanist’s interest in human welfare with our Lord’s is inexcusable for any person, much less one who claims to be a Christian and a gospel preacher! Jesus certainly didn’t “minister in the abstract,” He definitely ministered to people, but He ministered to people in the interest of their souls, something the humanists say man does not have, notice, Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the

‘ghost in the machine’ and the ‘separable soul...There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body...’ (*Humanist Manifesto II*, pages 16, 17).


With this view of man, any comparison between Jesus’ and humanism’s interest in PEOPLE is like comparing apples and oranges, and yet our brother makes the incredible statement that “To this point, there is certainly no variance between the central core of humanism and the historic thrust of Christianity. Both are concerned with people, (page 12, paragraph 1). Brother Hughes’ efforts here are just too shallow for words!☹

More next month

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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Human Suffering — I

by Maurice Barnett

WE are all acquainted with suffering, death, heartache, and sorrow. These things are as much a part of our existence as joy, peace, and good health. Some may not have much of the latter, but everyone has some of the former. How does the Christian handle human suffering? What is our attitude to he? Usually we take a look at Job in the Old Testament and eulogize his patience and faith, and say, “here is the answer.” Yet, sometimes, that is not quite enough said. The origin and circumstances of Job’s sufferings were unique to say the least. Our experiences may run the range from little to much, and at the end we may not have a many-fold restoration to health and wealth, as with Job. In the articles before us we are going to look at handling human suffering without benefit of direct reference to Job. I want to emphasize some other aspects of confronting suffering from a New Testament viewpoint.

How Some People Face Suffering

1) Some accept the fact of suffering and face it by trying to anticipate it. This type is always expecting some calamity. “I knew it would come.” But this is the way of cynicism.

2) Some wallow in self-pity; they get pleasure out of feeling sorry for themselves. They believe that no one else has troubles like theirs. A very unpleasant person to be around, and certainly not Christ-like.

3) Stoicism faces suffering by inwardly steeling against it, and accepting it without flinching. An Indian tribe in South America trains their young with “You are born into a world of trouble. Shut your mouth, be quiet, and bear it.” But this is not the attitude of joy that Christians are to have, as we shall note later.

4) Buddhist philosophy is “existence and suffering are one.” Through countless rebirths, working out deeds from our desires we may achieve the passionless, actionless state of Nirvana, where there is no personality, or suffering.

5) Hindu attitude is that suffering comes from sins of a previous life. They theorize that there is no need to

help the sick in hospitals, since this would be interfering with the suffering they must undergo for previous misdeeds.

6) Moslems think that all good and bad is the will of God, and we must patiently submit to it. This may produce some patience, but is certainly not true.

7) Christian Science declares that all is God, God is good, so all is good. If all is good, then sin, sickness, and death, which are evils, cannot exist. It is simply a denial of reality.

8) Some emotional and imaginative individuals, such as Pentecostals, look at suffering as demon possession, and a miracle will cure it. This likewise is not so.

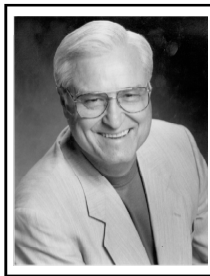
9) Some others look for a message from God in suffering. “God is trying to tell me something.” They use suffering about like some use astrology.

The Jews, by the first century, had developed an attitude toward suffering that has carried over into the thinking of many Christians. Their idea was that God would look with favor on his people and save them out of any troubles they got into. At the cross they thought Jesus was a deceiver because God did not save him.

“He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” (Matthew 27:43)

If God would deliver Jesus it would be proof that he was good and pleasing to God; if not, it would prove that God didn’t desire him. Islam claims almost the same. To them, Jesus, as a prophet of God, could not die as upon the cross, so they teach that he was miraculously saved, taken to heaven, and another crucified in his place.

But, we are not to think that Christians will be spared all discomfort just because they are Christians; the righteous and innocent suffer along with the rest of humanity. God does not suspend the law of gravity just for the Christian, so be careful where and how you walk at great heights. Can you imagine the attitude, and conduct, that would develop in Christians if they really accepted the idea that since God will take care of His people then we don’t really have to be careful about what we do.’? The



evidence of our God and faith is not founded on such a position as this.

At times, when a person is injured or killed, someone will usually say, "it is the will of God." No, don't lay that to God's account. In all Job's suffering he "sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." God does not will a person to sin, but he allows sin to exist. Likewise, God is responsible for man being in the flesh and consequently that suffering exists, but we cannot say "this is the will of God." Many have prayed for someone to get well, and they died anyway. People sometimes then turn against God because He didn't make the person well. In all this we forget that God has self-imposed limitations. We tend to think He should be perfectly free to act as we would want to act if we had unlimited power.

God Does See and Cares

God does understand us and He knows of our suffering and sorrows. We can see the effect of that in Jesus. Jesus wept over the death of a friend, was moved at the hunger of the multitude, had compassion toward others, could bind up wounds and heal all manner of disease. The book of Hebrews shows that Jesus was made in every way like man, 2:7-18, and because he "himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," 4:15, and "learned obedience by the things which he suffered," 5:8, 2:10. We know God knows us and understands us, and He proves that by the fact that Jesus came into the world and went through so much. And we see it in the effect suffering of others had on Jesus.

