

# Gospel Truths



"Love ... rejoices in the truth"  
1 Corinthians 13:6

Volume I - Number 1

JANUARY 1990

## Why A New Paper?

by J. T. Smith - Editor



**R**EALLY this is neither a new name nor a new paper. **Gospel Truths** is a name selected in 1965 to use on the bulletin published by the Rockwell Avenue church of Christ in Oklahoma City. In nine of my preaching years, where churches published and mailed out a bulletin, the name **Gospel Truths** has been used. This name was chosen to begin with because it provides the directive on which I have tried to base my life and preaching. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can provide us with the

**All Those Who Have Subscribed To *TORCH* Will Now Be Receiving *Gospel Truths*.**

pure unvarnished Truth. As Jesus prayed to His Father He pled for those of the disciples, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Thus with the decision to go to a large format the old name **Gospel Truths** seemed appropriate.

That there is simply *a change* in the name and *format* is suggestive of the fact that in reality this is not a new paper. I still have the sole ownership of this paper as was the case with **TORCH**. All those who have subscribed to **TORCH** will now be receiving **Gospel Truths**. We will be able, because of the increase in size, to provide more material. **Gospel Truths** will also be more readable because the increase in size will allow us to use larger type.

According to our agreement when I took **TORCH** over, the name **TORCH** along with its right to be published and its permit for mailing has been returned to James P. Needham. He does not intend to continue its publication at this time.

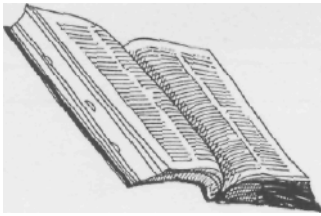
My profound thanks to my good friend and brother Needham for allowing me to use the name **TORCH** and its publishing rights to present truth through its pages for the past four years. We have been the very best of friends over the years. I wish him every success and know that if he should, at a future time, decide to continue **TORCH**, it will have material worth reading. **GT**

## This Month's Articles

An Introduction To Gospel Truths - Editor - Page 1  
Prospectus - Editor - Page 2  
How Authority of Truth Is Established  
Elmer Moore - Page - 3  
The Use Of Proof-Texts - Bill Feist - Page 4  
Buy the Truth & Sell It Not - Colly Caldwell - Page 6  
The Gospel Is Good News - Tom Roberts - Page 7  
Is Truth Relevant - William E. Fain - Page 8  
Eternal Truth Is Of God - Jim Cooper - Page 9  
The Sufficiency of Truth - Hoyt Houchen - Page 11  
Walking In The Truth - Dudley Ross Spears - Page 12

Reverence For Truth - Robert F. Turner- Page 14  
Truth And The Church - Art Ogden - Page 15  
God's Truth Applies To Both Men & Women  
Jean Jones - Page 17  
Finality Of Truth - Barney Keith - Page 18  
The Gospel: Righteousness Apart From The Law  
Bill Cavender - Page 19  
The Bible & Home Life - Bill Robinson, Jr. - Page 21  
The Comfort Of Scripture - Earl Robertson - Page 22  
Have You Seen A Rainbow Lately?  
Loren T. Stephens - Page 25

# Gospel Truths



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in the truth' I  
Corinthians 13:6*

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## Editorial .

J.T. SMITH, EDITOR

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### A Prospectus

**T**HE world in which we live today is troubled on every side. People in every walk of life are plagued by uncertainty and unrest. Even though this is true, according to the Bible there are some things that are certain. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We do not have to guess about this. Proof of death may be observed as we drive down our highways. As we observe the hillsides dotted with tombstones, we are brought to the realization that but few of our populace live beyond the century mark. There is, however, a warning to all in the above passage. God has said that after death there will be a judgment. Because this too is certain God has commanded all men everywhere to repent. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). We have assurance of a judgment to come, Paul said. That assurance is provided by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Many fail to yield themselves to God because they do not believe the Bible or because they cannot determine that judgment is any closer. Peter said in II Peter 3:3-9, "knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, (4) and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation." (5) For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, (6) by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. (7) But the heavens and the earth *which* now *exist* are kept in store by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (8) But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Can there be any doubt in anyone's mind of the growing tendency among "conservative" brethren toward a more "liberal" trend? If you do not believe this is the case, I suggest that you just look about you, read some of the things that are being taught in our religious journals and listen carefully to some of the *drivel* that is being passed off for gospel preaching. It in no wise has the "ring" of the old fashion gospel that has come forth from the pulpits that brought us out of institutionalism and liberalism.

#### The Policy Of This Paper

It shall be the policy of this paper, as it has been with **TORCH** to speak forth that which we believe is truth without fear or favor of any man. We shall address any and every subject that we believe will be of benefit in helping those who are not Christians to know the truth. We shall also present articles that will be designed to edify those who are Christians, both young and old. And when false doctrine is called to our attention, we will oppose it and those who teach it with every fiber of our being.

It will be the purpose of this paper and its contributors to fairly represent all issues that come to our attention. We will in no way knowingly tolerate any misquotations of any person or institution. Those who have a personal "Ax to grind" will not knowingly be given space to grind it. Only issues that we believe will cause division among the people of God will be addressed.

For those who might be interested in writing articles for this paper, we welcome material from you. Material approved for this paper will be the sole responsibility of the Editor and his advisors. Each writer's views will be his own and will not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or any other person who writes for **Gospel Truths**.

The position as Editor of this journal in trying to get the truth to people is greatly felt. I believe that God's charge to Ezekiel is relevant today. Ezekiel said, "Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, (17) "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: (18) "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. (19) "Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul" (Ezekiel 3:16-19).

If and when an article is printed that is believed to contain error, it will be published only with the reserved right to publish a review. The author of the original article will have the right to make a reply to the review with the person writing the original review having a rebuttal. The general rule will be that this will conclude the matter. However, special attention and permission may be deemed wise for further consideration on some subjects. This will be done at the discretion of the Editor.

Questions on Bible topics will be welcomed. An honest and forthright effort will be made to answer such questions by our question and answer Editor, Bill Robinson, Jr. **Send all Bible questions to him at P. O. Box 666, Kemp, TX 75143.**

Finally, we will do our very best to follow the apostle Paul's instruction to Timothy in the pages of this journal. "(1) I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: (2) Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (4) and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (II Timothy 4:1-4).

We appreciate those of you who have supported our efforts in **TORCH** for the past four years. We solicit your prayers and your help in encouraging others to subscribe to **Gospel Truths**.

## How Authority Of Truth Is Established

by Elmer Moore



**A**UTHORITY is defined to mean, "The right to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; the right to control, command, or determine." (The American College Encyclopedic Dictionary, page 84).

The word *adjudicate* means, "To pronounce or decree by judicial sentence; settle judicially; pass judgment on; to determine an issue or dispute judicially" (ibid page 15). A careful student of the Bible is aware that truth settles issues (II Timothy 3:16-17); exercises control (II Peter 1:1-12); and determines right and wrong (Galatians 2:14). The title of our lesson rightly assumes that truth *is* authoritative. Hence, our task is to show that authority is established by proper understanding and application of that truth. *Truth* settles issues and exercises control. Truth also determines the right or wrong of any dispute.



How then can we determine when a matter has been authorized in the Scriptures? The Bible teaches us "explicitly", i.e., clearly developed with all its elements apparent," and also "implicitly", i.e., capable of being understood from something else though unexpressed." I do not believe the matter of *implicit* authority has received the recognition it deserves. Men do not seem to have difficulty in accepting the fact that the Bible teaches explicitly but ridicule the thought that it teaches implicitly or by *implication*. If the Bible does not teach us by implication then we are left with out a shred of information as to how we are to serve God. Unless, of course, you read explicit instructions to you personally! Find *your name* on the Sacred pages! You must *infer* that certain matters apply to you. How do you know that anything God has said applies to you unless you *infer it!* The Bible does not *infer* for you. The Bible *implies* and man must infer. The idea has been suggested that we cannot bind, as matters of faith, anything that has to be determined by necessary inference. The reason is that we have to use "human reasoning" in inference. We also must use "human reason" in matters of precept. We must decide whether a passage is addressing us. To do this we must use "human reasoning."

When the Charismatics claim for themselves the promise of Acts 1:8, we show that the passage does not include them. When brethren argue that James 1:27 is assigning the church a benevolent responsibility, we show that the passage is not assigning the church anything to perform. To do this we have to use "human reasoning." The word *imply* means, "To indicate or suggest, as some-



thing naturally to be inferred, without express statement," (**American Collegiate Dictionary** page 607). The word *infer* means, "To derive by reasoning; conclude or judge from premises or evidence", (ibid, page 622). Friends there is no escape from *reasoning* from the *evidence* presented in the Scriptures. Comprehension of anything written requires the same common sense approach. The idea that we cannot establish *truth* by Necessary Inference is without any basis whatever. The apostle Paul urged, "Be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is," (Ephesians 5:17).

Truth is indicated in the Scriptures by plain statements, approved precedents and implications, and we must use human judgment in all three of these areas. One must determine *who* is being addressed in plain statements, and to do this involves human judgment. Certainly caution must be exercised when considering approved precedent or example. Surely we must use intelligence in concluding by necessary inference. Every rule of hermeneutics that applies to the study of the Bible as a whole, must certainly apply to, the integral parts such as, "examples" and "necessary implications." When one considers that *he* is a *part* of the record where God directs man; he must realize that these rules must apply. The fundamental Laws of, (1) Harmony, (2) Uniformity, (3) Universal application, and (4) Materiality must be considered when one studies the Bible.

How then does one determine the *truth* of any proposition? He does so by considering *all of the facts in the case*. One *must* look at the context which includes, the statement, that which precedes and follows the statement and all other related facts. These facts will be established Explicitly and Implicitly, and will be indicated either by Statements, Examples or Necessary Implications.

Another problem area in understanding and applying truth involves determining whether a practice is under "liberty" or "obligation." A practice is right because the Scriptures either *require* or *allow* us to do it. If the Bible *requires* that we do a certain thing, then we have no choice. However, if the Bible *allows* us to do a certain thing we do have a choice. This is just another way of saying that what the Lord *binds* we dare not loose and what He has *loosed* we dare not bind. We know that here is where problems exist. When men *bind* matters that the Lord did not bind they are "sitting in the temple of God" and thus "setting themselves forth as God." They have become legislators; a right that belongs *only* to God, (James 4:12). On the other hand when men *loose* matters that God did not loose they become lawless and as such are not approved of God, (Matthew 7:22-23).

We believe beyond a doubt that there is no substitute for truth. Man must come to a knowledge of it in order to be made free from sin, (John 8:31-32). He must love and believe it in order to escape perishing and be saved, (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). He must obey it in order to purify his soul, (II Peter 1:21-22). His worship must be according to truth, (John 4:24), and his conduct must be as truth directs, (III John 4). The admonition to Timothy is

## The Use Of Proof-Texts In Preaching

by Bill Feist

**NOT** long ago a brother who had just returned from a rather lengthy vacation trip asked to talk with me. We talked about the condition of the Lord's cause in the many places he had been. He related to me the situation in one particular place. He had worshipped there on a Lord's day morning and left thoroughly disgusted. As he related the circumstances to me, I thought "this is becoming a far too common problem." He said, "Bill, I counted two scriptures used in a thirty-five minute sermon." He said the congregation was informed as to what Dear Abby thought about the particular issue, what psychologists and psychiatrists believed was the root of the problem, the local newspaper was cited, but the Bible was ignored. How sad it is when such as these become the "proof-texts" for our teaching. While there may be times when such will help fortify our case, God's word must be our final appeal.

The gospel should be both center and circumference of all preaching. Paul said to young Timothy, "Preach the word;" (II Timothy 4:2). This is the need of the world in this and every generation that God may permit to live on this earth. It is only by the preaching of the word that the souls of men can or will be blessed. This is true because the Bible is the revelation of God's will concerning man and God's way for man to be saved. The purpose of divine revelation is that man may know the will of God and do it. Furthermore, the Bible must be preached because it is the only source of spiritual light. Aside from scripture there is only darkness in the spiritual realm. No other book or message can tell us anything about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, hell, the origin of life, etc. Since the Bible is the only textbook on man and his relation to God, it follows that every lesson on such a subject must be drawn directly from and punctuated by the word of God.

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worthy of noting. He was told, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth," (II Timothy 2:15). One cannot but wonder just how many there are who *need to be ashamed*? If I do not "handle" the word of God properly, I should be! Diligent effort must be pursued in order to handle aright (hold a straight course in) the word of Truth.

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**GT**

**Editor's Note:** This excellent article by brother Moore is just an introduction to other articles that will follow on this subject. We look forward to more from Moore.

