

# Gospel Truths

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(Front Page Article)

## Envy and The Love Of Money

by H. E. Phillips – (Deceased)



BUT they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Timothy 6:9-10).

Seeing the definition of “envy,” it is important that we determine the conditions that breed envy. Most of us have a tendency to give first place to self in most everything. The fact that everyone has an intense interest and love for self makes it easy for the power of money to be involved.

But from the Lord we learn: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:4). Avarice in the heart brings other things into captivity. The power of money cannot be underestimated. It can easily be seen in the lives of millions around us every day.

Crimes of every kind and dimension are growing rapidly around the world because of the love of money and the desire for its power. Its power to purchase about anything to gratify and pacify man’s appetite of the things in this world compels him to seek it at every opportunity. Selfishness makes the love for money the lure of Satan to entice hundreds of millions every day. Every one of us tends to have a little streak of greed that renders us subjects to the desire for the possession of some wealth. This strong ambition for this power to serve self paves the way for sin. James says: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14-15).

The relationship of selfishness, money and lust form the following vicious circle: selfishness and avarice provide excessive appetites, and money produces the key to unlock the doors to fulfill the lust, thus the love of money. The Scriptures teach that the love of money is the root of all evil. Lust or excessive desire is covetousness. Covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Idolatry includes heathen worship and sacrifice; it is the worship of any-thing in the place of God. That which takes the place of God and comes before God is an idol, regardless of what you call it. The love of money is the foundation for *envy*.

### Most Problems Of Preachers Are From Envy

Envy ensues from things other than money, but money is directly or indirectly involved most of the time. All thoughts, attitudes and motives originate in the heart. It is in the heart that envy is conceived and is expressed in words and actions.

A younger preacher is invited to a rather large congregation to work with them. He is offered a larger than average monthly salary. Some older preachers find this incomprehensible. No good

thing can come from this younger preacher and this church who supports him so well. They talk among themselves and detail all of his faults, and the lack of wisdom on the part of the elders who invited him. When they have finished, there is not one good or constructive idea expressed. Why did they talk among themselves about this younger preacher and the church where he moved? They were not telling each other anything they did not already know. They were exposing the envy in their hearts. They did not want that younger man to be with this church: they wanted to be there. If you look closely at the situation, you will find that money is likely to be at the root of their envy. They do not want a younger preacher to be making more money than they are.

One preacher has worked hard for many years to prepare himself to preach the gospel, while some of his fellow-preachers spent an insignificant amount of time cooking up little innocuous sermons. Invitations and opportunities to the prepared preacher double those of his fellow-preachers, and they are angry with him for his success. Backbiting and slander about him and his “luck” consume their minds and deeds. He will likely be charged with falsehood, immoral conduct and very little knowledge of truth, etc. Why are they saying these things? They are envious of him. They do not want him to have the success and reputation he has. They can say all kinds of blasphemous and untrue things about him, but they do not want to work as he did. They want what he has, but they want more: they do not want him to have any of it. At the bottom of this is the love of money, because he is in position to receive more for his labors. Most of the problems among preachers are a combination of envy and jealousy. One does not want the other to have the ability and opportunity which he has, but he wants it. One does not want the other to have anything he has. One preacher gets angry at another for exposing some error with which he is involved. An honest and good heart would gladly receive the truth and thank the one to taught him. But this is not what happens when envy rules the heart. The one who exposed the error becomes an enemy and is no longer worthy of his fellowship.

A “big” preacher has established a reputation for which he is jealous. His resentment builds against preachers who have less reputation, but who are showing great ability and a lot of hard work. The envy of the “big” preacher effects all sorts of criticism and efforts to discourage him in his work.

We can tell when envy is working in the heart. We must keep in mind that what others think of us will not determine where we will spend eternity. God knows the hearts of men, and He will judge each one through Jesus Christ in that day which He has appointed (Acts 17:31). In some cases envy may never come to the surface in word or deed, but it will boil within the heart and destroy the effectiveness of that preacher. I could rejoice within my heart at the information of the failure or heartache of a fellow-preacher with the hope that it will reduce or destroy his ability and influence to preach the gospel. That is envy! You may smile at the derogatory remarks of others concerning a good preacher, and never say a word. That is envy working in the heart. Even the news that a good preacher had a heart attack and is confined to his bed for a long time, with little hope that he will be back to his former power to preach the gospel, makes you glad in your heart. You may be hypocritical and pass the word of sympathy to him or his friends, but envy is in your heart if you are the least bit glad for his problems. Feuds and vicious exchange of words that extend over a period of time is fueled by envy, and envy comes from selfishness and the love of money. A preacher is rebuked by another for bad conduct or false teaching. The one rebuked becomes angry and retaliates with aggressive words. Truth is lost in the exchange, and each continues from envy to assault the other. Now truth is not altered by heated exchanges of charges and counter-charges. It is not changed by heaping “witnesses” and

colleagues to support his charges. The man who stands for or against the truth never changes it one particle. He stands in defense of it or opposed to it. And Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Why do these preachers continue to feud with each other? The answer is envy and the love of money.

Strife is closely associated with envy, and is usually named with it. Strife is a factious mind. It is based upon self-ambition, a self-seeking party spirit that gathers sympathetic followers who separate from others. Usually when preacher turns against preacher, each seeks to gather sympathetic followers to rally to the cause over which the division occurred. Envy and strife go together. Contention is a self-serving, usually insincere, person whose motives are to hurt others who stand in his way of promoting his self-interests. This word is mentioned with envy and strife in Philippians 1:15-16. A contentious person is dangerous to the truth. It is time for each individual to examine his heart and dig out all envy, strife, jealous and contention, and get about the business of preaching the gospel to a lost and dying world. There is more than anyone can do in a lifetime. We ought to encourage each other and give all the strength to every preacher of the gospel we know. The only situation which should never be encouraged is that man who preachers “another gospel” or who does not bring the doctrine of Christ. Every brother that walketh disorderly and not according to the truth, should be disciplined, with the hope that he will repent and return to the Lord.



## Controversy – And the Spirit of Compromise

**THE** Bible says we as Christians are in a battle. It is not a battle with tanks and planes and guns (carnal weapons). “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore ...” (Ephesians 6:10-14). He then names the pieces of armor that we are to put on.

II Corinthians 10:3-6 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: <sup>4</sup>(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) <sup>5</sup>Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; <sup>6</sup>And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”

Christianity involves controversy. We cannot say “but I don’t want to fight” and be pleasing to God. When we join the Lord’s army we join Him in a fight (as Paul said) “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. “ It may not be my nature to fight. I have no choice in the matter. For again Paul said to Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (I Timothy 6:12). “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus

Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules” (II Timothy 2:3-5). We are in a battle with the devil daily as we endeavor to live the Christian life. We are also instructed to: “. . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude3) and in doing this, we must follow the example of the early Christians. Peter said, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you...” (II Peter 2:1).

Paul encountered many “false brethren” (II Corinthians 11:26). In fact one circumstance was cited by Luke in the book of Acts. Paul said of those teachers of error(brethren) who tried to bring brethren into bondage with false doctrine in Acts 15:1-2, “And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.” In rehearsing this matter to the Gentiles in Galatians 2:3-5, Paul reminded them that when false brethren tried to bind circumcision on them that”... we did not yield submission even *for* an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Galatians 2:5).

