

Gospel Truths

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(Front Page Article)

The Policy of This Journal by J. T. Smith

It shall be the policy of *Gospel Truths* on the Web, as it has been with the paper edition of *Gospel Truths* 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 journal 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, we welcome material from you. Approving material will be the sole responsibility of the Editor. 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: ¹⁸When 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. ¹⁹Yet, 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 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. ¶

Editorial

Before you read this article, please go to the next article "Do All Wrong Views Condemn?" by Ron Halbrook. Although the article was written a number of years ago and published in brother Halbrook's local church bulletin, it was only recently called to my attention.

I have numbered the paragraphs so that you will be able to turn and examine the content of that which I am reviewing. Even though there are a number of paragraphs with which I agree, my understanding of the Scriptures will certainly not allow me to accept all of the teaching.

Even though much of the article was copied from the writings of J. W. McGarvey and N. B. Hardeman, brother Halbrook says:

“Though we can never recognize any inherent religious authority in men, we can recognize that some man has said a thing better than we can. J.W. McGarvey states the truth on this present question better than I can in his sermon on “Believing A Lie” (Sermons, Pages 315-339).”

(Paragraph 3) (Underlining mine for emphasis – jts)

The first problem I had with the brother McGarvey (Halbrook) article was in Paragraph 4 on the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 15. Even though he didn’t specifically cite the passage, McGarvey quotes from it and alludes to what Jesus said.

Paragraph 4: “Shall we think, then, that every man who believes a lie in regard to God’s will shall perish? I think not. If a blind man is guided by another blind man along a smooth road, where there is no ditch, I don’t think either of them will fall into a ditch.”

Quite frankly, I was not too surprised at brother McGarvey’s making the above statement. However, I was surprised that Ron would put his stamp of approval on such a far-fetched argument as this.

Brother McGarvey lived during the days when the mechanical instrument of music in worship was causing division among those who were Christians. Though brother McGarvey said he did not agree with the teaching that it was right to use it in worship, at the same time he preached in meetings where it was used and fellowshiped those who used it. But back to the blind man and the smooth road.

In Matthew 15, Jesus is condemning the Jews for their false teaching and practice. Even though it is rather lengthy, please bear with me in providing the following text.

Matthew 15:1-14 “Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ²‘Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.’ ³He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ⁴For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ ⁵But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God – ⁶‘then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. ⁷Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁹And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ¹⁰When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, ‘Hear and understand: ¹¹Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. ¹²Then His disciples came and said to Him, ‘Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?’ ¹³But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.’”

The point is this. There is no such thing as a “smooth road” with the Devil and those who follow him. Satan’s roads all have ditches. And if a man blindly follows a false teacher both are going to be lost. That was Jesus’ point.

Again in **Paragraph 4** I read:

“In like manner, I can imagine a man believing some lies in religion, which, though they may injure him some, and I suppose there are very few that would not, might yet fall far short of proving fatal to him. I think that the doctrine of election as taught in the old creeds is false in the extreme; but I think that many a man has believed it all his life, and then gone to heaven when he died.”

So, one can believe false doctrine in the extreme and still be saved when he dies. If a man can believe false doctrine on the Calvinistic doctrine of “election,” then I suppose he could believe any other doctrine that was “false in the extreme” (premillennialism; institutionalism; instrumental music, etc.) and be alright with God and go to heaven.

Then and Now

That is the reason I titled this editorial “Then and Now.” Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, brother Halbrook, and a number of other brethren, devised a plan to try to make sure that those whom they were fellowshiping were “sound.” They invented a “questionnaire” and required all those whom they were supporting to preach the gospel, those who were the local preachers and those who would be holding gospel meetings for them to fill out said 28 question, questionnaire. Now Ron tells us (through brother McGarvey) that one may believe a doctrine that is “false in the extreme” and still go to heaven. Brother Halbrook, if one, in filling out the questionnaire had made this statement would you have continued your financial support and fellowship with him? Another question: what happened to Jesus’ statement, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Have we given up on this statement by Jesus? If a man believes yours and brother McGarvey’s error, when asked to expound on that subject, can he teach the truth? Conclusion, he may believe error but he must never teach it lest the blind lead the blind and both fall into the ditch, you and McGarvey and Hardeman to the contrary notwithstanding.