In the Revelation, He says many times such things as in 2:2, "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience..." So many details are given in chapters 2-3 of sufferings on the part of His people that we can know that God knows and cares. Matthew, chapter 6, records several statements, such as the birds of the heaven and lilies of the field, that show God knows what goes on among us. And he has not left us without help in our struggles for existence, happiness, peace, and joy in the face of hardship.

Reasons Why Men Suffer

Besides the "it's the will of God" idea, I suppose the most popular reason for suffering is that it is punishment for sin. But this doesn't explain the suffering that comes on harmless infants, or on faithful Christians. Notice what Jesus says about it:

"Now there were some present at that very season

who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish..." (Luke 13:1-3)

Jesus here denies that suffering is punishment for sin, contrary to what the Jews believed. Likewise the following passage:

"And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be manifest in him." (John 9:2-3)

Here Jesus denies that his blindness was the result of his sin, or of any sins of his parents. However, the way this translation reads it leaves an impression with some that God caused this particular man to be born blind and infirm so that His power could be manifest in his healing. But, with all the other blind and infirm available for healing, there doesn't seem to be much sense in causing this man so many years of blindness just to demonstrate the power of Jesus. God is the originator of mankind's condition, true enough, but in a general sense. This man was born blind simply according to the order, or disorder, of nature. Jesus used this instance to show the power of God. A similar phrase is found in John 11:4, concerning the death of Lazarus:

"But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby."

This is not saying that Lazarus was killed by God just so Jesus could raise him, but that Jesus used the instance to glorify God. Yet another way of looking at John 9:3-4 would call for a slight re-punctuation, like this:

"Neither did this man sin, nor his parents. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him, we must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

That gives the sense of the passage, and the blame for the blindness cannot be *specifically* charged to the parents, the man, or God.

We might note just here that God has visited some sufferings on man in the past. The destruction of whole cities, like Sodom and others, the great flood, large numbers of people, such as the plagues on the Egyptians, all came from God. The Israelites were punished many

times with suffering. Herod was eaten of worms and died a horrible death. And there have been a few others. But, these were isolated instances in relation to most of mankind, and they were for some specific reason. We cannot conclude from these that all suffering is punishment from God. Nor is there any evidence that any suffering at all today is a specific result of God's visitation to punish. But, notice now some reasons why men suffer today.

1) *The result of being human.* God set in order natural laws when he made the world and created man. We are subject to death and decay. There were two physical changes wrought on man after his creation, and these affect his well-being. The first was the result of being cast out of the garden of Eden and denied access to the tree of life. The second occurred at the flood and is evidence by the extreme drop in life-span following the flood. As with Paul, we can readily see that the "outward man perishes." We are subject to disease, deformity, accident and such like. From the standpoint that God made this world, and man, He is responsible for the existence of suffering. Yet, we must understand that all people are subject to such natural laws, male, female, infants, or aged. Natural laws apply to everyone. From this we can also understand why "God sends the rain on the just and unjust alike." From the benefits of nature the wicked may prosper, but just as all may benefit from natural laws, all may suffer as well. Lightning strikes someone, a plane crashes, an infant falls from a speeding automobile, another is born with some deformity, and countless other tragedies. When they occur someone will invariably say, "How could God allow this to happen?" Well, it wasn't that God allowed or disallowed it. Our physical world is ruled by natural laws that God set in order. If God intervened in every tragedy or discomfort He would have to restore earth to a paradise and repeal natural laws. Then, why would man want to look forward to heaven? God shows us a way to live with our existence.

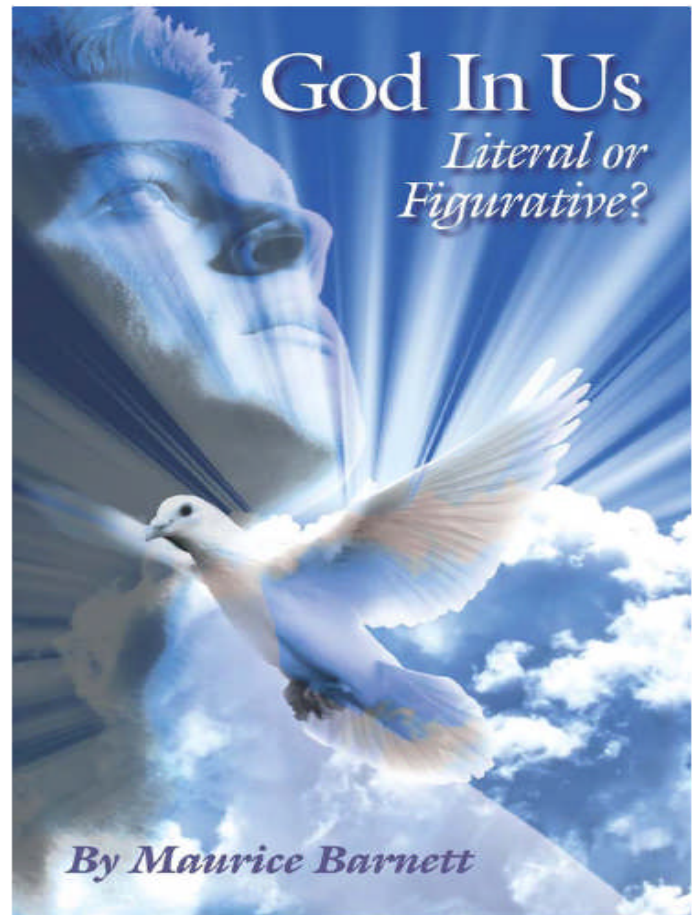
2) *The result of sin.* Basically our suffering is the result of being human, but we may suffer needlessly. One way that may come is as the result of sin. The alcoholic will suffer physical disabilities, and even death, as a result of drinking. The same is true of the drug addict, or any other of the list of sins men may commit. In this event we have only ourselves to blame.