The question as to what place in preaching shall proof-texts be given can be resolved by a simple inquiry: What will benefit the souls of men, divine wisdom or human wisdom? If preaching is to bless the souls of men and accomplish the divine purpose, it must be Bible preaching. This means that we must preach the Bible just as God has given it to man. What better way can this clearly come across to our listeners than by citing book, chapter, and verse?

One of the outstanding discussions on this very point is in I Corinthians 1:18-31. In this passage Paul emphasizes the absolute need of man for the wisdom of God. Some of the Corinthians had evidently exalted human wisdom and fallen prey to false teachers as the consequence. Instead of being primarily concerned with the truth of the message, they gave more attention to the wonderful vocabulary of the speaker, considering it an indication of wisdom. The eloquence was likewise exalted, as were all other outward and carnal things. This resulted in a disregard of the important consideration of truth and its spiritual benefits. This is sadly too often the case in our present generation. A man who has a high degree educationally, or who speaks in the smoothest most eloquent fashion, or who uses impressive speech, or who feigns the air of profound wisdom creates the greatest impression and receives the most consideration. However, the truly great preacher stands upon a "Thus saith the Lord." His only appeal is "To the law and the testimony." The only issue for this proclaimer of truth is, "What saith it, the word of faith which we preach?"

Divine testimony approves men who preach the word. Those who listen to teaching with the resolve to test what is taught by the word of God before they teach it or accept it are commended. Luke records the noble example of the Bereans, "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). These checked the great apostle Paul, comparing his teaching with the scriptures. When the comparison was made, Paul's teaching conformed to scripture. We should be willing to follow this approved example of teaching the gospel of Christ. We should be determined to fill our teaching with scripture so it can be checked. We should be willing to believe no man on earth for his own sake, but find ourselves in harmony with those who "speak as the oracles of God."

Perhaps we can see the need for proof-texts in teaching when we remember that more than ten percent of the New Testament text is composed of quotations from or direct allusions to the Old Testament. For example, the recorded words of Jesus include a comparable percentage of language drawn directly from the Old Testament. Jesus' thinking and speech were so moulded by the Old Testament that such references are readily seen in the life of our Lord. This is well illustrated in our Lord's conflict with Satan (Matthew 4). Jesus made repeated appeals to the scriptures. The scriptures were His weapon of offense against His foe. Jesus' use of scripture successfully put to

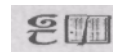
flight the foe. Satan recognized Jesus use of scripture in the first temptation (command these stones be made bread) in the second temptation, where Satan quoted scripture (perverted or otherwise). It is as if Satan is saying, "Since you are one of those book, chapter, and verse men, what do you have to say about this scripture?" Jesus demonstrated that scripture is in harmony with itself and again relies upon a "thus saith the Lord."

Jesus showed from the scriptures that He was the Christ. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). After His resurrection Jesus appealed to the scriptures to enlighten His followers as to the truth of the events that has transpired (Luke 24:32; 44-48). In Luke 4:21 the Lord stated, "And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." In the sermon on the mount, Jesus continually referred to the Old Testament scriptures (Matthew 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 41). All of this points to the emphasis in the life of the Lord to proof-texts.

When we preach Christ today, the scriptures must be our authority. This is the example of the inspired apostles of the Lord. In Acts 2, Peter and the apostles quote scripture throughout the great message that was preached on the day the church was established and three thousand obeyed the gospel of Christ. Peter, whose sermon is recorded for us, quoted freely from Joel and David to establish his case. The second sermon in Acts 3:18-19 declares, "But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." When the "issue of circumcision" was dealt with in Acts 15, James quoted the words of the "prophets" (verse 15). Everywhere the apostle Paul was given an opportunity to preach Christ, he always appealed to the witness of the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

When the apostle Paul stands on the verge of sacrificing his life for the Master's cause, he sums up all his instructions to Timothy in II Timothy 4. Knowing that in a short time he would die, in Timothy he hoped for the continuation of the great work that they had been doing together. With great passion for the souls of men and the kingdom of Christ, Paul makes a final charge and plea. A more solemn one was never delivered. No greater mantle of service was ever handed to another. Greater obligations were never imposed than these Paul lays on Timothy. "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word." Here is the supreme obligation. Everything centers here. The wisdom of God is revealed in it. The grace of God is extended through it. We cannot preach the word and minimize proof-texts in our teaching. Let's get back to "speaking as the oracles of God."

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**Send Gospel Truths To A Friend!**



**L**ITTLE boys sometimes exasperate their mothers by climbing on the furniture and cabinets. One such little boy went high up onto the shelves in the den and found an old dusty Bible. None in the family had seen a Bible in months except at the church building. When his mother surprised him by coming back into the room, he said, "Look Mom, I found this old dusty thing on top of the book case." "Be careful," she replied, "don't tear it up. That's God's book." "Well," he exclaimed, "We had better send it back to God. We never use it anyway." Isn't it sad that people do not value the word of God more than that story seems to indicate.

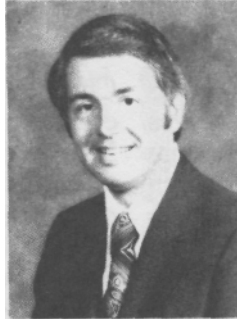
Bible believers have long recognized Solomon as the wisest of ancient men. His wisdom was greater, his judgments keener, and his knowledge and understanding broader than any other (I Kings 4:29-34). Far from perfect, he fell into sin in his later years (I Kings 11:1-13), but he left a wonderful collection of proverbs for our spiritual edification. Solomon's wisdom was given in response to prayer (I Kings 3:5-15) and his writings clearly reflect the revelation of Divine inspiration. He was also wealthy beyond calculation (I Kings 4:20-28; 3:13; 10:7). He could buy anything he wished. He realized, however, at least at one time in his life that the greatest treasure of all is God's truth. He said, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23).

Because the truth is so precious, we should inquire concerning its character and effects upon men. Jesus said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). We can depend on the fact that whatever God has said is truth.

So much else is false in this world. I recently went out to buy a car. Before going further let me say that I have not yet bought. The salesman let me talk to the sales-manager about the price of a beautiful, well-equipped car and he finally told me that he could not go any lower

## "Buy The Truth And Sell It Not"

by Colly Caldwell



without getting below cost. He said that someone would buy the car and he was not going to make any deal that would lose money. I wasn't prepared to pay that much so I came home. That night, the salesman called asking if I was offended. I said that I was not offended but that when they said they could not make a better offer, I saw no point in staying. He said, "Well, why don't you tell me what you would like to pay for the car and I will talk to him again." Now I was offended. By indicating that the sales-manager would reconsider, he was as much as telling me that the man had lied to me that afternoon. I like to depend upon the word of those with whom I live, work, and do business. I am not as naive as I used to be concerning what I am told, but this one thing I accept without any reservation: **GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH.**

Another factor in the truth's value is the fact that it makes us free from sin. What prices men have paid for their freedom. Hundreds of thousands have died fighting for freedom or fleeing to freedom. What greater imprisonment or enslavement has been known to man than the captivity in chains known to all of us at one time in our lives when evil ruled our souls. "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' They answered Him, 'We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free?'" (John 8:31-

33). None of us desire bondage. Freedom is precious. It is God's truth that makes us free and we can have it.

Not only does God's word free from sin, but it is the divine element to be used in spiritually purifying our hearts. Peter said, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through *the* Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart" (I Peter 1:22). We are purified in heart when we obey the truth. That makes it valuable to me. There was a time when the truth was unknown. It was a mystery to men. Now we are blessed to know the truth and look what it does for us. Why do men want human philosophy or psychology in the pulpit when preachers can declare the wonderful truth? Why do preachers think they have something better than Scripture when they start talking to people about salvation and godly living?

That brings us, however, to further consider that there is a condition placed upon our purification and freedom from sin. Solomon says that we should "*buy*" the truth. John put it this way: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see" (Revelation 3:18).

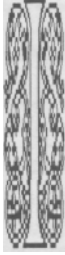
Certainly neither inspired man meant that truth's value can be determined in United States currency or even figuratively in "works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:9). They are, however, dispelling the notion that truth is acquired without effort on the part of man. Too many persons, even among Christians, seem to feel that the acquisition of truth is accomplished apart from diligent pursuit and sacrifice.

Paul told the Ephesians, "when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:4). He exhorted Timothy to "give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (I Timothy 4:13). It would seem that the least we could do is read that which is so precious. We

should read it daily and with concentration. In fact, the issue is how much do we *love* it. Please remember another warning: "and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).

Nothing is more precious than God's truth. It is enduring while all material things perish. It is incorruptible and can never be destroyed. This truth is the basis for response to God's rule in His kingdom. Jesus spoke of that kingdom in these words: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:46). Paul valued truth so much that he said, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:7-11). The question is: "How do you evaluate its worth???" **CT**  
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**For just \$16.00 per month, the congregation where you worship can receive 25 copies of Gospel Truths and a free ad on the travel page.**



**I**N Independence Hall, Philadelphia, the historic relic of our national liberty sits in mute silence, no longer pealing out the message inscribed on its cracked exterior, "Proclaim Liberty throughout

# The Gospel Is Good News

by Tom Roberts

captives were set free. Liberty is a marvelous word

all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof. Leviticus 25:10." How fitting that the symbol of our country which has opened its shores to untold millions from around the world should have as its motto a passage from the Holy Scriptures that speaks of the Law of Jubilee by which

and embodies a wonderful concept that has given hope to oppressed people in every age. Small wonder that so many of the Negro spirituals incorporated "Jubilee" expressions as they yearned to be free. Liberty is good news to people in bondage.

But there is a bondage more severe than that of the body. It is the bondage of the soul in sin whereby we are captive to Satan. The "good news" of the gospel message is that Jesus Christ became a "sharer in flesh and blood" that he "might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15). Nothing is more cruel and exacting than the captivity demanded by Satan and none need liberty more than souls imprisoned by sin. But through Jesus our bonds are shattered and Satan no longer has dominion. "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). The words of Christ tell us of this freedom (John 8:32) and the blood of Christ, contacted at the time of baptism, enables us to "be no longer in bondage to sin" (Romans 6:3-7).

## Foretold by the Prophets

This "mystery" of salvation (Colossians 1:26), was hidden for a time until God chose to reveal the "good news" (Thayer: "glad tidings") of the scriptures, through the apostles (Ephesians 3:4-11). Though not fully understood by those who prophesied of these things (I Peter 1:9-12), they nevertheless did speak beforehand of the freedom that would accompany the Messianic work of Jesus.

Isaiah, in fact, quoted part of the Liberty Bell text when he said of the Christ: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1). By prophecy, this prophet spoke of the work of Christ, not as a revolutionary, but as Savior. It is interesting that the setting of Isaiah's vision was based in part upon the Jubilee of Leviticus 25. But quite plainly, this connection was not accidental, for Jesus quoted Isaiah and applied it to Himself as he read from the scroll in the synagogue in Nazareth, saying, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

To further substantiate the connection between the Jubilee Sabbath and his work of liberation, Jesus healed on the Sabbath to emphasize to his critics that rather than being sinful to do his work on the Sabbath, he rather established its purpose. The woman, "whom Satan hath bound," for whom he "opened the prison" of infirmity was said to have been "loosed from thine infirmity" and "loosened from this bond on the day of the Sabbath" (Luke 13:10-17). Jesus elevated the Sabbath rather than violated it; he fulfilled it rather than destroyed it, and in so doing, he demonstrated his power over Satan. He showed that the true meaning of the Sabbath not only commemorated God's rest (Exodus 20:11), but also acknowledged that it included deliverance from bondage (Deuteronomy 5:15). It is highly important that we see that the final "Sabbath rest of the people of God" (Hebrews 4:1-11) refers to Heaven, the ultimate salvation from sin, the liberation from all sin and its punishment. (For an excel-

lent study on the Sabbath in this context, see The Doctrine of Last Things, "Seventy Weeks of Daniel," by Phil Roberts in the 1986 Florida College Annual Lectures.) Jesus came to set us free from the condition of sinfulness and Heaven will be the final chapter of his redeeming work. This is the gospel story and it is infinite in its goodness.

### Spiritual, Not Material

Please note that Jesus came not just to heal diseases of the body and liberate captives from man-made prisons. While on the earth, Jesus did not heal all the sick nor cure all the lepers. Even after his resurrection and ascension back to the right hand of God, physical burdens remained all over the world, and do so to this day. However, it was not the purpose of Jesus' mission to be a physician to mortal ailments; rather, he was the Great Physician who came to "seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). How sadly some miss the "good news" of the gospel and relegate it to an earthly plane far below the heavenly calling of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is the good news of salvation, not Medicare or sanctified clinics. It is tragic beyond words that some of our brethren, to say nothing of sectarians, attempt to equate Jesus' work of setting captives free from sin with that of social revolution and strictly humanitarian concerns. Are we reading of the same Person? Did the prophets yearn to see how Jesus was going to heal the sick or save the lost? Are the Old Testament types merely a reference to other worldly types or to the anti-type, the spiritual fulfillment in the person of Jesus, Immanuel, Savior?