Also, what about brother Hardeman’s statement regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?

“Paragraph 9: There are certain things religiously that I can believe, which may be a lie and yet not subject me to condemnation. There are many problems and questions about matters pertaining to Christian duty and things in general about which there are conflicting beliefs. Some think the Holy Spirit in person dwells in the heart of a Christian; others think that the Spirit is in the Christian only through his teaching and his word. One or the other of these theories is a lie, but I think that the belief of either of these theories would not damn a man.”

What Is a Theory?

“Theory - An assumption based on limited information or knowledge; a conjecture” (*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*,). So, the Lord has only provided for us “limited information” so that we can only make an assumption about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Then regardless of which “lie” you believe, it will be all right. I do not at all agree with this conjecture regarding the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul (you know, the Apostle) said, Ephesians 3:3-4 “how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, ⁴by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Also, Ephesians 5:17 “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Not only did Paul say “we may understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ, but he commanded us to “understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Romans 14

So, then, before Ron’s article is completed he gets around to bringing up Romans 14 and the eating of meats. Are we to presume that the eating of meats is comparable to believing in Calvinistic election, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a thousand other things that could be

mentioned? So it is on the positions of divorce and remarriage! It seems there are a dozen or more positions taken by brethren on the subject. Can we say that all these positions are theory? that all are lies? No! A thousand times, no! God has given us truth on every subject. It is up to us to study the Scriptures and find out what truth is.

I am sorely disappointed in the implications of Ron's article. A man who just a few years ago was "taking the hide off" of those who were teaching unity-in-diversity is now promoting it in his article. The man who was ridiculing brethren for trying to use Romans 14 to support unity-in-diversity on matters of "the faith" is now using it himself. Yes, as the tobacco industry used to promote Virginia Slims cigarettes to the ladies, "We've come a long way baby" so have brethren – a long way from the truth. ☹

Do All Wrong Views Condemn?

by Ron Halbrook

Paragraph 1: Apology should never be made for error of any kind. Rather, truth should be searched out, embraced, obeyed, and taught posthaste! Error should be left to its own fate and truth defended at all costs. To continue practicing sin without remorse or repentance is to separate oneself from God and His grace (Isaiah 59:1-2; I John 3:9). Every kind of error that causes us to violate God's law condemns. That necessarily follows. Christ came to set us free from condemnation (separation from God); He alone gives the truth which sets men free from the error and sin which condemn (John 8:32). "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

Paragraph 2: But it is a valid question whether all wrong views condemn. It is certain that a man's thinking his error does not condemn will not save him from condemnation (Isaiah 5:20-21; 8:20; Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23). One who loves sinful error more than truth will enjoy his ignorant bliss by the power of "strong delusion" unto condemnation "that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians. 2:10-12). So the question is not whether a man's apparent "piety" in sinful error can keep him from condemnation. The question is whether every wrong view causes a man to sin, for sin alone separates man from God.

Paragraph 3: Though we can never recognize any inherent religious authority in men, we can recognize that some man has said a thing better than we can. J.W. McGarvey states the truth on this present question better than I can in his sermon on "Believing A Lie" (Sermons, Pages 315-339). After telling the story of the young prophet from Judah who was destroyed because of believing a lie (I Kings 13), McGarvey said, "You can now see very plainly that this incident happened for a type, as Paul said of many other Old Testament incidents, and that it was written for our admonition. It was written to warn us against the belief of a lie. The fate of the young prophet cries out like the blast of a trumpet to startle us from our fancied security, and makes us look around to see if we, too, are in any such peril. Perhaps you are ready to say that the sin of the old prophet in this case was greater than that of the young one; and you think it strange that the less guilty was the one who perished. Well, there was an abundance of texts and incidents to show the sin of lying, and the vile consequences which must follow it; and nobody, either then or now, needed any particular instruction about the sin of the old prophet; but the world needed a lesson on the subject of believing a lie; so the young prophet was slain to teach this lesson, while the old man was left to God's ordinary method of dealing with liars..."