3) *The result of our own stupidity, carelessness, neglect, or intention.* Sometimes we are careless about

where we walk, how we drive, what we ingest or are just plain reckless. We may neglect some need that would be beneficial, don't take the medicine we should, or fail to eat properly. And some may even intentionally harm themselves. Suffering that comes as a result is our own fault. When you violate natural laws, you may expect a penalty.

4) *The result of being a Christian.* Certainly those that live godly in Christ "shall suffer persecution." We have only to look at the life of Paul to see what a person can suffer for the Lord. I don't know of many instances of this today, but it does occur and is liable to at any time. Peter says it is better "that we suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing," I Peter 3:17. And, "if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed," I Peter 4:16. ☞


This article is to be followed by two others, dealing with *how to face suffering* and *the value of prayer in suffering*. We look forward to them. (Gene Frost) *The Gospel Anchor*, February 1977



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It Penetrated My Head

by A. C. Grider

 have met W. T. Russell (Baptist) four times in public debate. He is an artful dodger and developed into a fine debater so far as defending Baptist doctrine is concerned. The first debate in which I ever had a part was with Russell and it was his first attempt at public debating. The discussion took place in the court house at Lafayette, Tennessee. There were several interesting incidents during the discussion. I will relate one.

The subject for debate was the "Plan of Salvation," and I was affirming that baptism is essential to salvation. Desiring to make things as simple as possible, I displayed a large chart with the "steps" in becoming a child of God clearly indicated. The chart consisted of a stairway with the steps labeled with the letters H, B, R, C, and B. I showed in my argument that in order to become a child of God, one must: 1. Hear the gospel, 2. Believe the gospel, 3. Repent of sins, 4. Confess Christ as Lord, and 5. Be baptized for remission of sins. I cited appropriate scriptures for each point and emphasized every scripture. I suggested, with emphasis, that if Russell ever gave us any kind of an example of one becoming a Christian, his example would of necessity include these five points.

Russell countered with the idea that one is saved by "believing on Christ." I replied that he was right but that believing on Christ included these five points. I pressed him to show how one believed on Christ. He said one believed on Christ by trusting in Him for salvation. Again I agreed that he was right but I pointed out that he was still using general terms. I suggested that he tell us how to trust in Christ and that if he did, he would necessarily include my five steps. I chided him to tell the audience HOW to trust in Christ. He said one trusted in Christ when he took Christ as his personal saviour. I agreed that he was right but I insisted that when he told us how to take Christ as savior he would still have to come to my five steps. I called upon him to tell us exactly how to take Christ as saviour. He replied that one takes Christ when he believes on Him. I showed the audience that Russell was simply "running around

in circles." He said believe and you believe by trusting, and you trust by taking Christ, and you take Christ when you believe. I kept insisting that he spell out HOW to believe, trust, take and again believe. I pressed him so hard to give us an example of becoming a child of God that he finally exploded and said, "I am going to give an example of trusting in Christ and make it so plain that it will soak into Grider's thick head." So he proceeded to give the example.

To my surprise and to the surprise of everybody present he said: "I have heard of the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota. I believe it is there and that it can do a good work. But I have never trusted in the clinic. But if I leave here and go to Rochester and tell them of my confidence in them, and crawl on the table and submit to an operation, then will I have trusted in that clinic. By the time he had finished with his speech the old debaters among the Baptistst and perhaps 25 Baptist preachers were present) had their heads in their laps almost. I accepted his "example" of trusting in Christ. But I then showed that 1. His hearing about the clinic corresponded with my hearing about Christ, that 2. His believing the clinic was there corresponded with my believing that Jesus was the Christ, that 3. His leaving and going to Minnesota corresponded to my repenting, that 4. His telling them of his confidence in them corresponded to my confession of Jesus Christ as the son of God, and that 5. His submitting to an operation corresponded to my being baptized for remission of sins. For good measure, I showed that Paul said we were "operated on" in baptism. (Colossians 2:12-13). It was a devastating blow to Russell and he never recovered from it. At the conclusion of the debate I heard Russell complain to one of his brethren, "What makes me so mad is that many of my own brethren seem to think more of old Grider than they do of me." I have used Russell's "example" many times in teaching the truth on the plan of salvation. It is indeed a perfect illustration of trusting. You may be able to use it sometime in teaching a neighbor or friend. ☞

The Ten Commandments

by Lloyd Nash



HERE is a lot said about the Ten Commandments and I think rightfully so for this law governed God's people for some 1500 years. It was given to Moses in Exodus 20:1-17. It is also referred to as God's covenant with Israel and had no bearing on their forefathers. Deuteronomy 5:2-3: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (See Deuteronomy 4:13 also.) We shall see that the law has no bearing on Christians today as we proceed.