Yes, it would be good news if cancer, arthritis, heart attacks, etc. were destroyed from the earth. Like anyone else, I rejoice at every step of progress in research against all the deadly diseases. However, the physical ailments do not begin to compare with the deadliness of sin, the eternity of spiritual death, the finality of separation from God. Jesus came to bring back to mankind what was lost at the Garden and afterwards: fellowship with God. To this end, he became flesh and died on the cross (Philippians 2:5ff), opening the entrance of the Tabernacle in Heaven (Hebrews 9:12). We rejoice in the good news of salvation and are reminded that it is the task of those on earth to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Matthew 28:18-20). No higher or more noble work exists than that of telling the lost about Jesus. No greater blessing could be ours than to hear and receive the good news as envisioned by Isaiah, that Jesus has come to "proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Let us "ring the message out," not from a cracked Liberty Bell, pealing the message of a flawed America, but of a perfect Savior with the good news of salvation holding forth the heavenly Sabbath rest for the people of God.

2612 South Meadow, Fort Worth, TX 76133

## Is Truth Relevant?

by William E. Fain



As we consider the relevance of truth, perhaps a few definitions will be in order. "Relevance" has to do with whether or not a subject satisfied the needs of the user; or whether it has significant bearing on the subject at hand. In this study, we are speaking of *absolute* truth; truth is not "relative," for it does not depend on having a relation to, or connection with, or dependence on another thing. Truth is not "abstract," for it can be determined and understood. Men may disagree as to the truth on some particular subject, study, or scientific discipline, but we are concerned with *spiritual* truth, the truth of God's word. While the Bible is not primarily concerned with scientific truth, every time it touches any field of science, it is TRUE, and is never inconsistent with, nor contrary to true science. This can also be said of its relation to history, geography, health, space, etc. It is relevant and timely in any age, in every part of this world, to every significant concern of all mankind. Jesus Christ said to the Father, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Psalmist said it was "a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). This could be the shortest article in this issue, for, in spiritual matters *truth* is the *only* thing that *is* relevant! Of course, being a preacher, you know I will not stop there.

### The Whole of Man

The wise man, directed by the Spirit, said, "Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the WHOLE of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Only the truth of God's word can be relevant to walking uprightly before Him in this life. John wrote, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (I John 1:7). TRUTH is the only thing that is relevant to any and every hope we have beyond this life. Peter described it as, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:3-5). It is a "living hope," an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled ... reserved in heaven..." Hebrews 3:14 tells us we "become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end."

### Truth The Criterion

*Truth* is the *only* criterion for determining the will of God on any subject, thought, word or deed. It is the *only* standard to distinguish right and wrong, righteousness from unrighteousness, eternal salvation from eternal loss, the doctrine of Christ from the false doctrines of men. Philippians 1:9-11 tells us when we grow in love, knowledge, and discernment, we will

learn to approve the excellent things, and be sincere and void of offence, filled with the fruits of righteousness. In Colossians 1:9-11, we are told we should be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding ... to walk worthily ... bear fruit" and then be made "meet to be partakers ... of the inheritance."

### Truth Relevant to Salvation

The knowledge of truth is essential to salvation (I Timothy 3:4 ; Romans 10:13-15), but *mere knowledge* is not enough. One must believe it, embrace it, love it (II Thessalonians 2:8-12), abide in it (John 8:31); this necessarily involves obedience (I Peter 1:22-23; Mark 16:15,16). God's power to save requires our faithful obedience to the gospel (Romans 1:16). The TRUTH makes us free from sin (John 8:32). Any other "gospel" is to be refused, and anyone preaching such is to be rejected (Galatians 1:6-7). The truth of God's plan to save His erring children is: repent and pray (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9).

Christ **the Personification** Jesus Christ *is* truth (John 14:6; 18:37), and it is *only* through Him that we may approach God's throne of mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16). Only in His name may we obtain salvation (Acts 4:11-12).

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97230 **GT**

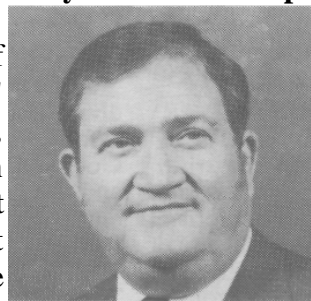
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## FOR this cause I Eternal Truth Is Of God

by James E. Cooper



was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate then responded, "What is truth?" (John 18: 37-38). We cannot now know exactly what Pilate had in mind. He may have been speaking in jest, or with a cynical attitude. Of one thing we may be sure: he was not motivated by *the facts* of the case. Although he sought opportunity to release Jesus, he caved in to the bitter and envious demands of the Jewish leaders. *Truth* was of no great concern to him.

### Is Truth Absolute?

The question, "What is truth?" has occupied the minds of thinking men for centuries. Long before the time of Pilate, classical philosophers had wrestled with the problem of Ultimate Reality, with differing conclusions. In the 5th century B.C., Protagoras, recognized by Humanists as the father of Humanism, contended that "man is the measure of all things; of all things that are that they are; and of all things that are not that they are not." He further contended that "contradictory assertions are equally true," and thus laid the foundation for modern existential philosophy.

Because they deny the existence of an Ultimate Being, Secular Humanists must look somewhere else for the ultimate source of truth. They find it in man. To them, truth is a relative thing, tied to man's circumstances and serving his needs. What may have been true yesterday is not necessarily true today.

Rene Dubos said: "We never arrive at a system of values that is permanent, because by the time we get there,

the conditions I have changed" (*The American Scholar*, Summer Quarter, 1965). Albert Ellis wrote: "There probably cannot ever be any absolute correct or proper rules of morality, since people and conditions change over the years and what is 'right' to-day may be 'wrong' tomorrow. Sane ethics are relativistic and situational" (**The Humanist**, Sept./Oct., 1979, page 18). Martin C. D'Arly said: "Morality does not depend on any set of doctrines; it rests on the basic need of a civilized society. Evolution is the password in philosophy as in science, and 'all fixed authority' is a casualty in an evolutionary age" (**Humanism and Christianity**, pg. 6). There you have it, from their own pens.

This kind of thinking is not limited to atheism. It is found in religious leaders who contend that what one believes doesn't matter; the important thing is believing. Whatever you believe is "the truth" for you. We may disagree over matters of doctrine or morals, but we must not consider anybody "wrong." What is "true" for one is not necessarily "true" for another. You go to your church, and I will go to mine, and both of us will be "right." Pshaw!

This kind of thinking is also reflected in the notion that moral standards recognized by parents are not necessarily "right" for the younger generation. Influenced by Humanism in our public schools, our young people come home arguing, "Times have changed; don't try to impose your moral standards on me. That may have been all right 'in your day,' but it won't work today!" The relativistic and situational notions of Secular Humanism are destroying the morals of our children!

"What is truth?" The atheist says truth is that which is relative to human needs. The skeptic says that we cannot find out, and can never know what it is. The person who says there is no absolute truth is *absolutely* sure that his proposition is true! The only thing he is *absolutely* sure of is that *there are no absolutes!*

### Truth is of God

What is truth? Jesus said, "I am come to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). He recognized that truth is not something to be derived from man; it is something outside of man, a standard by which man is to be measured. "Every one who is of the truth hears My voice." When hearts are inclined to the acceptance of truth, men will hear the voice of the Son of God.

*Truth begins with GOD!* We believe that God is because there is sufficient evidence in the world around us to demonstrate that there is a Creator. "Something exists. Something cannot come from nothing. Therefore, something always was." Is that something everlasting matter, or everlasting mind? If one says it is matter, he must explain where intelligence and life came from. Evolutionists tell us it was just an accident. The sun [whose origin they don't explain] just happened to shine on some protoplasm [whose origin they don't explain] and life spontaneously came into existence! That is beyond my comprehension. If you can accept that preposterous theory, don't be amazed at me for believing Genesis 1:1.

We can know the "everlasting power and godhead" (Romans 1:20) of God, not only by the evidence in the world about us, but also by the fact that He has revealed Himself in human history. The historicity of Bible events is confirmed from sources outside the Bible.

Since the Bible is a reliable book, we can trust what it says about what happened before human history. Hence, by faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God so that which is seen hath not been made out of things that appear" (Hebrews 11:3). *The ultimate source*

*of truth is God Himself.* Moses said of God: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect, all His ways are justice, a God of Truth and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4; cf. Psalms 31:5, etc.).

### Jesus, the Witness to the Truth

Jesus was the living embodiment of divine truth among humankind. The "Word" who was in the beginning with God, and was *God*, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us ..., full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). He said: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). His truth is the means by which we are saved: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Jesus not only lived the truth, but also taught the truth. As He left His disciples, He promised them that they would not have to depend upon fallible, human memories to remember His teachings. He would, after His death, send the Holy Spirit who would guide them "into all the truth" (John 16:13).

God's truth is made known by *revelation*. He revealed Himself through His own actions in human history as He dealt with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, etc. He revealed His will through the prophets. He made Himself known through the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ. In Christ, He let us know He loved sinners and hated sin. He demonstrated Himself to be a God of love, longsuffering and merciful, as well as a God of Holiness who cannot look upon sin (cf. Habakkuk 1:13). He is the Ultimate Reality.

We must know the truth in order to be made free (John 14:6; 8:32). "All things that pertain unto life and godliness" has been granted to us (II Peter 1:3). The inspired Scriptures are sufficient to thoroughly equip the man of God unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible reveals that truth can be obeyed. Early in the history of the church "a great company of the priests

were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Paul's apostleship resulted in the "obedience of faith" among the Gentiles (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Our souls are purified in "obedience to the truth" (I Peter 1:22). There is an objective standard of truth, and we shall be judged by the word spoken by Christ (John 12:48).

By faith we can come to God (Hebrews 11:6). His word is the means by which we are sanctified, and set apart from the world (John 17:17). By the knowledge and the application of that word we are set apart from the atheist, agnostic, skeptic, idolater and perverter of the truth. It is also the means by which we worship the Father (cf. John 4:23-24). John summarized the life of Christians as "walking in truth." He said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 3-4). If there is no such thing as truth, that all truth is relative, it would be impossible to know whether you were walking in truth or not.

Those who tell us that truth is not absolute are undermining the basis of true religion and morality. If you believe in God and His Son, and in His Word, you realize that there is a standard by which we must live, and by which we shall be judged (John 12:48). Believing is not enough, unless we believe the truth the "faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word will not pass" (Matthew 5:18).

Eternal truth has its origin in God. It is something stable. You can build your life on it! **GT**  
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**T**RUTH is important in every field of human endeavor. The significance of truth in a court of justice is self-evident. Truth is the goal of all who are honest, thus they will spend their lives in pursuit of it. The precious gem of truth is sought by every devoted historian, philosopher and scientist. For centuries men have tested their arguments in the crucibles of oral and written controversy in order to ascertain the truth. We are indebted to, and commend all who have made truth their aim, both past and present.

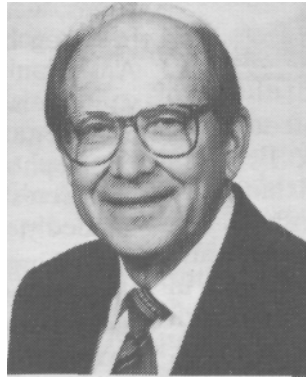
As significant as truth is in secular realms of life, it is nevertheless insufficient when discovered and even applied. It fails to fulfill the greatest need of mankind - salvation from sin. *Secular* truth will not save the human soul. Only *spiritual* truth will save our souls from sin and enable us to have a future home in heaven. James admonished his readers to "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Peter wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth..." (I Peter 1:22). Spiritual truth is God's Holy Word, His divine revelation to man. It is this truth that we must believe (Romans 10:10), that we must obey (Romans 6:17), by which we must live (Titus 2:11, 12) and by which we shall all be judged in the last day (John 12:48).

Paul declared in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." The gospel of Jesus Christ ("good news") is the embodiment of spiritual truth. It contains facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed and promises to be enjoyed. It is the gospel truth, when obeyed, that will make men free from the bondage of sin (John 8:32). When we put on Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27) His precious blood cleanses us from every sin (I Peter 1:18,19).