### **We Know God’s Attitude Toward Those Who Will Not Stand**

“‘Curse Meroz,’ said the angel of the LORD, ‘Curse its inhabitants bitterly, Because they did not come to the help of the LORD, To the help of the LORD against the mighty’” (Judges 5:23) “‘Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD deceitfully (negligently ASV), And cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood” (Jeremiah48:10). As you can readily see, it was not the fact that these people did something against the Lord, for they did not. The problem was that when the battle raged, they did not raise a hand to assist.

We must warn people of the coming doom if they stand before the judgment bar of God having lived in adultery in this life.”When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul” (Ezekiel 33:8-9).

Many brethren today are opposed to any kind of controversy. They want everything to be on a “positive” note. They have been “sold on” the philosophy, preach on positive things. Don’t preach on certain controversial subjects.

Oh, they will tell you that they do preach on some things that are negative. But, it is one thing to discuss somewhat controversial issues such as immodesty, the women’s liberation movement etc. which are not dividing the church. However, it is quite another to be called upon to discuss issues which are dividing the church which may involve some poor soul who is in the audience who is living in adultery. The reply comes, “No, I won’t preach on that. It is too controversial.”

For a number of years it has saddened me that brethren who have great influence in our brotherhood have chosen to uphold, commend and fellowship men who not only teach this soul-damning error but sit as moderator in debate for those who defend it in public discussion. Jerry Bassett and Don Bassett are examples of those who are teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage. Jerry Bassett’s erroneous teaching on the subject is surely known to all. It was not done in a corner. Also a number of these brethren continually hold meetings on the west coast where the preacher and elders believe error (and many in the congregations are living in adultery

because of what the elders and preacher believe and teach). Yet year after year meetings and lectureships are conducted without a single sermon being preached on the subject. Shades of every controversy that has ever divided brethren! Reports similar to this were read during the missionary society, the instrumental music, the premillennial and the institutional controversies. Their favorite theme was, “play shut-mouth on *that* subject and try to stay in good with both sides.”

### **The Devil’s Ploy**

Why do brethren take these routes? That is a difficult question. No doubt it is one of the devil’s ploys. We hear of happenings in the brotherhood that seem incredible. When brethren are seeking a preacher to work with them the preacher is asked what he believes on the divorce and remarriage question. When it is determined that he does not teach the truth the preacher replies, “Oh if I come I won’t teach on it.” Can you imagine that? He won’t teach on a Bible subject? Or elders may know of a preacher’s belief on the subject but because he is a good Bible student generally and a good communicator of The Word, they will tell him, “now we want you to come and work with us but you can’t teach your convictions on the divorce and remarriage question.” You talk about falling into the hands of the devil. In these kinds of situations the elders can’t demand that the preacher preach the “whole council of God” as Paul did in Acts 20:27. In fact, they all but dare him to -and the preacher agrees to it. Of course, that doesn’t include private teaching. When asked about his convictions on the subject by members of the congregation it would be a violation of his conscience not to tell them. If he stays there a number of years, the chances are excellent that by the time he leaves that a great number in the congregation will have been taught his position though he has never taught it publicly. On the other hand, if brethren think that a preacher coming for a meeting might preach on the subject, they will either tell him not to come or ask him not to preach on the subject. This, my good brethren, is the spirit and the fruit of compromise and someone is going to have to answer for it. But Who? It is not difficult to see who! Silence may be the road to popularity but there is no “may” be about the fact that it is sin. We need preachers with blood stained swords and a few battle scars. ❏



## **“Consider Your Ways.”**

by Micky Galloway

The theme of the book of Haggai is: "Build the Temple." In 536 B.C., about 50,000 Jews, under Zerubbabel’s leadership, returned from captivity. Isaiah prophesied 150 years earlier that Cyrus would issue a decree allowing the Jews to return home after 70 years in captivity (Isaiah 44:24-45:7; Cf. Jeremiah 25:11). After their return, they erected an altar and sacrificed on it burnt offerings to the Lord (*Ezra* 3:26). They also gathered materials with which to build the temple; and in the second year, the work began (*Ezra* 4:1-24). Their enthusiasm however, cooled when

they met with opposition from their adversaries, the Samaritans (Ezra 4:2-5), who eventually obtained from King Artaxerxes a decree forbidding the work. The work ceased, and God's house lay waste.

The zeal with which their labor began grew cold. These exiled people returned to their homeland with high hopes and great expectations for happiness and prosperity. But their hearts were not sufficiently motivated to cause them to arise and build while enduring inward distractions and outward opposition. They complacently acquiesced to the enforced cessation of their great work. They viewed the temple ruins with a certain amount of despondency, then turned their attention to their own personal concerns. They were more than willing to leave the temple restoration to other times and stronger hands. Finally, someone discovered the original decree of Cyrus and ended the interdict of Artaxerxes.

Now, the Jews received all kinds of offers of assistance in carrying out the original plans. The temple work, however, did not resume. Even after the opposition lifted, the people continued in their indifference to the work of rebuilding, having neither the interest or courage needed to resume. They seemed glad for an excuse to be idle. Interestingly enough, neither danger nor difficulty prevented them from building themselves luxurious houses. But, regarding God's house, they said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (Haggai 1: 2). God raised up Haggai, the prophet, to reprove them for their indifference and slothfulness in rebuilding the temple.

Haggai said: "consider your ways" (1: 5, 7). Literally, "set your heart on your ways." They needed to take a good look at themselves and consider what they had done since returning from Babylon. Their food, drink, and clothing were inadequate (1:6,9). They were not satisfied; nor did they have enough. Their priorities were wrong; therefore, Jehovah blessed them meagerly. Their failure to arise and build was due to their own carelessness (Haggai 1:2). They were concerned about their own luxury and comfort (Haggai 1:4). Their attitude was "let us build our own houses before we talk about the Lord's house."

Much good and important work remains undone because we put off doing it. Remember, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." Many have lapsed into the same lethargic spiritual condition that characterized Israel, judging themselves to be righteous because of what they do not do. "*Consider your ways.*" A wax dummy does not lie, steal, or listen to dirty jokes; but he also does not visit the sick, clean the building, teach a class, prepare for Bible Study, attend a gospel meeting, or worship regularly. Think of what could be accomplished if we all "considered our ways" and followed the instructions given in Haggai 2:4, "Be strong... and work." Israel's strength (as is ours) was not in numbers (Deuteronomy 7:8-9; Judges 7; I Samuel 14), but "in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).

Yet, among today's professed Christians are those who cannot see beyond themselves, and who imagine that a man's chief duty upon the earth is to do the best for himself, while "the house of God lieth waste." Perhaps, it is past time for us to stop to "consider our ways."

No one can travel along life's path with any degree of success if he doesn't first consider where that path is going. The man who does not "*consider his ways*" is certain to come to grief. The man who rushes on blindly will eventually fall into the ditch. If one is to be acceptable to the Lord, he must become intimately acquainted with his own ways. Paul said, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified." (II Corinthians 13:5) Without this self-inspection, we cannot become aware of our deficiencies. Are we continually examining ourselves that we might grow in our service to Him who loved and died for us?

If the Israelites would "*consider their ways*" and "*be strong... and work*" they would enjoy the promise of the Lord, "*for I am with you*" (2:4). This should have been enough to silence their fears. All our labor is for nothing if the Lord is not with us. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" {John 15:5}. No task authorized by the Lord is too big for us to accomplish if we will just work. Paul said, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13)

Israel could surely remember how the Lord had been with their fathers when they passed through the Red Sea, during all their wilderness wanderings, and their conquest of Canaan. God delivered them from Babylonian captivity. With all that history, how could they doubt God's promise now? How could they be so indifferent?