The Ten Commandments governed the spiritual and social life of Israel and the only way it affected others was for one to be a servant of the Israelites or a proselyte. (Exodus 20:10, Acts 2:10)

Sometimes when I am talking to Seventh Day Adventists, they ask me what do I find wrong with the Ten Commandments, or what fault do I find in them. I answer them quickly, "Nothing." I know it does not matter a hill of beans about what I like or you like; what God commands must be done. So it is He, God, that found fault with the Law and with the priesthood. Hebrews 8:7-8: "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he said, Behold the days cometh, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (Hebrews 7:11-14, Jer. 31:31-32, Hebrews 8:9-13). One may ask, "Why?" Think about it.

Every one of the Ten Commandments had a death penalty behind it. (See Exodus 20:3-17.)

Thou shalt have no other gods before me, verse 3. Penalty: Deuteronomy 12:2-6.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, vs. 4.5. Penalty: Exodus 22:20.

Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain, verse 7, Penalty: Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 20:1-5.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy, verse 8. Penalty: Numbers 15:32-36, Exodus 31:15.

Honor thy father and thy mother, verse 12. Penalty: Exodus 21:15.

Thou shalt not kill, verse 13. Penalty: Exodus 21:12.

Thou shalt not commit adultery, verse 14. Penalty: Leviticus 20:10.

Thou shalt not steal, verse 15. Penalty: Exodus 22:2.

Thou shalt not bear false Witness, verse 16. Penalty: Deuteronomy 17:6-12, Exodus 19:15-21.

Thou shalt not covet, verse 17. Penalty: Joshua 7:20-26.

Now, when you read these Scriptures, I think it will be impossible to fail to see why He referred to the Ten Commandments as the "ministration of death." Knowing this, all men ought to thank God for giving us his Son who ended this law, for the spirit tells us that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth (Romans 10:4).

Yes, my friends, Christ ended that law and gave us a new one. In Galatians 6:2, Paul said, "bear ye one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ." Hear this great man again in Romans 8:2, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Yes, Christians are free from the law of the Ten Commandments for the Law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). So, under this dispensation, Christ has been given all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18) and he is the head (Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18). ☞

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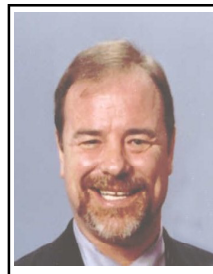
Raw Sugar.

by James R. Dunigan

WHAT color is raw sugar? Do you know? What color is raw flour? Are you thinking hard about that? Well if you don't know I will be happy to tell you - they are brown. What we normally buy in the store is refined and bleached to make its color and appearance more appealing to the consumer. But they have also been refined and bleached to the point they no longer resemble the original product. In fact they lose most of the good qualities they once had. The flour you buy in the store is so "refined" it has lost almost all of the bran and germ that is good for our bodies. The refined sugar we have in the stores does not taste anything like the sugar cane it once came from. The churches that surround us today are no different. They have been so refined, ground down, bleached and changed to meet the "consumers" wants they are no longer anything like the original. They have lost all the beneficial nutrients they need to sustain a spiritual healthy life.

I wonder how the writers of the New Testament would react to the so called churches of today. Those with their fellowship halls, love feasts, Lord's Supper anytime, musical instruments and all the other "refinements" and "bleaching: they have done to "improve" on the Lord's church. I am sure Paul would react to them the way he did the Galatians when he wrote in chapter one verses 6-7 "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

Let me ask this: If we change the church in any way from the one Christ established, would we not be guilty of turning away from the gospel? Note this passage of scripture "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (I Timothy 3:15) The church itself is the pillar and ground of truth! It is not that the authority of the Scriptures depends upon the church it is that the truth is the pillar and ground of the church. The



church holds forth the scripture and the doctrine of Christ, the same as a pillar to which a proclamation is affixed holds forth the proclamation. The truth of God is the revealed truth which He had given to save the world—and this was entrusted to the church. With this being so when we teach, preach or example anything else we have failed God by leaving the truth! When we change the Lord's church by refining it and bleaching it we are no different than the group Christ confronted in Matthew 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." We may look good on the outside to our fellowman but inside we have died!

When Paul found Peter setting a horrible example by playing the hypocrite and thus teaching falsely to his fellow Christians note what Paul said about that! Galatians 2: 14 "But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? When our examples and teachings do not match God's word then we have left the truth - simply put! Book, chapter and verse should mean something to us. The man who decides to teach anything other than what can be supported by the Word of God has the responsibility to prove his point. When it comes to obedience the prove is truly in the pudding - well actually the truth is in the Bible. If we cannot truly support it biblically then let it alone. Is it any wonder when men bring these innovations into the Lord's church they produce NO TRUE BIBLE evidence to justify its addition? Their opinions, "feel goodisms", and outright twisting of the scripture is what they produce, none of that will obtain for us a place in heaven. Peter addressed this very thing in his epistle when he stated "as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. (II Peter 3:16.)