Paragraph 4: Shall we think, then, that every man who believes a lie in regard to God's will shall perish? I think not. If a blind man is guided by another blind man along a smooth road,

here there is no ditch, I don't think either of them will fall into a ditch. It is only when there is a ditch in the way that they will fall into it. So, if this young prophet had been told to do almost anything else than what he was told to do, we have no reason to think it would have been fatal. If, for example, the old prophet had said, An angel sent me to tell you to get from under this tree and run for your life, and not to stop until you get home, the young man would have been scared, and would have run himself out of breath; but the lion would not have killed him. In like manner, I can imagine a man believing some lies in religion, which, though they may injure him some, and I suppose there are very few that would not, might yet fall far short of proving fatal to him. I think that the doctrine of election as taught in the old creeds is false in the extreme; but I think that many a man has believed it all his life, and then gone to heaven when he died. (Underlining mine for emphasis – jts) What, then, is the distinction? It is to be traced out by remembering that there is only one thing that can keep men out of heaven, or keep them estranged from God in this life. That one thing is sin. Nothing else does or can stand between God and any man. If the belief of a lie, then, leads a man to commit sin, it will prove fatal unless that sin shall be forgiven (emphasis added, RH). It was thus with the young prophet. The lie which he believed led him to disobey God. His disobedience was the immediate cause, while the belief of a lie was only the remote cause of his death.”

Paragraph 5: McGarvey asks, “How shall we be sure that we are not believing lies; that we are not being led by blind guides?” “I answer, there is one set of men, and only one, whom we can trust implicitly. We know that they are not blind; I mean the Lord Jesus and his apostles. We have their written instructions of the way of life, and they are not so voluminous or so obscure as to be unintelligible in regard to what is sinful. We may be in doubt, as we study them, over many questions of history and of exegesis, but rarely can we be in the least suspense, if we have a willing heart, as to what is sinful. Having found this, we ought to be able, and we shall be, to prevent any man from leading us into such error as shall cause us to commit sin - sin of omission or sin of commission.”

Paragraph 7: N.B. Hardeman preached almost exactly the same sermon under the identical title, “Believing A Lie” (The Bible Searchlight, Pages 123-136). Some of his expressions and examples differ enough to make it worthwhile to notice what he said on the point we are examining. Before anyone faults him overmuch for borrowing from McGarvey, let that critic be sure he has never learned precious truths of the Bible through study with someone else and then repeated those truths in almost (if not altogether) identical terms! After telling of the young prophet, Hardeman continued, “I want to ask this just now: Is every lie that a man believes detrimental? Does damnation follow the belief of all lies? If so, my friends, we are upon exceedingly dangerous ground, for deception and delusion are abroad on every hand. I am frank to say to you, because I firmly believe it, that there are lies which a man may believe and not be condemned. I can think just here if that old prophet had told this young man sitting under the oak almost anything else, it might not have resulted in the young man's death. Suppose the old gentleman had come to him while he was sitting under the oak and said, ‘Sir, a cyclone is coming, the storm is raging. This tree will be uprooted. Flee for your life, and stop not until you reach your home at last.’ O, the young man might have been scared wonderfully; he might have run until he was almost out of breath; but the chances are that he would not have met a lion on the way; and while that would have been a lie, it was not of the type the belief of which brought damnation unto the soul.

Paragraph 8: To make the matter short and without extending the lesson tonight, let me suggest to you this, which I think is in harmony with God's word and teaching in general: Any

kind of a lie on earth which would cause me to sin or to fall short of doing God's will or to go beyond that which God demands is the type of a lie that will condemn the soul and rob it of a blissful crown.