God has exercised His power in different ways at different times. He manifested His power when He created the heavens and the earth

## The Sufficiency Of Truth

by Hoyt Houchen



(Genesis 1:1). He demonstrated His power when He "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). We see God's power today in the scope and magnitude of the universe. But the only power He uses to save the human soul is the gospel - "it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

The truth, God's revealed message to man, is sufficient to do all for man that God intended for it to do. However, we are hearing the clamor today that we need a new gospel for this modern age, that the old gospel that Paul preached is outmoded and that man's nature has changed so his needs are different in our modern world. These modern advocates for a new gospel need to be reminded that God's word is truth (John 17:17) and that it has not changed. It is the same truth that it was some two thousand years ago when it transformed the lives of multitudes who obeyed it and lived by it. Furthermore, truth is absolute; it is not relevant. Truth remains the same in every age; it does not change. And, the idea that man has changed is a mere assumption; in fact, it is false. Man is the same in makeup that he ever was. His physical, mental and moral features are the very same. These are the same characteristics as possessed by Peter, Andrew, James and John, the same as all men. The gospel has not changed and man is the same today as he was in ancient times. Neither has man's

malady changed. It is SIN. There is no new sin; sin is the same as it ever was. Man has not devised anything different in his heart than he did in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:5). When we examine the pernicious sins of the Graeco-Roman world in the time of Paul (Romans 1:18-32), we conclude that there is no new sin under the sun. And, man's adversary has not changed. His adversary is the devil (I Peter 5:8), and we do not have a new devil walking around on the streets. He is the same old devil that he always was. These facts, when considered carefully, lead us to the logical conclusion that God's truth is sufficient for modern man; it fulfills all of his spiritual needs.

The sufficiency of truth is declared by Paul in II Timothy 3:16,17: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (ASV). The truth revealed in the scriptures will accomplish now exactly what it did when Paul wrote to Timothy.

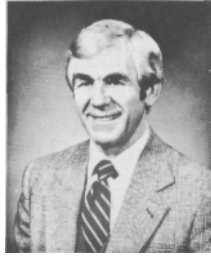
The attitude and conduct of many in our present generation is evidence that the Bible is passe' to them. It is observed that they do not read nor study the Bible. They are far more knowledgeable of world events, social affairs, business and sports than they are the word of God. They look to the speaking and writing of men for the solutions of their problems. The absence of Bible filled sermons in many of the pulpits throughout the land makes us wonder if even some so-called gospel preachers believe that the word of God is outdated. It is difficult to hear much Bible referred to, much less quoted.

Divine truth is seen to be sufficient in its origin. The Greek word translated "inspired" (II Timothy 3:16) is *theopneustos*, meaning "God-breathed." God, through the Holy Spirit, gave the writers of the Bible His message, even the very words He wanted them to use (II Peter 1:21). Hear the words of the psalmist David as he declared: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon

**Continued Bottom Next Page**

## Walking In The Truth

by Dudley Ross Spears



**J**OHN, the beloved apostle, wrote to a first century Christian named Gaius, "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 2-4). Sir Francis Bacon wrote, "But no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth" ("Essays, Of Truth"). Some men relish financial gains, political victories, excellence in

philosophical knowledge, or athletic accomplishments, but to John and men of sound reason standing on the vantage ground of truth is the very highest joy man can know.

John, working primarily out of Ephesus, sent some of his closest companions out to contact various brethren and return with a report. This brief letter was addressed to Gaius, "whom," John adds, "I love in truth" (verse 1). The brethren bore witness to the truth in Gaius. The New American Standard Bible translates this, "bore witness to your truth." It seems as if Gaius stood virtually alone in the congregation where he worshipped. The vicious Diotrophes was having his own way, undermining the brethren's confidence in John, and running things single handedly. Gaius stood with John.

Walking in the truth is exemplified many different ways in the Word. In this text one way Gaius exemplified it was by the support he provided for "the strangers." The strangers were those who "went out for the sake of the Name" (verse 7). Evidently they went out from Ephesus on a preaching journey. They returned to Ephesus to report the kindness and love of Gaius. R. C. H. Lenski

### Sufficiency....Contd.

my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2). The prophet Jeremiah said: "Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9). This is verbal inspiration. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), and Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2:13, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual words."

"Jesus spoke God's truth while here upon the earth, and He has ALL authority (Matthew 18:18). His word is complete and final authority. (See Matthew 7:28, 29). The word of Christ is sufficient. One could take the Bible, apart from any single decree devised by man, and live in complete harmony with God and man.

Truth is sufficient in its finality. If we could expect additional revelation from God, divine truth would be insufficient. But God's message of truth has been signed, sealed and delivered. There is no progressive revelation. God's word has been confirmed, leaving room for no more. It is complete and final (Jude 3), and neither man nor angel dare not change it (Galatians 1:6-9). God's

word has been preserved for us, and it will stand forever (Matthew 24:35). Remember, someday we shall all be judged by it (John 12:48).

All that man needs in spiritual matters is provided by divine truth. God's word has the answer. If this truth were applied by the world, we would not be plagued by such social ills as racial prejudice. Paul wrote, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be neither male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). If divine truth were applied, our problems of poverty and starvation would perish from the earth. Jesus set forth our individual responsibility to the indigent (Matthew 25:31-40), which is confirmed (James 1:27). The truth revealed by God to us is sufficient to eliminate the moral degeneracy which permeates our society. Were it applied, there would be no stealing (Ephesians 4:28), no pre-marital sex (I Corinthians 6:18), no sexual perversions such as homosexuality (I Corinthians 6:9-11). Adultery would disappear, allowing marriage to be restored to the ideal God purposed it to be (Matthew 5:32; 19:9, etc.) Religious division would be no more, if God's rules for unity were applied (John 17:20,21; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6).

All the evidence that one needs in order to have faith is supplied by God's revealed word (John 20:30,31; Romans 10:17). Men do not have to grope about, seeking to witness some miracle before they can believe. Ample evidence has been supplied within the word of God.

Truth is sufficient to answer the greatest question ever inquired from the lips of any man: "What must I do to be saved?" The scriptures contain God's truth in reply to this great question. To look elsewhere is to turn to the wrong source. God's word gives the answer (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9; Acts 2:38, 47; II Corinthians 5:17; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 15:58). These scriptures teach us as God's children how to worship (John 4:24), and grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18). Indeed divine truth is all sufficient. It furnished man all that he needs in order to please God.

God's eternal truth has nothing to fear; it has nothing to hide; it will bear investigation. It is the most precious commodity available to buy. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). **CT**  
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noted, "The whole congregation at the place where Gaius lived should have done that; but since Diotrefes was bossing it, Gaius bore the whole burden of it alone." (Commentary). Financially enabling others to preach the truth is part of what walking in the truth is all about.

In order to walk in the truth, one must know the truth. No one can walk in a place they cannot find. Those who discredit truth as a nebulous, plastic, and changing group of general principles can never walk in the truth of God. God's truth is revealed in and through His Son (John 14:6). That truth is preserved for all generations in the written record, the Bible (John 17:17). Truth is used six times in fourteen verses and specifies that objective divine revelation that came through Christ and the gospel.

Truth is truth regardless of whether mankind accepts or rejects it. And, whether we possess it in our hearts and minds or not has no real effect on the truthfulness of the truth. Gaius happened to have been one of those good individuals whose life harmonized with what God revealed. He not only obeyed and lived it, he became a partner with those who went forth preaching it to the lost world (verse 8). Walking in the truth is a figure of speech. One of the figures it presents to our minds is that of enjoying the truth in which we walk. Walking describes an action of successive steps in any given direction or in any medium. We sometimes speak of "walking on air" to describe one who experiences something that causes great elation. Those who would walk in truth will know the fullness of joy and happiness, the peace that passes all human comprehension, and the reality of being at peace with God Almighty. John's ultimate joy was to hear that his "children" maintained a walk in the truth (verse 4). In the second letter he wrote he expressed the exact same sentiment. "I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father" (II John 4). Walking in the truth only occurs when the commandments of God are heard, known, and practiced. Such is the case here.

It is worth observing that if John rejoiced that some of "his children" walked in the truth his disposition toward those who walked out of the truth was the opposite. Joy results in the hearts of spiritual men and women when God's children walk in harmony with the commands of God. The same experience deep misery and discomfort when the opposite is true. And, when the children of God who go astray and walk in forbidden ways return to the truth, Jesus said there is "joy in heaven" (Luke 15:7). Thus, the joy which results from walking in the truth encompasses the church here on earth and the hosts of heaven. Is that not a powerful incentive to be sure that the path we travel is clearly marked as "The Truth?"

Walking in the enjoyment of truth is the result of walking in obedience to the truth. The great apostle Peter wrote, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever"

(I Peter 1:22-23). Obedience is a submissive compliance to a directive given by a superior. Gospel obedience is, however, not slavish submission to a tyrannical master. Obedience to the truth is faith in action. The very same apostle, writing on the very same thought expressed the thought to his Jewish brethren in Jerusalem. Luke recorded it. "And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them, 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith' (Acts 15:7-9). Purification results from obedient faith. In his epistle he said obeying the truth purified the soul; in his speech in Jerusalem he said the heart is purified by faith. Only those whose faith impels them to obey the commands of God can actually claim a pure heart and soul.

Walking in the truth means walking in defense of the truth. No Christian can be a spiritual pacifist. The very nature of the Truth is such that it demands a militant spirit by those who claim to walk in it. The enemies of truth are more numerous than her defenders. Enemies arise from without and within the body of Christ and valiant soldiers of Christ must unsheathe the sword of the Spirit and rise to defend the honor, integrity, and purity of truth. Defense of truth may be a little more important than even a fuller knowledge of salvation. Jude was ready to write a dissertation he called, "the common salvation," but found it "needful to write" and "exhort" the brethren to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Paul mentioned those who were fully aware that he was "appointed for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). The truth suffers when faithful saints become indifferent or opposed to controversy. And when the truth suffers because of some weakness or laziness by those who claim to walk in it, what they walk in ceases to be the truth John mentioned.

Every sensible human being understands that walking in truth is walking with God. This is the one life worth living; the one and only hope for true happiness, respect, and assurance. God is willing to walk with humans on condition. Paul wrote of this very matter as follows. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.... As God has said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them, I will be their God and they shall be My people.' Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'" (II Corinthians 6:14,16b-18). Upon no other basis is it biblically possible to walk in the truth. This demands that all who walk in the truth, with God, confine their religious activities to what is within "the doctrine of Christ." John wrote, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

**Continued Bottom Next Page**



## Reverence For Truth

by Robert F. Turner



It should be clearly stated here and now that the "truth" of our subject is not "a" truth, or any "particular" truth; although of course such will be highly esteemed if we have proper respect for all that is true. Other articles in this issue will no doubt deal with specific truths, their source, and our means of receiving them. But we may respect certain truths for reasons other than a love for the essence of truth. Particular truths may be pillars of a sectarian fellowship, where love and desire for "the whole truth and nothing but the truth" is sadly missing. This article challenges the reader to consider the necessity for a proper attitude toward abstract truth, and the need to seek truth as an ideal, wherever it leads.

There may be a philosophical sense in which "truth" is the only sovereign, kingly authority known to man; and the penalty for rejecting truth is the consequence of error." (**Pattern of Authority**, Bernard Ramm.) But with faith in God we accept a correlation of God and truth, of holiness and truth. Paul writes of those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18ff NKJV). He explains: they could know the eternal power and Deity of God by observing the created universe, but failing to glorify Him and be thankful, "their foolish heart was darkened." They sinned, and God gave them up, as my father put it, "to stew in their own juice." Reverence for God is the foundation of respect for truth and holiness, and we need not expect the latter when the former is missing.

There is also a strong correlation between our love for truth and our capacity to perceive it. Satan's cohorts deceive with lying wonders those who refuse to love the truth, and God sends strong delusions to those who demonstrate their pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thessalonians 2:9ff). Without love for truth some may close their eyes to compelling evidence, hence fail to understand and be converted (Matthew 13:14-15). Again, Jesus

### Walking In Truth...Contd

The primary duty each of us has right now is a thorough examination of the source of truth, the word of God (John 17:17) and of self to determine exactly where we are at this moment in our lives. We urge all who read these words to "see that you walk "carefully" and "not as fools but as wise" (Ephesians 5:15) and you can do that when you know the truth, believe and obey the truth, enjoy the truth, and are willing to defend it. **GT**

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said, "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority" (John 7:17, NKJV). Recognition of the source of divine truth is highly dependent upon our attitude. Man has the capacity for spiritual enlightenment, but God does not force Himself upon us. There must be moral harmony of the man's purpose with the divine revelation. "If there be no sympathy there can be no understanding" (B. F. Westcott).

Respect for truth also gives it another dimension. Augustine is quoted as having prayed, "Lord, make me taste that by love which I taste by knowledge." The *desire* for truth is an emotional quality, going far beyond intellectual perception. It affects character, training us in honesty and reliability, and urging us to seek more and greater truths. Surely these passages impress us with the importance of loving and pursuing truth. To review, reverence for God is the foundation of respect for truth; and the love for truth enlarges our capacity to perceive, enables us to recognize the divine source, and adds an important dimension to truth. But we have to touch on the key element. Are we equally impressed with the need for self application of these great principles in our personal quest for truth? The question is critical in this study.