Paul and Peter had to address people who twisted

what was taught to their benefit - they also warned us these people were unstable and untaught too! Unstable (Asteriktos): actually means “unsteadfast.” Untaught (Amathes) which meant unlearned or ignorant. You can hear the word but yet not learn it! Who are those who remain blameless, holy and above reproach? Paul answers that in Colossians 1:22-23 “in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.” Who are those who enter into heaven? Hebrews 6:19 “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.”

There is no innovation that truly warrants risking our very souls on! Obedience to the word of God means following that very same word with no variance. We are to obey God not man (Acts 5:29.) There is NO SUBSTITUTE for obedience! Christ spoke to the Jews who searched God’s word and thought themselves to be very knowledgeable people. In John 5:39-40 Christ said “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” The writer of Hebrews sums it up best when he wrote in 5:9 “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” Knowledge will never substitute for obedience. I once heard Billy Graham could quote the Bible backwards and forwards in several translations, but he failed in one area - OBEDIENCE! He never once fully obeyed Christ by being baptized for the remission of sins. Simply calling on the Lord is never enough! (Luke 6:46.)

Churches need to get back to the business of pleasing God and not man. We need to get back to the original first century church. The one we can recognize from the Bible. Go back to being a church that depends on the word of God and ONLY the word of God for what we teach and practice. We need to get back into sharing with man what he truly needs. John 6:35 “And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” An unbleached, unrefined bread of life that supplies what man needs to sustain spiritual life. Until churches do, they will never be the church the Lord established.

Minister, West Side church of Christ, Clarksburg, WV. ☞

Tom O’Neal’s Material Justifying Privately Supported Human Institutions to Corporately “ Preach the Gospel”

by Don Martin



received an email attachment yesterday (June 8, 2009) from one who had been negatively mentioned by brother Tom O’Neal in his article, “Gene Frost’s and J. T. Smith’s Human Institutions Which They Deny.” The attachment contained Tom’s just mentioned article.

I read the material with interest and noticed that my name was also repeatedly mentioned in a negative climate.



First, let me be upfront and say that I often read or learn of my name being negatively mentioned. The first thing I do is check the accuracy of the personal reference and the teaching in which the reference is made. I am a big boy and I know that such

comes with the territory and I usually do not take such personally. Let me also start on a positive note by saying that Tom O’Neal greatly impresses me in that he is animated, has conviction, and is not afraid to speak out against what he views as wrong. I admire such! However, I believe Tom to be wrong in a number of areas and it is to these matters that I wish to briefly respond (I have no idea where all Tom’s material was sent and I do not even have Tom’s email. Such, though, really matters not.)

Brother O’Neal has been one of a very few who have sought to openly defend such privately funded entities to preach the gospel and edify the saved as the Guardian of Truth Foundation. Individually supported orders though not local churches, are acting as local churches to perform the work God has assigned to his entity, the local church (I Timothy 3:15). Indeed and incontrovertibly, God assigned to His organization, the local church, the responsibility of corporately preaching the gospel to the lost, edifying the saved, and when the need is present, administering to the needs of His people (I Timothy 3:15,

Ephesians 4:16, I Corinthians 16: 1,). God has arranged the financing for his local church and the oversight (Ibid., Acts 14: 23). Humanly devised orders having their own oversight (President, Vice President, Board of Directors, etc.) and treasury to do the work God specifically assigned to the local church are unscriptural (God has specified and in view of the silence of the scriptures relative to any other arrangement, it is without Bible authority that brethren build such orders and corporately work through and in them, cp. Hebrews 7: 14).

In an effort to defend human institutions to preach the gospel, Tom makes the following argument in the foregoing referenced material:

“(1) If the Guardian of Truth Foundation denies the all sufficiency of the church, as they claim, then so does Gospel Truths, Inc. and Gospel Anchor Publishing Company, Inc. (2) If Guardian of Truth Foundation has taken over the work of the church, as they claim, so has Gospel Truths, Inc. and Gospel Anchor Publishing Company, Inc. (3) If Guardian of Truth Foundation is leading the church into apostasy, as they claim, then so is Gospel Truths, Inc. and Gospel Anchor Publishing Company, Inc. On the other hand, if these things are not so with Gospel Truths, Inc. and Gospel Anchor Publishing Company, Inc., then they are not so with Guardian of Truth Foundation. Any argument that J. T., Gene, Tim, or Don have made, are making, or will make against Guardian of Truth Foundation can with equal force be made against Gospel Truths, Inc. and Gospel Anchor Publishing Company, Inc. Yet, brethren Don Martin and Tim Haile and others who oppose Truth Magazine Lectures have not said one word about the corporations of J. T. and Gene....”