Paragraph 9: There are certain things religiously that I can believe, which may be a lie and yet not subject me to condemnation. There are many problems and questions about matters pertaining to Christian duty and things in general about which there are conflicting beliefs. Some think the Holy Spirit in person dwells in the heart of a Christian; others think that the Spirit is in the Christian only through his teaching and his word. One or the other of these theories is a lie, but I think that the belief of either of these theories would not damn a man. Why not? Because neither would cause him to sin; neither would hinder his obedience to the will of God. There is but one thing, my friends, that will keep you and me outside of heaven's splendid mansions, and that one thing is sin. Whatever might cause me to commit sin, either in thought or in deed, if not forgiven, will result in my condemnation rather than my salvation (emphasis added, RH)."

Paragraph 10: Our safety is in following only Christ and His apostles. "Hence, I bid you listen to no man per se, nor to accept anything from any uninspired man which you cannot turn to the book of God and read for yourself." Hardeman suggests the young prophet should have answered the old one, "You claim to be of like profession with me. You say that an angel has come and told you to bring me back; but I have direct authority and commandment from God, and I will allow neither prophets of earth nor angels in heaven to countermand God's order; and if the Lord wants me to come back, he must tell me himself."

Paragraph 11: Sometimes, a wrong view immediately causes sin. For instance, one who believes he that believeth shall be saved and then can get baptized later, is hindered from entering God's family at all. Or, a Christian who thinks that in baptism a man is "dipped, dried, and done," and so forsakes patient continuance in well doing, condemns his soul thereby. On the other hand, sometimes it depends on what one does with a wrong view as to whether or not he will be involved in sin. If one accepts the Calvinistic idea of election, he may become consistent with what it implies and therefore not waste any time trying to convert others - he sins! Or, he may think "God has a time for me to die" and similar ideas, but not be consistent with the implications of so-called election (personal predestination). If a saint claims the personal actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but looks only to God's revealed Word for faith and conduct, how can he sin so acting? But, he may begin to search his own heart for "divine light" and "divine guidance," and be lead into sin (Jeremiah 10:23); or, he may compromise his attitude toward modern so-called Pentecostalism and its myriad of false teachers, seek some mystical "unity in the Spirit" with them, and begin to have fellowship with those who go beyond apostolic doctrine in their faith and practice (Acts 2:42; II John 9-10).

Paragraph 12: Paul said in Romans 14 to receive the brother who thinks he cannot eat meat; while seeking peace with him and helping him keep his conscience clear, brethren were also to edify him. Yet, on the other hand, if such a one were to make his scruples a matter of faith and practice, if he were to preach and teach his idea as part of the gospel, if he were to bind it on others and divide saints over it, he was to be especially noticed or singled out and avoided (Romans 16:17-18).

Paragraph 13: As we seek one another's edification in various issues that arise, let us remember that one thing and one thing alone separates from God: sin! When wrong views lead to compromise with sinful error, a false plea for peace and unity with error admitted to be in the realm of sin, or apology and defense of sinful error and errorists of any variety, then those views have led us into the danger zone. Every disagreement need not lead to broken fellowship, but

compromise and participation with sin requires it because sin is the very thing that separates from God. Let us exercise patience wherever possible, think the best of our brethren as long as possible, and do all in our power to help each other reach heaven.

Paragraph 14: The answer to our question is, then, “No, all wrong views do not separate from God.” To borrow McGarvey’s comment on the young prophet, “His disobedience was the immediate cause, while the belief of a lie was only the remote cause of his death.” Or, as inspired men have worded it, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God,” and, “The wages of sin is death” (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23). ❧

Apology to John Welch

In the November 2009 issue of *Gospel Truths*, I printed an article refuting the doctrine of Jesus being just a man. I attributed that position to John Welch. He made that statement a number of year ago.