We have the same promise today. "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20). Let us "*consider our ways*" and set our priorities appropriately; let us "be strong and work." Let us arise and build the Lord's house.✠



## The Greatest

by Geneva Brown Smith

**AND** now abide, faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians 13:13).

While reading these profound words from the pen of inspiration, one is made to stand in awe of the great intellect from which they came. No one in the universe except this all wise, all powerful, and ever present Being could have spoken these words with such great authority.

He is the one who taught us the meaning of this highest form of love (*agape*) when He gave His only son as a sacrifice for us. This was a love bestowed upon entirely unworthy subjects, "while we were yet sinners."

Knowing that the Scriptures say, "without faith it is impossible to please God," (Hebrews 11:6), and that "we are saved by hope," (Romans 8:24), we must conclude that these are vitally essential, and that one cannot enter Heaven without possessing these. There is, however, one greater:

Love, in our society has many meanings. Much has been said and written about romantic love. Great works of literature contain stories of romantic, sometimes tragic love. In the great Shakespearean tragedy, Romeo and Juliet, the two lovers were willing to die rather than face life without each other. Elizabeth Barrett Browning poured out her heart for all the world to read when she wrote of her beloved husband, "How do I love thee, let me count the ways."

The Bible contains many accounts of this type of love. Jacob loved Rachel, and was willing to work seven years for her father in order to obtain permission to marry her. When the seven years had expired and he was given Leah, the older daughter instead, he worked seven more years so that he could have Rachel as his wife.

Brotherly love, (*Phileo*) is beautiful to see. Because of the lack of it, friends have become estranged, churches have been torn asunder, and even kingdoms have fallen. Life would be so simple if everyone loved “his neighbor as himself.”

Someone has said that “love makes the world go ‘round,” and in a sense this is true. What a wonderful world this would be if everyone looked to the interests of others. There would be no need for prisons, courts, or locks on doors. Certainly, no one would steal from another, or try to inflict bodily harm on another. Wars would become only “horrors of the past.” Our world would be a safe and peaceful place in which to live if everyone loved.

Love is a very powerful emotion. It is the cement that binds friends together for life. Love is the motivation that causes a young mother to sacrifice many hours of the rest she needs in deference to her young child. Love is the look of pride in the eyes of the father when his son succeeds. Love is the foundation of the home, and the hope of the world.

To Christians, probably the most precious and meaningful Scripture about love is John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” When we try to fully comprehend the depth of this marvelous eternal truth, our finite minds do not allow us to enter into that realm of understanding.

The Bible does not tell us WHY God possessed this great love for us. In view of His great sacrifice, however, one would have to agree that “The greatest of these is love.” 𐄂



## Bible Questions—Bible Answers

by Don Martin

**Question:** What does the Bible say concerning annulment of a marriage?

**Answer:** In today’s America, annulment has become common-place. Some practice annulment without giving any thought to the Bible’s teaching regarding this subject. How does Bible truth relate to annulment? Annulment, as applied to marriage, means, “**The formal declaration that annuls a marriage**” ([Random House College Dictionary](#)). In addressing this subject, we are at a disadvantage, in that the Scriptures contain nothing about annulment, as applied to marriage. Its absence should cause great caution.

**God's law for marriage** is documented in such passages as: Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 5:32, 19:9; I Corinthians 7; and Romans 7:1-3. God’s law states that two people are joined (bound) together for life. Death and adultery are the only contingencies (Romans 7:2; Matthew 5:32, 19:9). Notice the emphatic warning: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:9).

This writer freely admits to not having knowledge of all the civil and religious practices that come under the heading of marriage annulment. Some, I understand, limit annulment to specific cases where vows are exchanged but, for some reason, the marriage is not physically consummated. Others obtain annulments through their churches, years and several children after

their marriage ceremonies. No man, civil or religious, has the right to dissolve a marriage (only God can dissolve the marriage bond) on grounds other than what God has expressly said! (Revelation 22:18, 19).

Dear reader, God revealed his will concerning marriage. Man needs to desist from his own legislation and rebellion against God's law (cf. Mark 7:1-13, Matthew 19:3). Man, it seems, incessantly attempts to circumvent, or go around, what God has said; marriage is no exception. It is the height of folly for man to believe he can arbitrarily annul what God has established.

**Question:** Is Hell annihilation?

**Answer:** Not a few today unashamedly deny the existence of Hell. For the most part, they are motivated, either by the "God is too good to eternally punish" philosophy; or they are products of the "positive" movement (Hell is definitely not positive). This is really strange, since most of these same people who deny the existence of Hell believe in heaven. Others, even religionists, attempt to acknowledge Hell as a Biblical subject, but they then proceed to alter and distort the Bible's teaching on this basic Bible truth. These religionists are known as materialists. Allow me to quote from the writings of one such religionist:

"Is hell a hot place? Do Sheol and Hades refer to some place where the wicked suffer after death? It is plain that they do not, for we have already seen that the dead are not conscious and, therefore, cannot suffer. So this illustration (Luke 16:19-31, dm) does not teach that some dead persons are tormented in a literal fiery Hell. So when Jesus said that persons would be thrown into Gehenna for their bad deeds, what did he mean? Not that they would be tormented forever..." (The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life, pgs. 41, 43, 44, a Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society publication, the Jehovah Witnesses).

Indeed, the doctrine of Hell is a Biblical doctrine. The Greek Word translated "Hell" is found twelve times in the Greek New Testament. By artfully confusing Hell (geenna) with Hades, materialists successfully mislead some into believing Hell is simply annihilation or nonexistence.

**Hades and Hell are two different words.** Hades has not been translated, only transliterated. Hades is found eleven times in the Greek New Testament. Of the eleven occurrences, Hades is translated "grave" once and "Hell" ten times in the King James Version. Hell is from the Greek geenna. Geenna is found twelve times and is consistently translated "Hell" in most translations.

**Hades and Hell are not the same place.** Geenna (Hell), as used in the scriptures, denotes a place of eternal punishment. Jesus associated damnation with geenna (Matthew 23:33). In fact, Jesus used geenna in such a way as to identify Hell as the place of damnation (Ibid.) Hell (geenna) is the place of eternal punishment, "fire that never shall be quenched" and "...their worm dieth not" (Mark 9:43ff). Hades, on the other hand, should never be translated Hell.

Those who deny the Bible's plain teaching regarding Hell and the fact that Hell is a place of everlasting, conscious punishment make a play on the word "destroy". Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) They say "destroy" means to extinguish or annihilate.

"Destroy" is from the Greek word apollumi and is found 92 times in the Greek New Testament. The world of Noah's day perished with water, we are told (II Peter 3:6). "Perish" is from apollumi. Did the antediluvian world cease to exist, or was it annihilated? We continue on the same earth or world; hence, it was not annihilated? When the apostles were engulfed in the great tempest, they said: "Lord, save us, we perish" (Matthew 8:25). Did they believe they were about to be annihilated (apollumi)?