Tom advanced the immediately above argument after spending time trying to show that the Gospel Anchor, Gospel Truths, and the Guardian of Truth Foundation are the same in structure. I am surprised and personally pleased that Tom did not include my Website, Bible Truths, in his paralleling presentation. I have, in fact, received word that some of the defenders of these orders are also claiming that Bible Truths is set up just like the Guardian of Truth Foundation. What a stretch! I am the sole owner of Bible Truths, I have no staff writers, and there is no Board of directors, etc. Yet, some have charged that I am inconsistent in teaching against such orders as GOTF and Truth Magazine because of my Website. It has been my experience that when challenged, these men back away and continue the dissemi-

nation of their erroneous charges.

Imagine, the Gospel Anchor, Gospel Truths, and the Guardian of Truth Foundation are tantamount, all privately funded entities affording brethren the means to pool their resources and corporately perform the work God has given to his local church, all having the same working oversight, type of treasury, etc. and providing public worship opportunities. What a prolific imagination! If I for one second viewed the Gospel Anchor (now history) and Gospel Truths as tantamount to the Guardian of Truth Foundation in functionality, I would be including them in my writings and warnings, but I do not view them as the same, not in operational reality and present threat, for sure. How can Tom say that these three “influences” are the same? (I will defer to the ability of Gene Frost and J.T. Smith to deal with this charge by Tom O’Neal.) Besides, if the Gospel Anchor, Gospel Truths, and the Guardian of Truth Foundation were all the same and did the same, what would such prove, other than they are all wrong! Such reasoning is childish.

Tom wrote:

“...I realize that I have been very plain in what I have had to say and I make no apology for that. I want my reader to understand the issue at hand and what I am saying.”

I have no problem with Tom speaking out, I am, though, troubled at the flawed reasoning and spurious argumentation found in his material.

Tom continued:

“Don Martin wrote & J. T Smith published ‘One family that attended the ‘Third Annual Guardian of Truth Foundation Lectures’ told me: ‘Brother Martin, the Foundation is doing a wonderful job in preaching the gospel. In fact, they are able to do what local churches cannot do...’” (Gospel Truth, November 2006, page 19).

Proof- Who? When? Where?

Observe the above quotation was placed in quotations marks by brother Martin. This means he is directly quoting from someone. Who he does not tell us. In my article ‘If I Were Going To Oppose The Truth Magazine Lectureship’ which was written well over two years ago, I called upon brother Martin to produce the proof where this was said. Who said it? When was it said? Where was it said? Two years later brother Martin still has not given the proof, yet, he still writes against the Truth Magazine. What brother Martin and Smith need to do is either produce the proof of who said this, when it was said, where it was said or withdraw the charge! Which

will they do? Until they do, they have lost any credibility they might have with honest brethren....were these statements also fabricated?"

I am sorry that Tom O'Neal would go so far in his defense of these human orders to preach the gospel as to accuse me of deliberately lying. The reason I did not answer Tom as to the source of the above quote is such is irrelevant and diversionary. Why talk about who said what when the Guardian of Truth Foundation is bigger than life and is functioning as a local church, albeit, an aberrant copy? In view of what the foundation is flagrantly now doing, how could anyone doubt such a statement being made or view such as incongruous?

Notice what Tom is doing in his dialectic process. First, consider how sometimes names were provided regarding certain fallacious teaching and sometimes they were withheld (cp. II Timothy. 2:17, 18; I Corinthians 15:12, 32). Yet, brother O'Neal says that I must provide an irrelevant name and then suggests that I lied about the whole conversation. Tom is desperate to defend his order. Imagine one going to such lengths to defend something not even taught or exemplified in the scriptures!

Tom furthermore stated:

"Brother Dickey in a January 29, 2006 sermon at the Brown Street Church in Akron, Ohio represented brother Roy E. Cogdill as appealing to Churches of Christ in general to send money to the Akin Foundation of Texas. The details that brother Dickey gave evidenced that he was completely uninformed about the matter at hand. I neither made a personal attack on him or the Brown Street Church. It is strange that when someone tries to correct faulty information, they are accused of making a personal attack on someone or on some church. What I had to say about brother Cogdill and the Akin Foundation, my reader can examine for themselves in *We Have A Right* (Revised Edition) pages 369-376....

First, brother Cogdill did not make an appeal to Churches of Christ in general for funds to be sent to the Akin Foundation. The truth was that no funds were to go to the Akin Foundation. Whether brother Dickey got his facts mixed up and was completely misinformed, I do not know."

Concerned reader, here is the original statement made by brother Cogdill:

"Most of the readers of this paper know already that the Akin Foundation is in trouble. It is not to advertise this fact but to call attention to the opportunity of all of

you have to render a service to the Foundation which has done so much for the spreading of the Gospel and indirectly to the cause of truth and righteousness..The 68th district court in which the law suit against the trustees has been filed has granted an injunction against the trustees further distributing any of the funds of the Foundation and has appointed a receiver impounding all the funds coming in..This effort will cost money as any case in court does..What do you think and what will you do about it? Those of you who through the years have been supported by and have participated in its help, what will you do to help preserve it - both churches and individuals are urged to respond" (*The Gospel Guardian*, Volume 29, number 7, April 1, 1977)."