Sometimes "the truth" we wish others to pursue is little more than *our concepts* of what is right or wrong. We should have convictions (Romans 14:5b), and concern for others will cause us to want to teach what we believe; but can we conceive of *truth* as something bigger than our knowledge? Are we capable of objectively questioning our own conclusions in the light of the perfect standard toward which all must strive? If we really revere *truth* we realize nothing of value can be lost in an upward climb. God's word puts it in a simple statement: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21). The Bereans were "noble" for two reasons: they not only measured truth by the divine rule, but were open minded in the process (Acts 17:11). Would that we were all so noble.

Misguided zeal and/or sectarian pride can cause us to be highly critical of any who raise questions and indicate doubts about some conclusion we hold. The querist could be an iconoclast, satisfied only with the rubble of destroyed ideas, and there is no virtue in doubting for doubt's sake. But there are healthful doubts on the part of genuine truth seekers that are open doors. Their doubts show them to be yet alive and interested, and as the educator Dewey said, "Learning begins with a felt difficulty." Instead of dismissing a question as an attack on "our learning" we might reconsider it as an opportunity for teaching and *mutual* learning. It may also indicate we have found someone who loves truth more than their own traditions.

Have we sufficient love for truth that we dare to question our own conclusions? Francis Bacon wrote, "If we begin with certainties, we shall end in doubts; but if we begin with doubts, and are patient in them, we shall end

in certainties." And Oscar Hammerstein put it this way, "Too many men become certain about too many things too early in their lives. Over eager to have everything 'settled in their minds,' they lack both the wisdom and the courage to expose their hastily adopted ideas to healthy doubts... The certainties of a strong man are built upon a structure of resolved doubts." If we truly revere truth as an ideal we accept the struggle that goes with finding it. Years ago I wrote an article that said, "**Truth Is A Mountain**" to be climbed. Can you forgive me if I close with excerpts from that bit of **Plain Talk**?

"There is challenge to TRUTH. Towering, majestic and awesome, it beckons the climber. Great and wonderful, clothed in mysteries it threatens and promises. Benevolently reaching to the world, it summons all; yet sternly holds aloft its crown, to defy the casual.

"Error shouts derision, and stops the ear. With arrogance he hides his wounds and walks another way. Tradition, richly garbed and stiff with age, dares not attempt the rugged path. And weaklings, fearing to look heavenward, support a course that others plan, and wish themselves in better clime.

"But faith responds, and in the earnest seeker whets desire. He dares look up. Toiling, sweating, step by step, he climbs. Struggling across downed timbers on the slope, he pushes upward. Pressing through the bush, slipping on the shale, he moves onward. Onward, upward, higher and higher, his lungs afire, he climbs with foot, and hand, with heart, and soul.

"For *truth* he lives, and if needs be, dies. He asks no quarter, hears no scorn. His hope is fastened on this goal, whose misty drapery sometimes part and to his raptured eyes reveal its sun swept crest. He needs no other prize than this, for here men humbly walk with God." **GT**  
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## THE house of **Truth And The Church**

God... is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:14-15). Without question there is a relationship between truth and the church. Careful study will reveal each is dependent upon the other in varying ways.

*Truth*, as it relates to this study, is the "word of God" (John 17:17). God is the source of all spiritual truth. David called Jehovah, "the God of truth" (Psalm 31:5), and said, "all of His works are done in truth" (Psalm 33:4). His *law* and all of His *commandments* are truth (Psalm 119:142, 151). Today, God's truth has been revealed by Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 17; Hebrews 1:1-2) through the Holy Spirit to the apostles (John 16:13-15) who have made it known "to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 15:25-26).

The *church* is the *assembly* of the saved who have been *called out* of darkness into God's marvelous light (Acts 2:47; 26:28; Colossians 1:12-13; I Peter 2:9). This assembled group left sin, the realm of Satan's rule, and came to the light by responding to the call of gospel truth (II Thessalonians 2:14; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:5). Jesus said, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light" (John 3:21). When men respond in obedience to the "word of truth, the gospel... of salvation" (Ephesians 1:13), they are saved from sin (Acts 2:38; I Peter 1:22) and added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47; 5:14; I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27). The *church*, therefore, cannot exist without the preaching of the *truth*. Let us observe other relationships between *Truth and The Church*.

### Prophecy

Jehovah often promised through the prophets the coming of a new and different Zion, or Jerusalem. To this new Zion Isaiah said the nations would flow to be taught the ways of

the Lord to walk in His paths. He said, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3). The word of the Lord and the law, the truth (Psalm 119:141, 151), were to go forth from this new Zion. (Homer Hailey, **A Commentary on Isaiah**, pages 46-49). The nations do not flow to the old Jerusalem.

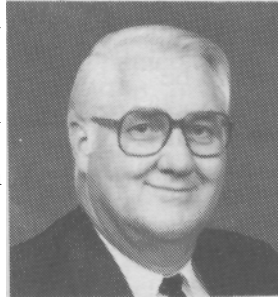
They flow to the new heavenly Jerusalem which is the church, the New Testament order (Hebrews 12:22-24). According to prophecy, the church has a responsibility in *sending forth* the word of God, the law of the Lord.

Again, in speaking of this new Jerusalem, Jehovah said, "I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them" (Isaiah 61:8), (Ibid, pages 494-495) and "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth" (Isaiah 65:16) *Ibid.*, page 518. "Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain" (Zechariah 8:3). (Homer Hailey, **A Commentary on the Minor Prophets**, page 360).

New Zion, according to prophecy, would be a *city of truth* to which the nations would flow to learn how to walk in the law of God. All of her activities were to be directed in truth by the God of truth. The church fulfills these prophecies.

### The Founder Is The Embodiment Of Truth

Jesus came to earth to "bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). He bore that witness (Romans 15:8) promising freedom from sin to all who come to know the truth (John 8:32, 34). He said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He is the *embodiment* of truth. As the source and embodiment of truth, He said, "Upon this rock I will



build my church" (Matthew 16:18). The church we read about in our Bibles was founded by Him who claimed to be the embodiment of truth.

### The Foundation Of The Church Is Truth

After Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the son of the living God, Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:16-18). The church was to be built upon the great spiritual truth that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and it was upon the preaching of this truth the church was built. Paul said, "as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation" (I Corinthians 3:10). He laid that foundation by preaching Christ (I Corinthians 2:1-2; II Corinthians 4:2). He said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11). We build upon that foundation by hearing and obeying the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation (Matthew 7:24-27; Ephesians 1:13). We are purified (I Peter 1:22), born anew (James 1:18), saved, sanctified (II Thessalonians 2:13), and hopeful of heaven by the truth of the gospel (Colossians 1:5). Indeed, Jesus Christ, who is the embodiment of truth, is the foundation of the church. He wills that "all men be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

### The Church Must Walk In The Way Of Truth

The *way of truth* is evil spoken of (II Peter 2:2). In order to walk in the way of truth, one must walk in the light. John said, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:6-7). Remember, Jesus said, "He that doeth truth cometh to the light" (John 3:21). So, one comes to the light by doing truth and continues in the light by walking in truth.

Truth must dwell in us and we in it *for ever* (II John 1-2). Truth can only dwell in us if we continue obeying it (I Corinthians 15:1-2). Walking in truth

is a way of life from which we must not depart (II John 4:9; III John 3-4).

As we travel this pathway, we are to walk in sincerity and truth (I Corinthians 5:8). Our works must be done in deed and in truth (I John 3:18-19), and we must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). All of our words and actions are to be the truth (Ephesians 4:25), and nothing done against it (II Corinthians 13:8). In order to accomplish this, we must believe and know the truth (I Timothy 4:3). Knowing and speaking the truth in love results in our growing up in all things in Christ and in the edifying of the church (Ephesians 4:15-16).

We must not be like those who are ever learning yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth (II Timothy 3:7), or like Peter who failed to walk uprightly according to the truth (Galatians 2:4). We must also guard against turning our ears away from the truth (II Timothy 4:4) and erring from it (James 5:19). The church must abide in God's truth, and it can do this only as each Christian continues in the way of truth.

### The Pillar And Ground Of The Truth

The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). The words *pillar* and *ground* are from Greek words with similar meanings. Both emphasize that which is used to prop up or support a building; the bulwarks or undergirding which upholds and supports a structure. The church, as God's institution, must uphold and support the truth.

The church has been charged with the responsibility of preaching and teaching the truth (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). The ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-20) was placed in earthen vessels (II Corinthians 4:7). To discharge this trust, we must study the truth to correctly handle (II Timothy 2:15), practice (I Thessalonians 2:13), proclaim (II Timothy 2:2), and defend it (Philippians 1:17; Jude 3). Are you doing your part as a member of the body of Christ to uphold, support, and defend the truth? If not, it is time to re-evaluate your relationship with the Lord.

### Conclusion

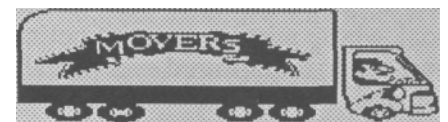
Truth and the church are dependent upon each other. The *church* is dependent upon truth for its existence, growth, sustenance, and guidance. *Truth* is dependent upon the church for its proclamation, practice, support and defense. The word of truth is the *incorruptible seed* which produces the precious fruits of righteousness in Christians (Romans 7:4; I Peter 1:23). It emanates from Christ, the head, to His bride which is the church. The interaction of truth with the church produces fruit in the lives of Christians conforming them to the image of God's sons (Romans 8:29), making them examples to others (I Timothy 4:12), and placing them in the position of winning souls to Christ.

Truth and the church go together. Those who err from the truth (James 5:19-20) are severed from Christ and His body (Galatians 5:4, 7). For this reason, we must always be concerned about what constitutes truth and error and whether or not we are abiding in truth. Let's develop a concern for truth and ever be searching for it with an open and receptive mind.

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**GT**

When a Christian sins, repents of that sin, confesses it to God and asks His forgiveness, he fakes care of the problem. Those who continue to hold it against him and/or continue to talk about it to others still have a problem. Gossiping and backbiting, and a failure to forgive those whom God has forgiven, are all sins. Are you guilty?  
-by Bill Robinson, Jr.



If you are planning on moving, be sure and send your old address and zip code along with your new address and zip code. Don't miss a single issue of *Gospel Truths*.

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



I am continually amazed, inspired and humbled in my study of the Scriptures, at their simplicity. They are very simple and plain in their outline of the principles by which one becomes a Christian and by which one lives in hope of eternal life. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8). The person who has made up his or her mind to walk with *honesty* in the Way, however simple or unlearned they may be, will find the Way clearer on what it takes to please God.

#### Equality In Christ

When Jesus gave the great commission, "He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). So, the gospel is for all,

### Modern Women Are Constantly Clamoring For Total "Equality." Obviously It Escapes Them. The More They Seek It; The More They Ignore The One Place It Is Found.

both *men* and *women*: there is no double standard. Of course, there are some things a woman cannot do in the public worship, but there are many other things she can do.

Modern women are constantly clamoring for total "equality." Obviously, it escapes them. The more they seek it; the more they ignore the *one place it is found*. Total equality for men and women is only found "in Jesus Christ." Women who are "in Christ" have as much accessibility to God through Christ as men. Our duties may differ in some ways, but we stand on *equal ground*.

#### The Duty And Privilege Of Teaching Younger Women

One thing older women have is the obligation and privilege to "teach the younger women." "The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5). *Why should older women teach the younger women?* There are lessons that one

## God's Truth Applies To Both Men And Women

by Jean Jones



learns by living a good while that cannot be learned any other way. Hindsight vision becomes twenty-twenty. Time and experience are great teachers IF accompanied by the Word of God.

Paul told Titus to "speak the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

Immediately following, he proceeds to give instruction for the *fitting behavior* of older and younger *men* and *women*. In passing, let us observe that "sound doctrine" is more than the plan of salvation, organization of the church and the avenues of worship. It includes fitting *behavior* for both men and women.

#### The Older Woman Must Look To Herself

The older woman must first look to herself. She must "be in behavior as becometh holiness." Her conduct should be

such as the gospel requires, and "that which is befitting in persons, actions or things consecrated to God." (WE. Vine).

She must not be a "false accuser" or slanderer. She must carefully guard her words. She must not "be given to much wine." I feel this means the same thing as in the qualifications of a deacon. I do not believe the words "much wine" are teaching an older woman that she can indulge in the use of intoxicants in small quantities, but the women who is given to wine has no business teaching younger women. If you indulge in drinking socially or otherwise, how do you know that those who follow in your steps might not become drunkards?