One of the common purposes of the word “destroy” (apollumi) is to suggest the spiritually lost. Jesus came “to save that which was lost (apollumi, Matthew 18:11). Apollumi suggests the opposite of saved (John 3:16). The prodigal son was lost (apollumi, Luke 15:24). Was he annihilated? The answer is no. Allow me to quote W.E. Vine regarding “destroy” (apollumi):

“A-1, apollumi, {Verb, 622} a strengthened form of ollumi, signifies “to destroy utterly; in Middle voice, “to perish.” The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being. This is clear from its use, as, e.g., of the marring of wine skins, Luke 5:36; of lost sheep, i.e. lost to the shepherd, metaphorical of spiritual destitution, Luke 15:4,6, etc.; the lost son, Luke 15:24; of the perishing of food, John 6:27; of gold, I Peter 1:7. So the persons, Matthew 2:13, “destroy;” Matthew 8:25, “perish;” Matthew 22:7; 27:20; of the loss of well-being in the case of the unsaved hereafter, Matthew 10:28; Luke 13:3,5; John 3:16 (vers.15 in some mss.); 10:28; 17:12; Romans 2:12; I Corinthians 15:18; II Corinthians 2:15, “are perishing;” II Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; James 4:12; II Peter 3:9. Cp. B, II, No.1. See DIE, LOSE, MARRED, PERISH” (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.)

Do the scriptures, though, present Hell as a place of endless and conscious punishment to be suffered by the wicked after the Judgment Day? Jesus used Gehenna (or geenna) to describe it as a place of "fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 10: 43, Jesus used the illustration of the literal Valley of Hinnom or Geenna to teach the spiritual truth of the spiritual geenna). He then said, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (verse 46). Of the lost, it is said: ".he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone; the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night" (Revelation 14:10, 11). Hell appears to be more than annihilation, does it not? How could such, described as "forever," punishment not involve consciousness? (See also Luke 16:19-31.)

Beloved, Jesus spoke plainly regarding the eternality of the punishment of the wicked. Hear him: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). The words "everlasting" (state of the wicked) and "eternal" (state of the saved) are both derived from the same Greek word (anionios). Hence, the everlasting punishment of the wicked will be just as eternal as the eternal life of the saved. In a similar fashion, the saved will be conscious in heaven. “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:3,4) So will the wicked be conscious in geenna. “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” (Revelation 22:14,15)

One source of the punishment will be "everlasting fire" which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:30). In Hell, there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30, indicative of a conscious state).

The Bible’s teaching regarding Hell, and the conscious and eternal punishment to be experienced in Hell, is a great source of motivation to serve God today. In closing, “And to you who are trouble rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that 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 1:7-9, see also John 15:6, Matthew 13:41,42). ❏



## Abuse of Power

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Modern society is plagued by a lack of respect for authority. No civilized society can last under those circumstances. Sooner or later, chaos will prevail.

God, in his wisdom, has formed society into under and over relationships. In the New Testament, the apostles and other writers made clear that Christians are to respect these relationships. The Apostle Paul, devoted a goodly part of two epistles to dealing with these relationships—Ephesians and Colossians. Those under authority must willingly submit themselves to that authority to please God. Likewise, those in authority must treat those under them with respect.

Parents should begin early to teach their children to respect authority in all aspects of their lives. It begins with respect for parental authority. It later extends to school authority, to government authority, and all other types of authority. A good mother, by example, can show her children how to act while under the authority of another – her husband. A good father, by example, can show them how to behave toward those under their authority. So, the children, when they leave the nest, and go out into society will have some concept of what authority is all about. They need this for the rest of their lives they are going to be both under authority and be in places of authority over others.

Those with authority have every right to expect that their authority be respected. But that is just half of the equation. Those under authority have the right to be respected by those who are over them. Each time the apostle Paul wrote concerning those who are under authority and their duty to respect those over them, he always accompanied that with a word of admonition to those who were over them.

For example, when he told children to obey their parents in the Lord, he told their fathers to not provoke him to anger. One word of caution, not getting the respect that one should have does not give a him the right to rebel against those over them. Let us now look at some examples of the abuse of power or authority:

### Abusive Parents

We are aware that any reasonable discipline is considered by some as child abuse. For years, activists have tried to ban corporal punishment. They have succeeded in get it all but abandoned in our public schools. Now they are working on getting it abandoned from our homes. This is not only a mistake, it is contrary to the will of God. The wise man wrote, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. (Proverbs 13:24). Parents have every right to reasonably spank their children, yea the responsibility to do it.

Evidently, some interpret this as a license to abuse. It is to the point that we daily hear of injury and even the death of children caused by their parents or caretakers. No reasonable person would support such abuse of parental authority, but would want to see such abusers punished to the fullest extent of the law. Unruly children do not need unruly parents. However, this should not deter parents from using reasonable disciplinary measures. The worst kind of child abuse is to withhold needed discipline.

### Abusive Husbands

The women's Lib movement tries hard to convince women that they do not have to submit to anyone, much less their husbands. Never mind that the Bible says that women are to be in subjection to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:23). The husband is the God appointed head of the household (Ephesians 5:25). A God-fearing woman will submit to her husband as unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22).

One of the qualifications of an elder is that he know how to rule his own house (I Timothy 3). It does not merely say to rule, but that he know how to rule *well*. There is a difference. One does not rule well, whose rule is based on intimidation rather than honor and respect. Being the head does not give a man the right to treat his wife as a doormat. It does not to give him the right to physically or mentally abuse her. He is to love his wife as his own body. (Ephesians 5:28). He is to treat her with honor as the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7).

#### Abusive Government

The God ordained civil government, as his agency on earth to administer punishment to the evildoer and to facilitate an orderly society (Romans 13: 1-5). Christians are commanded to submit to their governments for conscience sake. This command was given at a time when Christians were living under the abusive Roman empire. In spite of the abuse, they were still to honor those powers and pay their taxes, "render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." (Romans 13: 7).

But, it is a shame how you can take a person and give him a badge or any position of authority and watch him transform himself into a tyrant. Millions today are living under such governments. There is little, a Christian can or should do about it, other than pray for those in authority that we may live a quiet and peaceable life under their reign (I Timothy 2:2). Since the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, we can only use teaching and moral persuasion to bring about change. New Testament Christians, neither collectively nor distributively, made it their mission to reform Rome. They saw themselves as strangers and pilgrims on their way to a better country. In the meantime, they submitted themselves "to every ordinance of man" for conscious and influence sake. They were confident that God would give them strength to bear the abuse.

Peter shows that the abuse of those over us is no excuse for our not fulfilling our duty to submit (I Peter 2:18). But those who abuse their position of authority in the home, in society or in the government will be held accountable to God in the day of judgment (Cf. I Thessalonians 1:6-9).

#### Abusive Elders

God, in his wisdom, ordained that Christians are to serve under elders in every church (Acts 14: 23). They are said to be "over you in the Lord." (1 Thess. 5: 12). Congregations may function, and did function, at times without elders, but something was lacking. (Cf. Titus 1: 5). As soon as a plurality of men can be qualified, they should be appointed to this good work. Something is wrong when a sizable congregation goes for years without elders.