Tom seems to have lost his usual clear thinking ability. I witnessed this same lack of thinking and objectivity in those who demanded that their church supported human institutions continue, even at the expense of unity. We are now seeing this same convoluted "thinking" in defense of the privately funded orders. These entities, whether church funded or privately funded, it matters not, seem to create love affairs that blind some.

Brother Cogdill only appealed to churches to come to the aid of the Akin Foundation, churches who had been benefited by the foundation and not churches in general, argued Tom. Big deal! Tom went on to condemn brother Dickey in that Tom said the money was to be sent directly to Cogdill and not to the Akin Foundation. Again, big deal. The money was for attorneys relative to the foundation. This is one of the consequent dangers of attempting to defend these foundations: one places oneself in indefensible positions and advances ridiculous arguments to protect the foundations (I am not saying that the Akin Foundation is precisely the same as the Guardian of Truth Foundation). Where is the authority for churches to pay for the legal fees relative to a human foundation or in order to continue having monies from such a foundation? These defenders of foundations are exhibiting the same institutional mentality as was seen in the forties, fifties, and sixties regarding church supported orders.

While I am pleased that Tom shows more backbone than many of the promoters of these orders, I am saddened that he is willing to go to such lengths to try to authorize something that is not taught in the scriptures. Just as in the case with church funded orders, once the

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Religion, Morality, and Politics

by Garth Clair



do not remember how old I was when I heard the statement “Never argue about politics or religion” – I was very young and did not understand the import of the statement at the time. As age and experience has now taught me it is very important to God that Christians stand up for all things that are approved by “HIM – GOD” - (Ephesians 6:10-13 – “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” (KJV). We may also appeal to the truthfulness of the passage of Scripture found in Jude 3 - cf. Jude 3-5 “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. ⁴For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lascivi-

ousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not (KJV).

Yes, we must stand up for and defend the Biblical teaching regarding religious, moral, ethical, and political lifestyles and live our lives accordingly.

1. RELIGIOUS AREAS - If we are to be approved by Almighty God we must defend and occupy our place as true Christians are obligated and

Defend true religion in all its form and practices after the Divine Pattern (i.e. the Divine Pattern is revealed via the Holy Scriptures). Whenever men seek to function in religious activities without Divine Authority (i.e. from human wisdom rather than Biblical Revelation), their efforts must be resisted by those who contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints – [Jude 3]. Since true Christians are God’s representatives here on earth in any generation they must allow their voices to be heard and their websites must contain effective exposure of error and evil proposals presented by false teachers and evil conspirators.

2. MORAL – Christians are to uphold and stand firmly upon

those principles that were revealed to the first Christians clearly revealed in that portion of the Bible known as the New Testament. In the NT may be found the Divine instruction regarding morality that Christians are to live by and make every effort to incorporate within their life – cf. Philippians 2:12-13 “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Acts 2:42 – and they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (KJV).

I Corinthians 15:58 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, un-moveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (KJV).



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flood gates are opened, what will come next? Romans 14 is now being perverted by some of these brethren in order to try to force their institutions into the Romans 14 climate.

Will the Guardian of Truth Foundation conduct their next annual lectureship? I imagine they will. Do they care about unity and what their forced institution is doing to brethren across the land? They evidently do not care. Imagine such force, zeal, and defense for something not even observed or taught in the scriptures! However, such is not new.

(If you desire to be removed from this list, simply enter “remove” in the subject line and reply to sender.)

Galatians 5:19-25 – “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ²⁴And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (KJV).

The preceding Scripture references give man an idea of the kind of morals and ethics that the Christian must have to please God. The false teaching that a person - “once acknowledging God is locked into eternal life” is false teaching. Those that live and abide within the instruction of God’s Written Word after becoming a Christian (i.e. through FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESION OF CHRIST, and BAPTISM (i.e. immersion) – “for the remission of sin” will see God someday. These things we must teach and defend as this 21st Century begins... Dear brethren, make no mistake about it the need to stand, defend, and be counted for God is urgent.

3. POLITICS – The Bible is clear on the kind of government in secular affairs that God approves. The government that God approves throughout history has had certain qualities that encourage the support of the human masses. Let us examine some of those qualities found in the Bible:

God provides a basis upon which to determine the quality of any government under which Christians live. That gauge is found in Romans 13:1-7 “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. ²Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shall have praise of the same: ⁴For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. ⁵Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. ⁶For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s

ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. ⁷Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor (KJV).

Consider This:

Therefore; whenever a government under which Christians live becomes oppressive, hedonistic, and abusive toward its masses it is not the kind of government than encourages submission of the Christian. Yet, whenever a government becomes Godless; men of faith and purity will rise to seek changes through the ballot box and will not support that officer (i.e. be it

Local, state, or national) SEE THE NATURE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT – SEE ROMANS 13:1-7 AGAIN.

Conclusion:

Indeed, the Christian is obligated to support good (i.e. righteous) government. The Christian is also to submit to the governmental authorities and the citizen Christian is obligated as such to cry out when a government is failing in their responsibility to citizens and to Almighty God.