The older woman must be a teacher of "good things." The times in which we live are producing women who are almost anything but teachers of "good things." I am astounded at the older women I see at "pro-abortion" rallies on television who are telling us it is alright to kill the fetus within the womb because *women should have control over their bodies*. "The Scriptural and correct way to think and speak of the unborn is as someone, a person, in personal terms, not as a non-human, impersonal things." (**Abortion And The Christian**, By Kent Ellis) (Jeremiah 1:4-5; Job 3:3; Genesis 25:22). So you see, we can not listen to every older woman. She just might have been influenced by other women who would lead us to believe it is acceptable to commit adultery, kill our unborn babies, drink alcohol or take drugs. Let us listen *only* to older women who are "teachers of good things."

May God help all older women to realize how much influence we have over others. We are truly "Bridge Builders." Let us take care that we build dependable bridges.

## Finality Of Truth

by Barney Keith



RUTH from God has existed throughout human history. Whenever and wherever God has spoken, there was truth, for "God cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). When "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21), truth was the product of their speaking. Our present concern, however, is with this question: *Is truth still being revealed?* To put it another way, is the truth already revealed in the Bible *final*? Numerous religious groups deny that it is (such as Mormons, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Catholics). The issue is a vital one that cannot be dismissed or treated lightly.

Whether we have *final truth* for this age necessarily hinges on whether God has sent His last Authoritative spokesman into the world. It should be self-evident that if God has already sent His last spokesman, then what that one said is *final*. It is the contention of this article that such is precisely what has already occurred, that everything man needs to know is available, and that what we need to do is to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

### "Times Past" -- These Last Days"

Note the clear statement by the writer of Hebrews 1:1,2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son..." Regardless of how and what God spoke "in times past," it is asserted that "in these last days He has spoken "by His Son."

A truly unique role Christ has in God's scheme of things in that it is He alone whose voice carries authority today. John states that "*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" (John 1:17). Indeed Jesus was "*full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). Paul declares, "It pleased the Father that in Him *all the fullness* should dwell" (Colossians 1:19). "Ye are *complete* in Him" (Colossians 2:10). (Emphases by BLK) The fullness of God's purposes for mankind and the completeness of His plan are seen in Christ Jesus. There can be no progression beyond fullness or completeness. Jesus came into the world with truth that the human race had been anticipating in ages past, but which was to be opened to man's view by the gospel revelation (Ephesians 3:1-6).

### Jesus Spoke Truth Through His Apostles

As Deity in human flesh, our Lord was to tabernacle among men for a relatively short time. He had been speaking truth to His apostles for about three years. He informed the apostles that He would return to His Father. He would, He promised, send the Holy Spirit to them. A key passage that will put the whole question in proper

perspective is John 16:7-14. Jesus told the apostles: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment... I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak. And He will shew you things to come ..."

Bear in mind that in this context Jesus is addressing His *apostles*, who would require supernatural help in the matter of revealing truth to the world. (In fact, the New King James Version has "Helper" in verse 7 instead of "Comforter.") Through His own chosen ambassadors Jesus would make known what He, as God's last spokesman, wanted men to know. It was *His* truth, though spoken by the apostles.

### "All Truth"

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth." Two facets of His truth were: (1) All that Jesus had taught them while He was still on earth; and (2) the "many things" He was yet to tell them after He should depart to heaven. In John 14:26 they were assured that the Holy Spirit would "bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." In John 16:13 He declared that the Spirit would make known anything else that was needed. These two things together surely constituted "*all truth*." And if "*all truth*" was revealed to them in the first century, as Jesus promised, then *no more truth has been added!* Belief in Jesus necessarily demands belief of His word. "All truth" means just that.

### Miraculous Power

The apostles of Christ, through being baptized in the Spirit, exercised miraculous powers in revealing and confirming the truth. They also possessed power to impart spiritual gifts to others by laying their hands on them (see Acts 8:18 and 19:6). Such was essential when divine truth was being revealed. Yet the New Testament makes it clear that such would not continue indefinitely. In the middle of his discussion of spiritual gifts in the infant church (I Corinthians 12-14) Paul clearly indicated that they would all cease. "Whether there be prophecies (this involved revelation of God's word, BLK), they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Until the completed, perfected work of revelation and confirmation of truth was accomplished, this "in part" arrangement obtained. So Paul said a time was coming at which this miraculous work would end. It would be "when that which is perfect is come."

Without spending time in the exegesis of the above passage, let us consider some facts which show conclusively

Continued Bottom Of Next Page



OW we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the law

comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:19-26. NASV). Thus reads the first paragraph of the doctrinal part of the book of Romans. The theme or proposition of the letter to the saints in Rome is stated by the apostle in Romans 1:16-17. He wrote, "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.'" Between Romans 1:16 and 11:32 there is the discussion of the

## The Gospel: Righteousness Apart From The Law

by Bill Cavender



"good news" that God can and will save sinners in Jesus the Christ, through the shedding of His blood, and through our faith in Him as the propitiation for our sins. Habakkuk had stated the truth of God's dealings with men of all ages that "the justified ones live by faith" (2:4; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38). It is by

God's mercy, kindness, love and grace that all sinners for all time have been, and are, pardoned and forgiven, and treated as if they had never sinned, through the obedience of their faith in God and to His expressed will (Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:4-7; Romans 1:5:16;26).

Since God's power to save sinners is made known and exerted through and in the gospel, it follows that men and women (all responsible, accountable persons; Jews or Gentiles) are sinners, are lost and separated from God, and are under the sentence of death (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 5:12-14; II Corinthians 5:17-21). Thus the inspired writer tells us of the sinful, lost condition - the sins - of the Gentile world (Romans 1:18-32), and the lost state of the Jewish world (Romans 2:1-29). All need Jesus and the gospel.

It is difficult to convince religious people, then and now, that they are unforgiven and lost in guilt of sins. False religion soothes the mind and pacifies the spirit. The Jews were no exception (Romans 10:1-3). They objected to what Paul had said about their sinful state and he answers their objections (Romans 3:1-8). Then follows a series of scriptures from the Old Testament, wherein the inspired men of those days spoke of the Jews' sinfulness then as Paul was now saying, i.e., they were sinners, lost, guilty, under sentence of spiritual death, and separated from God (Romans 3:9-18).

God tells us that we all sin. It is a moot and foolish question for men and brethren to argue whether we have to sin or not. The fact is that we do. Beginning with Adam, all have sinned (Romans 5:12). All have come under the same condemnation, guilt and sentence imposed by God for sin, just as Adam did, even though no one but Adam (and Eve) committed the particular sin of eating forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24; Romans 5:14). All of us sin (Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:12). "For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Jesus came to save us (Matthew 1:21).

Sins are fundamentally of two classes - sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission are wrongs that we do, violations of God's will (I John 3:4; 5:17). Sins of omission are our failures and neglect to do God's will (James 4:17). Jesus taught us that "sins," "trespasses," and "debts" are things done and left undone (Luke 11:1-13; Matthew 6:7-15). We sin in our thoughts (Mark 2:7-8; 7:1-23; II Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 5:19-21; Matthew 5:27-32). We sin in our words (Matthew 12:34, 36-37; Ephesians 4:25,29). We sin in our acts and deeds (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-6; Colossians 3:5-9). Only

### Finality Of Truth....Contd.

that *final truth* was realized nearly nineteen centuries ago. (1) There are *no apostles* of Christ living on earth today. (2) Not a one of those upon whom they laid hands to impart miraculous powers still lives. Hence, the vehicles Jesus used to do His speaking are not here performing that work. Yet since Jesus had said those apostles would be guided into all truth, that has to tell us that at some point in time before they all had died, *all truth had been made known!* That which was "perfect" had come. Revelation was complete. Jesus had fully spoken His will. And let it be emphasized that the Scriptures know absolutely nothing about any "successors" to that apostolic company.

### The Sufficiency of Final Truth

The apostle Peter states very well the reason for arguing the completeness and finality of the truth known in the first century. He affirmed that "His divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us ..." (II Peter 1:3). "*All things*" *should be enough*. What more could be accomplished for man's present and eternal state than this? **545 Midfield Street, Midfield, AL 35228 GT**

Jesus, the Son of God manifested in human form and flesh, did not sin (John 1:14; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-25). He is the only person who ever lived to manhood who did not deserve to die, never having violated the laws of God nor man, yet He freely gave His precious, spotless life for me and for you, the guiltless for the guilty, the sinless for the sinful, and shed His precious blood for the remission of our sins (Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 26:28; Galatians 1:4; 2:20; Ephesians 5:25-27; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14, etc.).

Once we sin we are no longer righteous. We are condemned by the law of God (Romans 8:1-8; 7:5, 7-12, 13-25; Galatians 3:10-14; Romans 5:16-18). Death is the one and only sentence imposed by a just God for violations of His holy and pure will. Spiritual death is separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Ezekiel 18:20). We are guilty. The "good news" of the gospel of Christ is that God, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and, by His death, meeting the demands of the law for the punishment of the guilty, can be "just" (uphold the majesty, power and dignity of His law) and yet be the "justifier" (pardoner, forgiver) of those who believe in Jesus and accept Him in faith and obedience, believing in His sacrifice on Calvary for us all (Romans 3:19-26).

Once we sin the only way we can ever again be "righteous" in God's sight is through His forgiveness of our sins. No amount of good works on our part will atone for our sins nor remove their guilt or erase the sentence of death. Once we sin only two avenues are open to us the remainder of our lives in this world. We can come to Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30), believe in Him as the only begotten Son of God who died for our sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; Matthew 16:18; John 11:27; Acts 8:36-38), repent of our sins in exceeding sorrow for them (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 17:30-31; II Corinthians 7:10), and upon true confession from our hearts of our faith in Him (Hebrews 10:22; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37) we are baptized into His death and into spiritual fellowship and union with Him, and with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-7; Colossians 2:12-14). Our Heavenly Father thus promises to *pardon and forgive* us. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7). "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12; 10:16-18; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 4:31-32). This is the way of the cross, the way of the love of God in Christ Jesus, the way of pardon and forgiveness, the way of cleansing of the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5-6; I Peter 1:18-19).

This is the way illustrated in Romans 4:1-25 in the case of Abraham, who was a sinner as we are (Romans 5:14; 4:3, 9, 16, 22-25). His "works" (thoughts, words, deeds) were not perfect. He sinned from time to time. Yet he

lived by faith (Hebrews 11:8-19; Romans 4:11,14-16, 20-25; Galatians 3:6-8, 14), obeyed God (James 2:14-26; Hebrews 11:8-19), builded altars and worshipped (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 21:33); and Jesus, the only Saviour the world has ever had, died for Abraham's sins as well as for ours, dying for the sins of the whole world (Hebrews 9:15-17; I John 2:1-2). This is the course of life we must follow, as Abraham did, walking by faith in the truth, in the light and in love, and in the Spirit (II Corinthians 5:7; II John 4; III John 2-4; I John 1:7; Ephesians 5:2; Galatians 5:16-18). David describes the blessedness of the man who thus walks, unto whom God imputes (reckons, counts) righteousness, even though that man's life and works have not been perfect, by saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:6-8; Psalms 32:1-2).

The other avenue of life open to sinners (if they refuse the mercy and pardon that our God, the moral and spiritual Governor of the universe offers them through Jesus) is *punishment* for their guilt of sins. The separation between man and his God, caused by sin in the life of the person and the sentence of guilt and death, if unpardoned, continues through the course of this life and goes on into eternity. Our Saviour said, "... ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins... ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:24, 21). "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ..." (Romans 8:13). The law of God pronounces condemnation, judgment upon the disobedient (I Timothy 1:8-16). God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men (Romans 1:18). Sinful men and women, children of disobedience directed by Satan, deserving of wrath because of their wickedness and sins, will be punished (Ephesians 2:1-3; 5:6; Colossians 3:5-6). When Jesus is revealed from heaven at His coming again to end the world, to raise the dead, and to judge all who have ever lived on earth, "in flaming fire" He will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be *punished* with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power..." (II Thessalonians 1:3-10). Those who have not obeyed the gospel are all unbelievers, sinners, who have not availed themselves of the only way of escape from their guilt of sins and the sentence of separation from God forever (Romans 10:18; I Peter 4:17-18). Not being pardoned by God through Jesus, they receive the punishment due them for their iniquities (Isaiah 59:1-2; Matthew 7:21-23; II Peter 3:9).

The law of God, any law of God at any time to any person (as Adam), to any class of men (as the patriarchs), to any nation (as the Israelites at Sinai), and to all nations, to every human being (the New Testament of Jesus), is always "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:7-12). Jehovah never gave foolish, useless laws to anyone at anytime. All of His commandments are righteous (Psalm 119). If men at any time had kept His law perfectly in their lifetimes, the law would have been unto life (Romans 10:5; 7:9-12).