"Elders", "bishops", and "pastors" all refer to the same positions. They are to "feed" or "shepherd" the flock of God among them (1 Peter 5: 2). Their oversight is limited to the flock among them. Their work is to watch after the souls of the members of that congregation (Hebrews 13:17). There's no question that we are to "obey", "submit," and "honor," these men. Men who meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1 and do the work assigned to them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20: 28), are men who should be esteemed highly for their work's sake. Their work is vital to the effective working of the congregation. (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The idea that elders have *no* authority, but can *only* lead or rule by example is not taught in I Peter 5 or anywhere else in the New Testament, as some allege. The fact that others are to submit and obey suggests that they have some kind of authority that must be respected. The term, “overseer,” from the word, *episkopos*, also suggests authority. It carries the idea of being a superintendent. Thayer says that *episkopos* means, “an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things done by others are done rightly, a *curator, guardian, or superintendent.*” So to summarize the work of elders; as “shepherds,” they are in charge of the feeding and safety of the flock; as “bishops,” they are in charge of overseeing the work of the congregation so that it may be done right; “elders” suggests they have the maturity and experience to do these things. To do this one must be “apt to teach” and able to convict the gainsayer (I Timothy 3: 2; Titus 1: 9). It is unfortunate that in the church today that elders are often appointed because of their social standing, popularity among the members, secular managerial skills, and or political ability, rather than their knowledge of the word and their ability to apply to the needs of the church. They assume the role of a “corporate board” often with a dominant elder acting as Chairman of the Board – sometimes with the preacher acting as CEO. They see themselves with a business to run rather than a flock to shepherd. In keeping with the times, they build and maintain elaborate facilities . So the bulk of their time is spent on ways to keep the numbers and money needed to keep their corporate-like body afloat. It seems to escape them that their work is primarily spiritual and is that of taking care of the spiritual house of God (I Timothy 3: 5). So, too many congregations are patterned after modern business corporations rather than the doctrine of Christ.

Peter makes it clear that the role of elders, is that of The overseers and shepherds and not as lords. The phrase, “not as being lords over God’s heritage,” qualifies the kind of oversight that elders are commanded to have. The eldership is not a lordship. Lordship is what Jesus warned his disciples against when they were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. (Luke 22: 25).

There is room in the church for just one Lord – He sits at the right hand of his Father on high. The elders have no authority of their own. They lead the church in its submission to the authority of the head, Jesus Christ. They see that the work and worship is done right. A part of the work of the church is to discipline unruly and ungodly members (I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians. 3). They lead and oversee in this as well.

The responsibility of elders is awesome. As it is in secular matters, the greater the responsibility and authority, the greater is the potential for abuse. There’s a difference between a lord and a shepherd. A lord is not too concerned about the feelings and concerns of those under him. His main interest is that those under him are under control.

A good shepherd’s primary interest is the welfare of the flock with which he has been entrusted. He must remember that it is God’s heritage that he is called on to oversee is not his and that he will give an account to the chief Shepherd for it, when He shall appear. (I Peter 5: 4). While a good shepherd is not governed by the will of the sheep, still he governs by *leading* the sheep rather than *driving* them. The sheep know its voice and follow (John 10: 4) and they know that he has their best interest at heart. Often elders will sit in their “ivory tower” and make decisions that affect the whole congregation without communicating with the congregation as to how it might affect any plans or concerns they might have. That is acting more like autocratic lords than loving shepherds. In the matter of church discipline, all too often the concern is for how it will affect their control over the membership. It is all but forgotten that scriptural church discipline is to save the soul of the offender and not to save the face of the church. It is to purify the church

(remove the leavening influence of sin - I Corinthians 5) and not to rid the church of all dissent. There are cases where elderships take months and even years to deal with open flagrant sin, yet take only a few days to withdraw from those who dared to question their leadership decisions. That, my brother, is an abuse of power.

Elders like anyone else are subject to making unjust judgments and decisions. When that happens, are Christians automatically bound by these? I do not know if Diotrephes was an elder who was too big for his britches, as some suggest, or not (III John 9). I do know that he was one who wielded considerable power in the church where he attended. He is a prime example of the kind of power that no man or group in the church should ever be allowed to have.

Back when the institutional issue became prominent, many justified their support of the institutions by pointing out that we must be subject to the elders and the elders have decided that this is good work. I heard a teacher in a Bible classroom of one of "our colleges," answer the question: "What may the church spend its money on?", by saying, "Anything that elders decide is a good work?" A student asked, "What if they decided to spend it on a piano?" The silence was deafening. But that kind of mentality has led to many of the unscriptural innovations of the past. When elders assume the role of lords, and the membership assumes the role of unconditional subjects – the church is setting itself up for apostasy.

Conclusion

Let us always be humble enough to submit to those whom the Lord expects us to and to always show honor and respect for those over us, in the home, in the state, and in the Lord. Let us not lightly challenge any decision that they might make because of the awesome responsibility that they have in their place in leadership. But there is a higher authority, whose word must be adhered to first (Acts 5: 29).

[e.dbragwell@gmail.com](mailto:e.dbragwell@gmail.com) 44

## Useless Religion

by Garreth L. Clair

Among the many facts contained in the Bible is that there are at least two ways one may lose his own soul:

1. One may lose his own soul by living and dying without any kind of religion at all. He may live like an animal, graceless, faithless, prayerless, and godless (Romans 1:18-32).
2. Secondly, a man may lose his own soul by taking up some useless kind of religion. He may live his life and finally die content with his false religion, resting on baseless hope. This is probably the most common way to hell there is among man today.

Please bear with me as I tell you what I mean by useless kinds of religion.

A religion is completely useless in which Jesus is not the principal object, and does not fill the principal place. There are far too many calling themselves Christians who know little if anything about Jesus. Their religion consists in a few vague notions and empty expressions. They devoutly attest to the fact that they are no worse than anyone else. They keep themselves isolated in their own little building. They try to do their duty as they are told. They are careful to do no one harm. They hope that God will show them mercy. They trust that God will forgive their sins, and finally take them to heaven sometime off in the future. This is about the extent of their religious adherence, knowledge, and understanding.

But what do these people actually know about Christ? Nothing— nothing at all! What experimental acquaintance have they with His office and work, His blood, His righteousness, His mediation, His priesthood, His church, His judgment? None! Ask them about a saving faith and

ask them about the new birth (John 3:3-5). What answer do you think you will get? You are a barbarian to them. You asked them some simple Bible questions, but they know no more about them than they do about Buddha or Mohammed. And yet, such is the religion of hundreds of thousands of people who wear the biblical name Christian (Acts 11:26).

My friend, let me warn you if you are of this number. All notions and theories apart from obedience to Christ will avail absolutely nothing. You must obey the Lord Jesus Christ if your religion is acceptable to God (Hebrews 5:8,9). The God of heaven has appointed Christ as savior of the saved, if you would have an acceptable religion you must recognize that the only way is to comply with the scriptural instruction (Acts 4:12). "ANY RELIGION WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST WILL AVAIL NOTHING." ❏

## The Power of God

- Editor -

The apostles' doctrine begins with God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The same was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." "God... <sup>2</sup>Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup>Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3). Thus, not only did God (Christ) create the universe, but He continues to uphold all things by the word of His power.

When we think of the great universe of which we are a part I stand in awe of all that has been made by God. We live in a tremendously large Universe. While its outer limits have not been measured, it is estimated to be as much as 20 billion light years in diameter (i.e., the distance it would take light to travel across the Universe at a speed of over 186,000 miles per second).

There are an estimated one billion galaxies in the Universe, and an estimated 25 sextillion stars. The Milky Way galaxy in which we live contains over 100 billion stars, and is so large that even traveling at the speed of light would require 100,000 years to cross its diameter.

With light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, in 100,000 years, that would be 587 quadrillion miles just to cross the diameter of a single galaxy.

If we drew a map of the Milky Way galaxy, and represented the Earth and Sun as two dots one inch apart (thus a scale of one inch equals 93 million miles — the distance between the Earth and the Sun), we would need a map at least four miles wide to locate the next nearest star, and a map 25,000 miles wide to reach the center of our galaxy.