I received an e-mail from him stating the following: “Prior to the debates I had also in print apologized for this statement and any like it.” He also sent me a copy of the propositions he had affirmed in debate on the subject:

“Jesus possessed all the qualities and characteristics of deity while on earth - though He limited the use of them.” John Welch – Affirmed

I apologize to brother Welch. I do not intentionally misrepresent anyone and am always willing to make correction. My mistake. – Editor ❧

Children

by Geneva Brown Smith

Isn’t it interesting to watch children play? Several years ago when my four year old was playing with the neighbors’ little girl, I heard a commotion. Angry cries of “slop bucket, slop bucket,” were coming out of the little girls’ mouths. They had disagreed about something, had become angry, and reached the ultimate in name-calling. I continued to watch, not planning to intervene unless their argument became physical. Pretty soon, their argument was over, and they were playing again as if nothing had ever happened.

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the sea” (Matthew 18:2). How do we become like little children? Notice some of the characteristics:

(1) Children are *innocent*. This word means not corrupted by evil.

A little child does not know the difference between good and evil. Parents are charged with the responsibility of teaching them what they should and should not do.

(2) Children are *honest*. Not lying, stealing, nor taking unfair advantage.

They come into the world pure. Everything either good or evil is learned.

(3) Children are *humble*, modest, meek, not showing pride.

They do not know what it is to be proud and haughty.

(4) Children are *loving*. This means affectionate and devoted.

They love unconditionally. They do not continue to remember their anger.

(5) Children are *forgiving*, renouncing anger or resentment against.

They soon forget disagreements or wrongs that other children have committed against them.

(6) Children are *curious*, eager to acquire information.

They ask many questions in order to find out what they want to know. One of the most often question asked is “why?”

(7) Children are most often *obedient*, submissive to control.

Small children are very obliging and anxious to please. It is when they grow older that they begin to rebel.

Let’s apply some of these desired characteristics to the Christian:

The child of God must to the best of his ability become **innocent**, uncorrupted by evil. Of course there is evil in the world, but one should “Abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22).

The child of God must be **honest**. He must tell the truth, “ not lying, cheating, stealing nor taking unfair advantage.” “Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not (Mark 10: 19).

The child of God must be **humble**, meek, modest, not showing pride. “Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up” (I Corinthians 13:4).

The child of God must be **loving**, affectionate and devoted, loving unconditionally. “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well” (James 2:8). “Honor all men. Love the brotherhood” (I Peter 2:17).

The child of God must be **forgiving**, not holding a grudge. “Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

The child of God must be **curious**. “Study to show thyself approved of God. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

The child of God must be **obedient**—“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). ❧

Indwelling of Deity

by J. T. Smith

When we discuss Deity, we are discussing three individual persons. In Genesis 1:2 we read that in the beginning “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;... ‘.” These plural pronouns spell out for us the facts that more than one person was involved in the creation.

The New Testament gives us further information. John 1:1-3, 14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Also in the New Testament there are also passages that mention all three. Jesus was speaking, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all

things that I said to you” (John 14:26). These three, then, are the Father, Son (Word) and Holy Spirit.

What About Persons?

Three individual beings are clearly set forth in the Scriptures as persons. But are there three persons? Some have taken the position that there is only one person because a person must have flesh and bones – therefore Jesus was the only “person.”

In Hebrews 1:3 we read, “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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The word “person” in this passage is from the Greek word:

“Hupostasis – substance, (a) in Hebrews 1:3, of Christ as ‘the very image’ of God’s ‘substance’; here the word has the meaning of the real nature of that to which reference is made in contrast to the outward manifestation” (from Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*).

When we speak of Deity we are speaking of those who possess the qualities of characteristics of Divinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make up the (for lack of better words) God family. All three are Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. When we speak of the human family, we are involving all those who possess the qualities and characteristics of a human being. The same is true if we speak of the bird family, etc. Each individual possesses all these essential attributes and characteristics.

Definition of the Term “Attributes”

“The attributes of God are those distinguishing characteristics of the Divine Nature which are inseparable from the idea of God and which constitute the basis and ground for His various manifestations to His creatures.