But failing to keep the law, the law pronounced as guilty the violator of the law, and was unto death, the sentence and penalty incurred by violation of God's law (Romans 4:15; 3:19-20; Galatians 3:9-14). "Only perfect works, works without any guilt of sin, can bring salvation as a debt. The one 'who worketh' is, therefore, the one whose works are so perfect that he has no guilt of sin. But no one has so lived" (Commentary on Romans, R.L. Whiteside, page 94). Any man's "works" are the thoughts, words and deeds of his life, as he lives his lifetime in this world under the laws of God which govern him at the time he lives. All "faithful" men and women mentioned in the scriptures are people who in their lifetimes did not live perfectly, yet walked by faith, with penitent hearts and obedient spirits, and received the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of all men for all time - past, present and future (Hebrews 9:15-17; Romans 3:24-26).

The ways of life in Jesus and death in sin are set before each one of us. The way of life, pardon, forgiveness, righteousness, justification, salvation here and hereafter, for time and for eternity, is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who paid the price with the shedding of His blood and redeemed us from all iniquities (all as to kind and number) ((Romans 6:23; Titus 2:14; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). No man can boast, nor does any man deserve the goodness, grace, love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Yet God loves us in spite of our sins (John 3:16-17; I John 3:9-11, 3:1-3; Romans 5:6-10). The only way a sinner can ever be "righteous" again is by being cleansed and forgiven in the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 1:5; Romans 5:9), through faith and through obedience to the gospel of our Lord (Romans 6:1-7, 16-18; Acts 2:37-41).

The way of death is a life of wickedness, sinfulness, disobedience, neglect, breaking and/or ignoring the laws of God as revealed to all men now in the New Testament. God has spoken to all mankind through Jesus, His only-begotten Son (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-23). The sinner refuses all of God's generous offers of pardon, forgiveness, justification and righteousness in Christ (I Corinthians 1:18, 30), and lives and dies in his guilt of his sins. Therefore, punishment, eternal fire in hell, is prepared for him, and for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:10,15). This is the only destiny and future a sinner has.

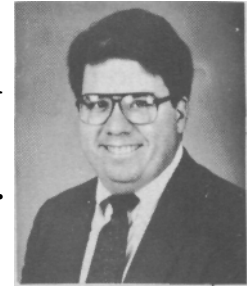
We are all under the law of God as revealed in the New Testament. We must believe it, respect it, and obey it from our hearts. Yet when we falter and fail, sin and fall short of God's glory, there is mercy and pardon if we turn from our sins and iniquities in sorrow, regret and confession, and obey our Lord's will from a sincere, true heart of faith (Hebrews 10:22; Acts 3:26; Romans 6:16-18). We are under the law of God but we are also under the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:11, 14-15; Acts 20:24).

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*Study Your Bible Daily!*

## The Bible And Home Life

by Bill Robinson, Jr.



N excessive number of "self help" (?) books line the shelves of bookstores across our nation today. Covering every aspect of our lives from mental health to dressing for success. Perhaps, no other aspect of human society continues to receive as much media attention (via books, radio/television talk shows, magazines, etc.) as does the home and related subjects such as marriage, parenting, family life et. al.

I am not opposed to reading or gleaning from uninspired sources helpful suggestions regarding marriage and the home. However, and quite frankly, I am about as sick and tired of hearing members of the church quote, "Fascinating Womanhood" or "Man of Steel and Velvet" or Dr. James Dobson as the ultimate authority on marriage, manhood and child-rearing, as I am in hearing what Chuck Swindoll and others of his ilk, who do not even know how to become a New Testament Christian, have to say about dealing with life and Christian living!

In spite of all the uninspired books written on the home and the family, whether considered individually or collectively, none of them demand a greater devotion to marriage and the home than what the Bible says in Ephesians 5:22 - 6:4. Furthermore, none of these "self-help" books are able to pay the supreme tribute to the marriage relationship as does the Holy Spirit when He compares it to Christ's love for the church. Again, we emphasize not one of these books provides a greater example than the Bible does of the love necessary to establishing and maintaining an honorable marriage and stable home life.

In view of these salient truths, regarding the Bible and homelife, though it may seem elementary, it is nonetheless important that this article emphasize from the beginning that problems in marriages and homes are the result of the husband and/or the wife not loving the Lord as they should. Please note, I did not say loving each other as they should I said loving the Lord as THEY should. When discussing the love which sustains a marriage, it should be clearly understood that neither the husband nor the wife is capable of reaching their full potential for loving each other until they put the Lord first and love Him supremely (I John 4:10-11, 19). Folks, that is not just some "pop psycho-analysis" that is *biblical truth!*

Our love, if it is to find its proper expression both toward God and in our home life, must be based on the Bible. Thus, as love is properly expressed in the home be-

tween husbands and wives parents and children the Bible becomes the invincible foundation upon which the family life is built and secured. Only in this environment - where a sincere love for God and Divine truth, as well as a true love between husband and wife exists — can we have any hope of successfully communicating the same to our children. If there is one significant message that needs to be impressed upon our minds as parents it is the divine truth that what we *are* is reflected in our children not what we believe! (Ezekiel 16:4).

There are some suggestions which I believe make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of children. One is the reading and studying of the Bible with them. Make it a regular habit. However, in trying to establish a regular schedule do not be so rigid about it that if you miss it a time or two, here and there, that you give it up completely! The important thing is to get started and make the effort to stay with it -- even when you lapse from time to time!

Personally, I do not favor a Bible Story book except as an aid to the reading of the inspired text. The International Children's Bible (IBC) is an excellent translation of the Bible for children it is geared for a third grade reading level. There is an adult version of the same translation under the name of the New Century Version (NCV), which I have found extremely helpful. (For those with an aversion to the New International Version, please note that these are not the same). Though it (ICB/NCV) is rather simplistic in places, such seems to be a preferable trait of this reliable translation, in my opinion, to the discouragement many of us faced as children in trying to read and understand the older reliable and still respected translations.

We might also add that there are a couple of good helps for children to aid them in Bible study. The International Children's Bible Dictionary and International Children's Bible Handbook provide good usable and readable geographical data, definitions, maps, etc. Every Bible class teacher of children should have access to these books (ICB, Handbook and Dictionary).

Another suggestion we offer in helping parents to bring children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is in the area of singing. We need to sing with our children - the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is an excellent tool for teaching children Biblical concepts and to help them remember important facts necessary to serving God. Frankly, there is not a better way to develop a closeness with our children than by singing with them. Children have a seeming predisposition for singing and it is important that we help cultivate it ~ after all God commands us to sing in worship of Him.

Finally, another suggestion is in the realm of prayer. Prayer, unlike our predisposition to sing, has to be taught (Luke 11:1). And parents, we will never be successful teachers of that which we do not practice! Be an encouragement to the development of your child's prayer life by your own example, as well as verbal instruction.

Often as parents we complain that we do not have the time we would like to have to be able to spend it studying, singing and praying with our children. The problem folks is not time — quit shifting the blame and putting it off on time! The real problem is we don't think it is that important to us personally! I say this because we always find the time for the important things — for us personally.

Let me leave you with one last thought. While it may not seem very important to you personally to take the time, in addition to their Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday, to help your children develop spiritually, let me assure you that it is important to Jehovah. It was on this basis that God chose Abraham to be the recipient of His promises of blessing. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19). Could God have chosen us on the same basis? May I remind you that God's spiritual blessings today are only reserved for those "...who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham..." (Romans 4:12ff).

**P. O. Box 666, Kemp, Texas 75143 *GT***

## Sympathy

Our sympathy is extended to the family of Thomas Icard at his passing on September 28, 1989. Brother Icard was a faithful gospel preacher. He passed away in a hospital in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He died of a heart attack.

Brother Icard was married to Glenda Adams (sister of Wiley and Connie Adams) of Hopewell, Virginia. He had been preaching the gospel of Christ for a number of years, with most of his work done in the West Virginia, Pennsylvania and North Carolina areas. He preached for a number of years at the Tomlinson Run congregation in Georgetown, Pennsylvania. He also worked for an extended period with the church in Wellsburg, West Virginia.

Services were conducted for Tommy at Tomlinson Run on Saturday, September 30th by Owen Thomas, the local preacher.

Then on Monday, October 2nd, services were conducted in Hopewell, Virginia by John Noscar, Wiley Adams and Connie Adams. There was a good number of friends and family who attended the services. It was my privilege to attend these services since I was in a gospel meeting with the Rivermont church in Hopewell that week. It was not actually a sad occasion as all who knew him spoke of him as a faithful Christian.

Again, may I say that we extend to Glenda and the family our kindest regards and wish the very best for them.

-- Editor



ALL humanity is well fraught with one burdening and besetting problem after another, and man is, therefore, ever looking for sufficiency with which to cope with each ordeal. The Bible believer struggles (II Corinthians 5:4), though with boldness (Hebrews 4:16), in his appeal for help. He understands that help comes in many ways; that God provides sufficiency for those who trust Him (II Corinthians 12:9).

Paul wrote the Romans saying the "strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," and quotes Psalm 69:9 to prove it (Romans 15:1-3). The use of this Old Testament passage places apostolic endorsement upon it; shows the whole of the Old Testament is to be used by us for our learning; that "the God of patience and consolation" - "the God of all comfort" caused the Scriptures to be written to teach us patience in bearing the infirmities of others, and to give us comfort under the inconvenience of carrying them (Romans 15:4,5; II Corinthians 1:3). Therefore, the Scriptures are our source of comfort; their commands, examples and promises extend hope to the obedient. The comfort of the Scriptures is allied, not in indifference, but in endurance in doing the will of God.

"Comfort" translates *parakleis*, a compound meaning "a calling to one's side"; "a calling near, summons." The Hellenistic signification is to console, to soothe, to encourage. The Scriptures are "for the instruction of us," teaching us that there is help, that the Lord is near to protect and sustain (Philippians 4:5), that we can keep on having hope. Both Old and New Testaments give one example after another of God, in manifold ways giving comfort. But this comfort is always associated with His word (Psalm 119:76), it is "afforded by the contents of the Scriptures." **Thayer**, page 485. Dr. S.T. Bloomfield says the comfort is "through the patience which the Scriptures recommend and exemplify, and by the [motives for] consolation which they supply." Com-

## The Comfort Of The Scriptures

by Earl Robertson



mentary, Volume II, page 86. David said, "Remember the word to thy servant, upon which thou has caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (Psalm 119:49,50). The Christian finds cheer and encouragement in the comfort he calls for from God through the Scriptures, and such is enjoyed through the dispelling of grief and the giving of strength. One finds himself able to do all things through Christ who strengthens him (Philippians 4:13).

For the sacred writings to produce comfort within a man, the word must be planted in his heart. Jesus taught men that the word must be heard (received) by the honest and good heart and kept to save (and comfort) the soul (Luke 8:11-15). God, through His word, appeals to the inner man while Satan seeks the affection of man through the flesh. Compare Ephesians 3:16; I John 2:15-17. Paul said, "But I keep (bruise, buffet) under my body..." (I Corinthians 9:27). The "I" and his "body" were two: the "outward" man and the "inward" man (II Corinthians 4:16-18). When Jesus told the devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), He was emphasizing the soul's need for the word of God as well as the body's need for daily bread. The soul can't live and be comforted without the everlasting truth of God. One's body can live on beans and bread, but so can a hog. No wonder Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"

(Colossians 3:16)! The Scriptures are to be used by us in conformity with the intellectual and moral convictions formed in our hearts by an acceptance of the word as the absolute standard for faith and morals. Only by causing the word to enter into our hearts, and then acting upon its passions and powers, can we enjoy the comfort afforded by God.

There is no comfort in the Scriptures to either an unbelieving alien sinner or a disobedient child of God. The preached word caused the alien Jews at Pentecost to be pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:37), and it caused Simon to ask the apostle Peter to pray for him (Acts 8:21-24). It caused sinners in the church at Corinth to be sorry (I Corinthians 5:2; II Corinthians 7:8). God ever holds punishment before man for disbelief and disobedience. The life of the disobedient is miserable, and his career ends in hell!

The early disciples are said to have walked "in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). They had reverence for the Lord, and their every step was motivated, authorized, and circumscribed by His word. This word was placed in the apostles (II Corinthians 4:7; I Thessalonians 2:4), and they spoke it "as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4; I Corinthians 2:13; Ephesians 3:3-6). As the disciples so received the words of the Spirit, and in piety utilized them in their daily lives, they are said to have walked in the comfort of the Spirit. They experienced uniformity: agreement in life with the will of God was a well known fact among these saints who walked so as to please the Lord (Romans 8:1,16; 12:1,2; II Corinthians 3:2,3; Colossians 2:10; I Thessalonians 2:12). Their walk was by faith (II Corinthians 5:7). Before conversion it was a walk "according to the course of this world" (Ephesians 2:2), but voluntary surrender to Christ in conversion causes one to walk by the rule of Christ (Galatians 6:6; I John 3:6). The Holy Spirit revealed the truth, and it was received by men from the apostles, showing

them "how [they] ought to walk and to please God" (I Thessalonians 4:1). The appreciation of this truth gave comfort - comfort of the Holy Spirit!