### "The Man Upstairs"

Most folks have downgraded Deity to that of a Super-man. They refer to Him as "the man upstairs" and other such super-human labels. God (the Father) is the designer of all that exists. The Son (Christ) created it even making man in His own image and after His own likeness (John 1:1-3). The Holy Spirit organized it (Genesis 1:2). Friends, this is not humanity or super-humanity. This is Deity at work. And, according to Hebrews 1:3, Christ is still upholding all things by the word of His power. ❏



## Religion and Politics

by James R. Dunigan

I have thought long and hard about this article. I have taken "pen to paper" many times to write an article like this only to stop and put it off until later. Religion and politics are two subjects that stir the ire of people all over the world. People have gone to war over these subjects and families have been torn asunder. Preachers walk a fine line in the world of politics. We often find ourselves answering people's questions in the regards of who to vote for or who we plan to vote for with the generic response of "vote your conscience." Surely men who make their lives work preaching the gospel can respond better than that. Would we respond to people in other areas like that? If a brother asked me about committing a sin (stealing, adultery, etc.) or engaging in an activity that will harm themselves or destroy their Christian influence would I shrug it off with a "Do what your conscience tells you?" Or would I lovingly talk with him about setting biblical principles for his actions and life? Wouldn't I give him book, chapter and verse on the subject and pray that he apply them and make the right decision?

One of the things we should remember in all things is prayer, even in regards to our government. The person that has been elected may not have been your choice but we must still pray for him. Paul said to pray, pay and obey the government. Romans 13, Titus 3:1, I Timothy 2:1-3. Peter taught the same thing in his epistle I Peter 2:13-14. Jesus even taught for us to obey the government in paying our taxes and obeying its laws (Matthew 22:16-18). So no matter who is elected we should remember them and our government in our prayers then obey the laws they set that do not interfere with our obedience to God.

I am not writing this in opposition to or support for one candidate over another. I have some I will vote for and some I would not because I do not agree with their stance on moral issues. It would be nice if Christians were as vocal and defensive about their Christianity as they were their politics! It seems that Christians as a whole are timid about discussing Christianity. We show great passion in talking sports, politics or a variety of other subjects but duck our heads and slink away when religion comes up! Are we truly passionate about Christianity? Do we feel strongly enough about our beliefs to fight for them? Philippians 1:7, Jude 3.

Do religion and politics mix? Can the church be involved in politics? We see many churches open their doors and allow voting booths to be put in and used as a place to vote. Again I ask can the church be involved in politics, even on this seemingly mundane level. Can I preach from the pulpit to support one candidate over another? Can I use the church bulletin to do the same? Can the church throw its weight behind one candidate over another? I know some other churches have done this very thing but the answer to all of those questions is a resounding NO! When it comes to political issues then we cannot do these things. But what concerns me is how so many of us, when it comes to voting, throw out what really matters and that is moral issues.

As a Christian I should be doing my best to influence government to follow God's moral laws. It is my right as a citizen of this country to write my government leaders and implore them to think about the moral issues and vote appropriately. One other right we all have is to vote for the candidate of our choice. I believe we should do our best to vote for the candidate that stands for what is right and moral. Do we or do we not stand against immorality? That stance is to be made individually and as a congregation. I am not advocating the church come together and participate

in political rallies but I am suggesting when we vote we should take a good look at the person we are voting for and judge whether or not he is truly standing firm on the moral issues that are plaguing our nation. Do we not stand against abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, alcohol, gambling, pornography, adultery, etc? (Romans 1:22-32, I Corinthians 6:9-11, I Timothy 1:9-10, II Timothy. 3:1-5, Mark 6:18.)

The church is the pillar and ground of truth (I Timothy 3:15.) It is the responsibility of the Christian and the church to oppose evil. (Ephesians 5:11; Acts 24:25.) Why do so many think that defense of the truth and the stand for morality stops at the voting booth? So who should receive our votes in the upcoming elections? Democrats, Republicans, Green Party, Independents or some other political party? I can't say who you should vote for, but as for me I plan to vote for the man or woman that makes a stand for morality. Can I support a gambling establishment because it would be "good for our economy?" Can I support an abortion clinic because they are simply helping rid the world of unwanted children who would have been unloved anyway? Can I support false teachers like Billy Graham or Mark Copeland because they are, after all, men who seem to be living moral lives, but on the other hand cause great harm by teaching God's word falsely? If I cannot support anyone like that then why would I vote for someone who denies Christ and God as He is revealed in the Bible? Can I support anyone who does not accept the Bible as the last and true Testament of God and His Son? Can I support homosexual adoptions because even though they are condemned by God as reprobates they would most likely provide loving and caring homes? If I cannot support these issues then why vote for people who do? To me to vote for someone that says publicly they support immorality is to vote against God. That may seem a radical idea but it is how I feel. Doesn't God oppose immorality? When we vote for immoral people who support and stand for immorality then we are taking a stance against any who oppose such things. If God opposes immorality and we as God's children are told to do the same what are we doing and saying when we vote for people who make it their goal to break down the narrow minds of conservative people and force upon us the immoral actions of gambling, alcohol, homosexuality, abortion and the like?

When we became a Christian we put behind us the things we had been doing and holding onto that was against God. (John 3:3-5, I Corinthians 12:20; Colossians 3:1-9; Hebrews 4:15, Colossians 1:13-14.) We are a new creatures in Christ, members of the body of Christ, we are living a new life, living by a new standard and we are now citizens in the kingdom of God. Will God allow those who practice such immorality into heaven? Will God allow such immorality in His kingdom (I Corinthians 9:5-13)? When one lives as a Christian he MUST oppose those things which are immoral and in opposition of God's law! What will guide your vote? Emotions or facts? Pray to God about your vote as you pray in all things, then make the vote that you know will please Him. I am not going to tell you who to vote for in any shape, form or fashion, I am going to suggest you let the Bible be your guide. If you do then the person best suited for the work will be apparent. As for me ? Well if you ask me don't be surprised when I answer you with "I am voting for the person who stands most in line with God's moral laws" no matter what party he/she happens to be a member of. ❏



## When God Does Not Hear

by Steven Harper

I am sure we have all experienced the frustration of not being heard. As a parent, I wonder sometimes if I am talking to the walls because things I say seem to not be heard by anyone but myself and I have to repeat some things numerous times before the words are actually heard by the intended audience. Maybe you have experienced this or other occasions where no one seemed to hear you. Maybe you had 'hard of hearing' employees when you sat at a table in a restaurant waiting to order; maybe you couldn't get anyone to listen to you when you tried to explain what was wrong with your car when you brought it in for service; maybe you couldn't get anyone in the school to listen when you asked about your child's troubles; maybe you couldn't get anyone in your office to hear your solution to the problem at hand and you could only sit by and watch things get worse.

Whatever the case, though, it is indeed frustrating to have something to say, only to have no one to hear it. [Preachers can tell you they often wonder if anyone hears what they are saying or writing.] And have you ever been in trouble or distress and were calling out for help or looking for a helping hand, only to find no one was listening or no one cared? It is then that our frustration turns to desperation and, sometimes, despair because we aren't just looking to be heard — we're looking for help! When no one seems to be listening when you need help the most, what do you do? To whom do you turn?

It is in troubling times that many men finally begin to look up and desire the ear of God. In troubled times and in desperate situations, men sometimes realize that they cannot do it alone and they need someone bigger than their problems to help. Sometimes, men who have never given God a thought begin to think about one who is bigger than all and capable of conquering anything and they seek His help. But will He hear us? And what if He doesn't?