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The Simplicity of God's Marriage Law

by Irven Lee



HE law of God relative to marriage is rather simple and easy to understand. Simplicity generally characterized our Lord as He talked. We are told in Mark 12:37 that the common people heard him gladly. They would not have heard him gladly if they could not have understood him. It is beyond our comprehension that One who was with God in the creation and who possessed knowledge as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth could come in the flesh and so speak that the common people could hear Him gladly. They were the ones that were the easiest for him to reach. He did not reach the high and mighty, and certainly he made no effort to speak only to the high and mighty. He made a special effort to speak to the poor, to those who had had less opportunity in the field of education, and to those who were little in their own sight.

John the Baptist once sent two of his disciples to our Lord to say, "Art thou he that should come or look we for another?" John was in prison through no wrong doing and was likely discouraged. Jesus asked the two disciples to return to John with this message, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:5). The poor have the gospel preached to them. The common people heard him gladly.

The law of marriage is simple and easy to understand. It would be a false effort on my part if I tried to make it seem complicated because it is not complicated. The Lord stated it so that the average man, the common people, could understand it. Back in the days when I was teaching school I had the privilege of having a sixth grade Bible class every morning for several years. I never did have anybody in one of those classes who could not understand the law of marriage as it is given in the New Testament. It is not hard to understand, but it is ignored . . . Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." That is not hard to read, and it is not hard to understand. There are a lot of questions that people can ask that I cannot answer. They come asking questions after they have become entangled in complicated situations that seem to me to have no solution, and I do not know what to tell them to do. I could have told them before they became enmeshed in their difficult situations what the law of God is concerning marriage. It is much simpler to talk to people who have not violated the law and who are trying

to avoid the pitfalls than it is to try to untangle some of the nets that they have woven around themselves when they did not examine the law carefully before marriage.

I want to reach young people who are not yet married. I want to help them to know the law so that they can enter into their marriages with the understanding that they must live together until the death of one of the partners. The law indicates that one cannot put away his wife because she is lazy or is not physically attractive, or because she has a high temper or because she is not a good housekeeper. The only way he may do so is for the cause of fornication. It was the Lord Himself who gave the law, and he has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has bound it on earth, and neither Congress nor the State Legislature can change it. The United Nations cannot come up with some decree that could change it. Now, states may write other laws that differ from that and put them on their statute books, but God's law would still stand. It does not matter what the law of the land may say, the law of God will still say, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." Putting away one's wife for any other cause than that of fornication brings about a temptation that is almost certain to lead her to commit adultery. It is a normal thing for her to want a husband, so she is likely to violate God's law.

In **Matthew 19** we have a record of the Pharisees' coming to Jesus and questioning him, hoping to trap him in his answers. They asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he that made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Is this teaching so deep and complicated that only the intellectual genius can understand it or is it simple enough that the common man may understand it? (Excerpts from *Good Homes in a Wicked World*, Pages 11-12,14-16.) ☞

The Greatest Question

THE question of all questions is “What think ye of Christ?” What one thinks of Christ determines his thoughts and actions on every question. The correctness of faith depends on the correct answer to the superlative question—“What think ye of Christ?” The question of how and when one is saved by faith through Christ is answered when the first question is resolved. The value of faith in salvation is determined by the use that is made of faith. How faith is to be used must be decided by what the gospel of Christ says; for apart from the testimony of the divine records no one can settle any question as to salvation through Christ.

Before all men today there are two plans of salvation offered. One is of human origin, and contradicts the teaching of Christ and his apostles..

The other is Jesus Christ’s own plan, and it was revealed through the apostles.

Since the time of Martin Luther the doctrine of justification by faith alone has been taught as a leading theological tenet. It is taught in opposition to the teaching of Christ through his apostles. We should and we do emphasize justification by faith, as the apostles of the Lord taught it, but we refuse to add the word “alone,” and because we refuse to do that we are charged with teaching *justification by worlds* and *water salvation*. Paul and all of the apostles taught justification by faith, but never did they say *faith alone*. Why? “There’s a reason,” as certain advertising reads, and quite a sufficient reason. First, they would have contradicted the commission of Mark 16:15-16 which gave them authority to preach. Second, they knew that faith is a continuing state of mind. Faith was to be ever present, hence a life of faith. Hence, Paul said “Christ liveth in me.” Do you ask, how? “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. 2:20) Thus Paul teaches that faith is ever present, all through life, and is directed all of the way by “the faith” of Christ.

All students of language know that we may employ transposition of clauses in a sentence without changing its meaning, but rather making its meaning clearer. Transposing Rom. 1:16 it reads: “To every one that believeth it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation.” So here is the order: (1) There is a believer; (2) the believer is in possession of “the power” that is “unto” salvation; (3) when that “power” is used, the believer becomes saved. Power is necessary to the accomplishment of anything, physical or spiritual. The power must be used before there can be results. The power *unto salvation* is the gospel. That power and the use of it stands between the believer and salvation. Is the believer saved before and without the use of the power which is “unto”—in order to—his salvation? Who can imagine results without the use of the power necessary to the results? Thus it is that this passage, and every other passage quoted as a faith alone text, condemns the doctrine of salvation at the moment one believes.

What one thinks of Christ is determined by what he thinks of the gospel of Christ.

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