Christians experience distress and anxiety in toiling for the Master. Their known fellow-Christians may not be as faithful and committed to the Lord so as to give the sweet aroma of support so badly needed. In Paul's case the Lord stood with him (II Timothy 4:16-18). When Paul went into Macedonia he had no rest, trouble was on every side, fightings without and fears within! However, God comforted him by getting Titus to him with a message of change by the Corinthians (II Corinthians 7:5-7). So many times when one brother sorely needs help for comfort he gets a "Judas act" instead. Our efforts for each other should be such that proves "our care" to be pure and kind "in the sight of God" (II Corinthians 7:12). Behavior like this, so ordered by the Scriptures, proves comforting.

The difficulties in serving Christ are sometimes opposition and even persecution (II Timothy 3:12). The sources of such difficulties are from within the church as well as from without. The conflict of wills comes into strong play, and man sets his heart and hand against every thing that is holy. This is particularly distressing and even more so, as the opposition assumes a more aggressive form: calumny, gossip, innuendo. The "unprovable" was a tool enemies of Paul enjoyed using against him and his work for Christ (Acts 25:7). This maltreatment is insult to injury. But remember: God knows all about it, and will repay (Romans 12:19). Satan knows many wiles (Ephesians 4:14; 6:11), and is so successful in baiting his hook. The consolation of those who have gone before us was in accepting the predictions of sufferings, and the promises of help offered in the Scriptures. David said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalm 27:13). Again, he wrote, "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). Confidently, he again exclaimed, "They that sow in tears

shall reap in joy" (Psalm 127:5). Believers in God enjoy the comfort from these Scriptures!

Living in a totally good conscience before God is demonstrative of the comfort of the Scripture (Acts 23:1). A good conscience is never had without singular effort (Acts 24:16). Paul, who counted all things loss for Christ (Philippians 3:7-11), "exercised" (took pains, labor, strive) himself to have the quality and character of conscience he could live with by day and sleep with at night. He lived with his deeds; he could live with himself!

The trials of faith, of cruel mockings and scourgings which God's faithful experience, would really have no value were it not for the Lord's behest and His promises (Hebrews 11; I Peter 1:7; 4:12-14). God, our Father, is righteous and keeps His promises (II Peter 3:9). Regarding the land promise God made to Abraham, Nehemiah said God "has performed thy words, for thou art righteous" (Nehemiah 9:8). Promises of God are guaranteed on the righteousness of God! Like Abraham, who from mere human rationale, did not have the "why's" and "why not's" regarding the offering of his son, Isaac, but "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20,21). Truly, his life of trust in God was a life of comfort based on the eternal Scriptures. Trials, properly used, build hope, and sustaining hope creates and maintains comfort.

Perhaps the greatest comfort found in the Scriptures has to do with death and resurrection. Christ shall reign until death is destroyed (I Corinthians 15:25,26). The dying saint is so related to his Savior that the Scripture speaks of him as being asleep "in Jesus" (I Thessalonians 4:14), and as dying unto the Lord (Romans 14:8). John says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). Paul desired strongly to be righteous before God through the faith of Christ, to know the power of His resurrection and "attain unto the

resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:9-11). The comfort of knowing that if the body dies the faithful Christian has "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" is unequalled (II Corinthians 5:1-10). The strength of the body fails (II Corinthians 4:16), but the soul is strengthened (Ephesians 3:16); the vicissitudes of life hold the experiences a believer has with God which renews his soul day by day (II Corinthians 4:16). What hope! What joy! What comfort from God's own word that the faithful in Christ Jesus will not have to cross Jordan alone!

Tho the billows of sorrow and trouble may sweep,

Christ the Savior will care for His own;

Till the end of the journey, my soul He will keep,

I won't have to cross Jordan alone.

- C.E. Durham

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## Have You Seen A Rainbow Lately?

by Loren T. Stephens



OD gave to mankind the rainbow, for dual purposes. We need to know these purposes in order that we may properly appreciate the significance of the rainbow today. We read in Genesis 9:11-13 "And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off anymore by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the heavens and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." The first purpose for the rainbow is plainly stated in these passages.

God stated He would never again destroy the earth by flood, and placed the bow, or rainbow, in the cloud as the perpetual, continuing sign of that promise to all mankind. He, in that action, sealed for the duration of earth-time His promise, and each time a human sees that sign, regardless of their religious beliefs or lack of them, he can know that God IS, and that He is powerful. The rainbow tells us that! We are reminded each and every time we see this bow of God's that He did destroy the life of this earth at one time, and promised never to so flood the earth again. We need also to remember that He nowhere promised Noah or anyone else that He would not destroy the earth again. He only promised that it would not be by a flood.

God gave the Israelites the feast of the Passover for two reasons also. In Exodus 12:13-14, Moses records, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord, and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by ordinance forever." God wanted the Israelites to remember what He did to the Egyptians that night through all the following generations of their people. He wanted their thoughts to be upon Him and His power and majesty. Thus, He gave them this yearly feast to observe. It was an annual reminder of His destruction of the Egyptians. Also, God wanted them to remember what He had done for *them!* Notice verse 17 of the text here: "and ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread (Passover), for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever." God not only punished the Egyptians for their treatment of the Israelites, He also delivered the Israelites from bondage. He freed them from slavery. He wanted them to remember the event for the duration of their people. It was important that they remember their God and serve *Him*. In this He also reminds them that had they not obeyed in the

placing of the blood, He would have brought the plague upon them!

God had the Israelites place manna in the Tabernacle for a memorial for two reasons also. Notice in Exodus 16:32-34, "And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt." God wanted future generations of Israelites to know that He has provided for His people, that He had cared for their needs while they were in the wilderness. This could easily be proved by preserving the manna for them to see. This also served as a strengthening of their faith in God. The manna was not a common item of food, it in fact was an all-purpose food, being primary and only food, apparently, for some time, until God brought them quail and meat. Man had never seen such an item of food before God gave it to the Israelites, and to our knowledge, no one has duplicated it in the years since. Thus, preserving the samples would be doubly beneficial and faith renewing.

God by Jesus Christ gave the Lord's Supper, again for two purposes. Man, in this observance, is to remember the sacrifices that Jesus gave for the sins of all who will obey and follow Him. This is the thrust of His comments in Matthew 26:26 and following. Paul also quotes Jesus in this institution in I Corinthians 11:20-34. We are to remember the giving of the life of Jesus to redeem us from our sins and reconcile us to God.

The other purpose for the memorial we observe each Lord's Day in the Lord's Supper is set forth in Acts 20:28, speaking of Jesus and the church which "He purchased with His own blood." God, through this memorial also reminds the partaker of the price paid and who it was that paid the price for the church.

Many times, in regard to the Lord's Supper, and even the church itself, we need reminding of who is to partake, and where the authority comes from for doing it. The body and the church are one and the same (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:23-27). We are baptized into the body of Christ (Galatians 3:27), and the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23). This memorial means everything to the Christian, the one who obeys Christ, who desires heaven enough to leave all and follow Him. The instructions for the partaking of the Lord's Supper are given to saints, members of His body, God's children, even as the other memorials we have discussed were given to God's people, from Sinai on, and to *no one else*. The Lord's Supper is not for everyone, only those who can partake worthily.

The Lord gave us II Peter 3:1-18 for two purposes. In the first six verses, we are reminded of those who have gone before, those sinful people who were destroyed by the flood (remember them, and that rainbow we started this article with?) who scoffed at God and everything holy. Having been thus reminded, Peter then warns us of what is to come, the final destruction of this old earth by fire, a complete and total removal from existence. Verses 7-14 should both remind us that God said He would not use a flood again, *and*, that He says here He *will* destroy the earth, and this time, by fire.

Now, in conclusion, let's put all this together and see where we are today.

First, God gave memorials to *His* people.

Second, The Lord's Supper is for *His* people.

**Continued Bottom Next Page**

<b>Reemphasizing Bible Basics''</b> <b>Florida College Lectureship January 29</b> <b>- February 1, 1990</b>			
Morning Lectures	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<b>9:00 a.m.</b> <i>Christ</i>	Head of the Church <b>Harry Pickup, Jr.</b>	Center Of The Gospel and Doctrine <b>Connie Adams</b>	Savior of the Church <b>Dale Smelser</b>
<b>10:00 a.m.</b> <i>Gospel</i>	Elements of: Facts, Commands, Promises <b>Berry Kercheville</b>	Obedience of: (to) <b>Morris Hafley</b>	Power of: To Save <b>Tom Roberts</b>
<b>11:00 A. M.</b> <i>Church</i>	Structure of: <b>Maurice Barnett</b>	Worship of: <b>Dan Petty</b>	Work of: <b>Hoyt</b> <b>Houchen</b>
<b>12:00 noon</b> <i>Bible</i>	Authority of: <b>Colly Caldwell</b>	Inspiration of: <b>James Cooper</b>	Canonicity of: <b>Marty Pickup</b>
<b>Afternoon Sessions</b> <i>Holy Spirit</i>	Panel: Indwelling of the Spirit <b>Ron Halbrook</b> <b>Ferrell Jenkins</b>	Open Forum <b>Clinton Hamilton</b>	
<b>Evening Lectures:</b> <i>Unity</i>			
<b>Monday</b>			
Walking In The Old Paths <b>Melvin Curry</b>	Departure From The Old Paths <b>Grover Stevens</b>	Pharisaism In The Way <b>Frank Jamerson</b>	The End Of The Journey <b>James R. Cope</b>

**Rainbow....Contd.**

Third, if you are not a Christian, you are not of God's people and the Lord's Supper is not for you, you are not a child of God and going to heaven. In fact, Christ died for no reason for you.

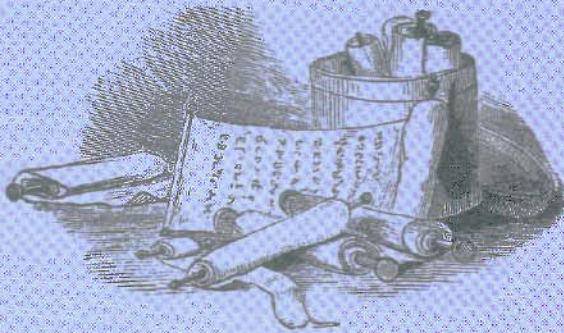
In that condition, the sight of a rainbow should literally terrorize your heart, for it tells you that the flood is past, and that the same God who destroyed the earth once by

flood has promised that He will destroy it in the last day by fire, and you, dear lost one do not know the day it's coming.

Have you seen any rainbows lately? Think about it.  
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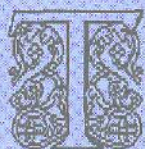
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## Voices From The Past

### Men And Movements



THE everlasting and inevitable conflict between truth and error, right and wrong, goes on. It would be heavenly if all knew, believed, and lived the truth, error were banished from the earth, and universal peace prevailed. Such has not been since sin entered into the world, and there is no evidence that such a happy state is imminent.

#### Desirable But Impossible

It would be far less painful and heartbreaking if the conflict could proceed in a purely impersonal way. But such has never been and cannot be. Issues and movements are too closely identified with men. Men come to personify the issues that inflame them. It becomes impossible to fight error without at the same time fighting the men in whom the error is incarnated. The conflict between Jesus and the apostles of false doctrine in his day was bitter and personal. They early recognized him as the embodiment of principles they would not compromise with. He was set for their destruction as leaders of the people. He mentioned them by name, called them wolves in sheep's clothing, whited sepulchers, sons of hell, fools and blind, blind guides, hypocrites, and warned the people pointedly to beware of their teaching.

It is a foolish notion that a heretical movement in the church, or out, can be fought in a purely impersonal way. Some seem to think that a death stroke can be administered to the movement and leave the man or men who are the life of it unscratched. It is like killing one of the Siamese twins with affecting the health of the other. It cannot be done. Too tender a solicitation for such men is in itself an evidence of too great a toleration of the movement. An apology for false teachers is an apology for their false teaching. Try to fix it any other way without making a complete wreck out of the principles of logic! The least that can be done to logic by such a course is to beg the question, declare that the movement is not serious enough in its nature or consequences to oppose. And that will start a fight on another issue. A fence sitter in no man's land in a major conflict would never have invited a light from heaven on the road to Damascus.

#### Compromise Is Deadly

Can you imagine Paul saying to Sergius Paulus: "Our friend Elymas possibly had good intentions. But that he is wrong I shall not at length present to you. You will please give consideration to --" Ugh! If Paul were alive today, he would have to tone down his personality to get into some of the papers.

-- Excerpts Taken From An Article  
by Cled E. Wallace, *Gospel Advocate*, 1936