Before we wait until it is too late to appeal to God for help, we should seriously consider these very questions because if you know anything about God at all, you know it would be a terrible position to be in to know that God would not hear you in your darkest hour — and that very well may be a possibility, for there are times when God does not hear. For our good, let us consider such situations and strive to never be the one whom God does not hear.

When Man Refuses to Hear Him. It is amazing, but sadly tragic, that men believe they can refuse to listen to God and yet expect God to immediately and fully hear them when they come to Him in desperation. But a short study of the history of God's people in the Old Testament teaches us that it is a mistaken concept. After the

Israelites had for so long forsaken God and gone after the false gods of the surrounding nations, and after He had allowed them to go into captivity, He also brought the faithful few back to the land after the prophesied 70 years. It was only after the return that some could look back and realize that their captivity had come because their forefathers “shrugged their shoulders, stiffened their necks, and would not hear” (Nehemiah 9:26-29). It should not have been such a surprise, for God had said He would do just that (Deuteronomy 31:17, 18).

Friends and brethren, surely we cannot expect a different result if that is what we, as individuals or as a nation, have done! For long years now, men have turned their ears away from listening to the evidence God has left for us to know He exists (Acts 14:17) and have long refused to hear what He has said within His written word; it is abominable, then, that some will now run to Him in desperation, wondering why He does not now hear! God's own word tells us, “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Proverbs 28:9). It cannot be said any stronger than this, and to expect that God will for some reason treat us differently is but a false hope and a lie.

**When We Call On Him While Walking in Sin.** It is no less foolish to believe that we can continue in sin and call Him and expect an answer or help. Again, considering God's people of the Old Law, we find that they eventually came to a point when God said to them, “When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen” (Isaiah 1:15). With these people being God's people, we might expect He would readily hear them, but He did not, and it was because their hands were full of blood, they practiced evil, and they oppressed the weakest among them (verses 11-17). Yet they still expected God to hear!

Friends and brethren, let us not also fool ourselves into thinking that we can continue in sin today and have God's ear. The words He spoke to them are just as true today when He does not hear us: “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear” (Isaiah 59:1, 2). They had gone so far into sin that God specifically told Jeremiah to not pray for them, because He would not hear (Jeremiah 7:13-16). What was true for God's people then is true for all men now: “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to Him” (Proverbs 15:8).

**When Sin is in My Heart.** The psalmist was knowledgeable of God and understood, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Psalm 66:18). That is, if I have a love for sin, a desire for sin, and an intent to sin in my heart, He will not hear me when I come to Him in prayer. And why would He? If I have a love for the very thing He said I should hate (Psalm 97:10), why would He waste time hearing me? What should I expect when I go to ask favor of the one against whom I have transgressed, with the transgression still accounted to me and with no remorse, but a love for it?

Here is where we may fall short when we approach God in prayer. If we have not truly eliminated sin in our lives, repented of it and confessed it for what it is, then it is then that we may expect God to not hear us. It would be foolish and without any sound reasoning to expect otherwise. Who could honestly expect God to hear if we have a love for sin, have no remorse for past sins, and intend to sin again?

While these are times when God said He will not hear, let us also acknowledge there may be times when we think God does not hear, but He actually does. The psalmist prophetically wrote of the Messiah in His time of grave distress, who cried out, "O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest" (Psalm 22:2). Some have mistakenly applied this to Jesus before and during His crucifixion, falsely teaching that God had to turn away because Jesus took all the sins of man upon Him. Let us read on from the psalmist and hear what he learned: "For He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and He has not hidden his face from Him, but has heard, when He cried to Him" (Psalm 22:24). God heard! He heard and looked down on His Son during His darkest time and did not abandon Him, for He was doing the very thing which pleased Him (cf. Isaiah 53:10). And He will hear the prayer of the righteous today, too.

God hears those who seek Him (cf. Acts 10) but turns away from those who turn away from Him, who walk in sin, and who have a desire for it in their heart. When you call on Him, will He hear you? ㄹ

## Warren and Woods on The Holy Spirit - 1967

Editor's Note: The following is a transcription of a taped exchange between Thomas Warren and Guy N. Woods in which Warren asserted that the Holy Spirit aids the Christian directly, "in conjunction with" the word of God. This exchange took place at the Freed-Hardeman College Lectureship Forum which was conducted Feb. 8-9, 1967. This was the first public assertion of this error to which Mac Deaver is heir and which he teaches today.

Warren

The Holy Spirit is given to the children of God as an earnest of their eternal inheritance. Now that means we are given the Holy Spirit as a pledge that we will receive the rest which is eternal life in heaven. This is not given to the child of the devil who is out in the world, though he's on his way to becoming a child of God remains a child of the devil until he's baptized out of the world into Christ. The Holy Spirit is given to strengthen the spirit of the inward man. Paul prayed for that. I told some brethren recently that I wasn't going to get too excited about this until they stop practicing what I preach. As I emphasized last evening, when men go into hospitals where terminal cancer cases are, they pray for those people to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inward man, I'm certain that you do. And I believe the Bible authorizes us to tell a man who says 'I'm weak.' I know what the Bible tells me to do, I can see here's the path down which I should walk, but I need some help from God and Paul prayed for the Ephesian brethren that they might have that help and the help that he talked about was to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner

man and that was in conjunction with the word of God. And if that be heresy, brethren, make the most of it.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the body of the child of God. Paul reasons in First Corinthians, chapter six, he said, "Your body, your physical body, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you." And then he then contemplates the possibility of a man taking his body and joining it to a harlot. He pictures this as a crime so heinous as to be almost unthinkable. Shall you take that body, that temple in which the Holy Spirit himself dwells, when he says, "which is in you." Now this is true of a man - a man in the world can receive the word of God, but you're not a child of God until you're baptized into Christ. Let me note this in closing. We receive the word before we're baptized (Acts 2:41), we receive the Spirit after we're baptized (Acts 2:38; Gal. 4:6). We receive the word in order to become sons of God (Acts 2:42). We are sons of God, or we receive the Holy Spirit because we are sons of God. Brethren, that has been taught by faithful brethren since the Lord's church was restored in this land of ours. It is taught by the great majority, I have no doubt, of faithful brethren today. I plead with you, that you be willing to examine the evidence. That we all remain brethren and work together. So far as I'm concerned, I have just as much love for brother Woods and those who stand for him as I ever did and it is beyond my ability to describe. It is my earnest prayer, with all of my heart, that we shall work with one another, and this is the basic plea that I was making, and not not against one another. Let us deal with issues that arise among us, but let us learn that the great task that is before us is to carry the gospel to the world, and we are hardly touching the hem of the garment. If you don't believe that's so, then I plead with you to examine what's going on in the world. Thank you, brethren.

### Woods

Unfortunately, brother Warren feels that these remarks, whether with reference to higher education or with reference to the Holy Spirit, are directed at him. Now, I know not why he draws that conclusion. Unless he feels he has to defend the position every time it's attacked. Now brother Warren is not the only one in the country that holds these views, and so far as he is concerned, he has a perfect right, number one, to believe what he wants to regarding it. And I have not the least desire in any fashion whatever to, in any way to disturb him or embarrass him. I have not mentioned his name. Much of what I said today had no relation whatever to him. I felt that he took a full hour last night to justify his position, but not satisfied, he wants a further effort today. As for the twenty five minutes, I was quite a part of a discussion over yonder today but I didn't get up there because I thought, "well I'll take care of it this afternoon," but I had a speech of last night to refer to, at least indirectly and also the matters discussed over there, so I took the time to set out the issue. Now, I would like to say, once for all, we're not opposed to higher education. If brother Warren wants to get a doctor's degree, that's his business and I don't consider that anybody has any right to even criticize him for it. But now, I'll tell you what I don't appreciate - now that the subject is up - the insinuation that all gospel preachers, without such, are ignorant characters, unable to meet the issues of the

day. Now these brethren will serve their cause better if they quit making that insinuation.

Well, may I say further that repeatedly we were assured that somebody needs to prepare themselves to meet the issues of the day. Well, apparently we have nobody that can meet the issues of the day. Well now, we've got a lot of men with doctors degrees. Norvel Young, Batsell Baxter, they're by the dozens around over the country. Have these fellows been failing all these years? So now, brother Warren, we are not uh, if anybody has said something about this that upset you, certainly it's not my intention to and I apologize if I've said one word that reflected upon your effort to get an education. May the Lord bless you in it, and I certainly have no criticism to offer because I don't think anybody'll ever shake the faith of Tom Warren regarding the inspiration of the Bible and so on. And because I don't believe there's a better man on earth than Tom Warren. But I think he's unduly exercised about this matter and he's too sensitive about and I wouldn't have mentioned this if he hadn't himself injected it because we all love him. We're not mad at you brother Tom. And I would be glad if he would just simply, as far as possible, be able to harmonize... if his view is the same as brother Nichols. Brother Nichols' is the same as mine, so that makes us the same. I would just like to ask a question or two. Brother Warren, what is it that the Holy Spirit does to you that the word can't? Would you come up here and tell us?

Warren

Brother Woods, I've explained that last evening and today. I've explained that the Holy Spirit is given as a seal to the child of God. This is not the word of God, it is the Holy Spirit himself. The Holy Spirit is given as the earnest of our inheritance. This is not the word of God. Both of these, Ephesians 1:13 and 14. Paul prayed that the brethren might be strengthened by his Spirit in the inward man, and as I've indicated in First Corinthians six, the Holy Spirit is given as a deterrent to sin, in addition to the word of God, in conjunction with the word of God. The Holy Spirit which is in you, the very use of the fact that he refers to the body of the Christian, that it is a temple of the Holy Spirit, indicates that we're to contemplate our bodies as a dwelling place of the Spirit as a strong deterrent to sin and he contemplates the particular sin of fornication. Now there are four things that the Holy Spirit does not separate and apart or independent of the word, but in conjunction with the word.

Woods

Well, that's not what I asked you. I asked you, "What does it do that the word doesn't?" You're telling me that it does that with the word.

Warren

If there's anything that I emphasized, brother Woods, it is that it does nothing not in conjunction with the word. I emphasize that by saying over and over, "It is not disjunction, which would mean independence, but conjunction."

Woods

Can you say then, that the Holy Spirit operates, insofar as the Christian is concerned, only by means of the word?

Warren

I believe the Holy Spirit himself dwells in our bodies.

Woods

That is not the question. Answer the question. Can or does the Holy Spirit do anything apart from the word of truth, to us?

Warren

Well, I'd rather answer the question the way...in my own language. The Holy Spirit dwells in the child of God and in conjunction with the word of God. It is the Holy Spirit himself. Not only the word of God. Now brother Woods, I'll be as good to you as you were to me. Do we receive the Holy Spirit when we receive the word of God?

Woods

I have already answered that.

Warren

What did you say?

Woods

I pointed out that when a person obeys the gospel, of course the word enters into his heart and governs his life. But may I point out to you, that that is because as brother Lipscomb said it permeates his life. Now it's very true, you take a little leaven and put in a meal. There's a time when it's just the leaven by itself and the meal is separated. That would represent the fact that the word is preached and perhaps is received. But then as it influences the life, controls the life, as brother Lipscomb so ably pointed out, then of course he is filled with the Spirit, as Paul said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." But I want to answer those four points now...

Warren

Just a minute, brother Woods. You didn't answer the question that I asked. I asked, "Do you receive the Holy Spirit when you receive the word of God?" Now we receive the word of God before we're baptized. Now does a man receive the word of God before he's baptized, does he receive the Holy Spirit when he receives that word?

Woods

I just explained it to you, brother Warren. As a matter of fact, brother Warren is wanting me to put in his words what he was unwilling to do in mine, but let me answer your four points, let me answer your four points. Number one, he says that the Holy Spirit is given us as a seal. I remember, at least 35 years ago, in discussing that with brother Joe S. Warlick who had heard Baptist preachers make that argument in debate. He said the seal there is a stamp. That is, it is a mark of

approval upon the individual. The stamp of the approval of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian and it's that kind of a seal.

Secondly, with reference to the earnest, the word "earnest" just means a part payment. Now does he mean that the Holy Spirit is the part payment? If so, that means we'll all get the baptism of the Spirit over yonder, because an earnest must be paid in exactly the same thing. It has no reference there to the Spirit as such. The earnest there is a down payment on salvation in heaven. That's what it means. He's mistaking the meaning of the passage completely.

And thirdly, with reference to our bodies being a temple of the Spirit, nobody questions that at all. That's not the issue. The issue is how? But our time of five minutes over. Surely, brother Warren, you had ample opportunity to state your position. Are you satisfied?

Warren

Well, I'm satisfied with mine. I'm not too satisfied with yours. ㄹㄱ

## *Writings From Yesteryear*

### It Isn't In The Book

Have you ever heard someone say, "There isn't anything in a name," or "One name is as good as another"? Where do you suppose they would be willing to apply such teaching? Surely no one would say "There isn't anything in a name" concerning the family relationship.

Then what about financial matters? Is there anything in the name that is signed to a check? People are sent to prison for signing the wrong name to a check. Manufactured products bear registered trade marks and are given copyrighted trade names which are protected by law. Severe penalties are inflicted for violating these regulations governing the use of trade names in the financial world. If someone else should make a car and put the name Ford on it, would it make any difference?

The Old Testament prophets prophesied that a new name would be given to His people when the "Gentiles see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory" and that New Name was to be named by the mouth of Jehovah. (Isaiah 62:2). This prophecy in all its elements was fulfilled and Saul served that mission while preaching Christ in Antioch of Syria. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 1:26). For the first time Gentiles and Jews were brought together in Antioch into a common fellowship upon common terms. Thus the new name was given.

Other passages bear witness to the significance of the name to be worn religiously.

1. Do nothing in any other name but the Lord's. (Colossians 3:17).
2. Glorify God in the name of Christ. (I Peter 4:16).
3. No other name as good as the name of Christ. (Philippians 2:9).
4. Salvation is in no other name but the name of Christ. (Acts 4:11-12).
5. Human names are condemned. We should wear the name of Him who died for us and into whose name we have been baptized. (I Corinthians 1:10-15).

All these and passages and many others eliminate the name of John The Baptist, Martin Luther, Wesley, Campbell or any other man. These also eliminate calling ourselves after religious ordinances, forms of church government (Methodist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal) or deriving our names from particular doctrines instead of from Christ - (Baptists, Seven Day Adventists, Holiness, Pentecostal).

The doctrine that is so widespread, "One name is just as good as another" Just Isn't in **The Book**. The Bible teaches exactly the opposite.

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