Why do we call them ‘attributes?’ We call them ‘attributes’ because we are compelled to attribute them to God as fundamental qualities or powers of His being.”

A Spirit Has Location

Father and Son Are In Heaven

Matthew 6:9 “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven...”

Mark 11:25-26 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Daniel 7:13-14 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.” A being, then, has location.

The word “person” does not always mean “outward manifestation.” John 4:24 teaches, “God is Spirit.” Since we are made in the “likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26) we are therefore spirit beings. James said, James 2:26 “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” God made the body out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living being.

Solomon further emphasizes this in Ecclesiastes 12:7 “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.” So, the person or substance of man is spirit as God is Spirit.

Is the “Indwelling” Literal or Figurative?

It is interesting that most people who talk about “indwelling” only attribute this occurrence to the Holy Spirit. The fact of the matter is, there are more passages that either say or imply that both the Father and the Son dwell in us than there are that teach that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. A total of 6 passages tell us that the Spirit dwells in us. A Total of 16 passages indicating that Christ is in us. John 6:56; 15:4-5; 17:23, 26; Romans 8:10; II Corinthians 4:10-11; 13:5; Galatians 2:20; 4:19; Ephesians 3:17; Philippians 1:20; Colossians 1:27; 3:11; I Peter 3:15. And a total of 8 passages indicating that God (the Father) is in us. II Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 4:6; I John 3:24; 4:4; 4:12-13, 15, 16.

It is obvious that if the Holy Spirit directly and personally (His substance as a person) indwells the physical body of every Christian, then the Father and the Son also directly and personally (Their substance as persons) also dwells in every Christian. But if each one is a person (substance) then if they all three dwell in me (and that is their location) how can they abide in anyone else? Is there then a solution to the problem? I believe there is.

To Dwell In = A Relationship – Fellowship

I John 4:15 “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.” John 14:20 “At that day you will know that I (Jesus) am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” How do we “dwell in Him?” When we answer the question we will know how He dwells in us.

I believe the answer is given in John 15:1-6. “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵I 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. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” In fact, in verse 5 Jesus says, “He who abides in Me and I in him...” In fact this relationship must exist or else we can do nothing.

I John 1:7 “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.” So the facts are these: if the “indwelling” or being “in” someone means that we sustain the proper relationship – are in fellowship with, then it is possible for all three to abide in us and we in them. Shouldn’t that settle it? It does for me! ☺

What Our Children Need To Know About Morality

by James R. Dunigan

One of the greatest concerns I have in this life is my children. I am in the unique situation of raising what is basically two different generations of children. My youngest son being 18 years older than my youngest daughter with no children in between has shown me just how much things have changed through the years. My sons had advantages and toys I did not have, my daughter is the same way. When I studied for school you really did have to “hit the books” we did not have the internet to type something into a search engine and have so many articles available to draw information from in seconds. It still boggles my mind I can write family and friends hundreds of miles away and they are reading my letter in seconds.

However, with all of these changes I believe we have had some very good innovations that have come to be abused. With the good comes the bad, as the saying goes. One of the worse

trends I see is that Biblical values no longer represent the mainstream of American society. I know homosexuality, adultery, pornography, gambling, etc. all existed in my "day" but no one sure bragged about it, it was kept hidden behind closed doors away from mainstream society! Even in high school we had distinctions of bad girls and guys that no one really wanted to be around because of their involvement in activities we could not agree with. Now it's the "bad girls" and the "bad boys" who are popular in school. One thing is for certain spiritual maturity entails moral purity. People will fight and fuss over what moral purity is but there really is no argument to be made. God is the basis and standard of TRUE MORALITY.

The Fact Is: God Has Some Absolute Moral Standards. Absolute standards are not variable. They never change. God's attitude toward sins of the flesh has not changed. (Galatians 5:17-21.) Paul even states *"of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."* Paul did not teach anything but one moral standard that applied to ALL Christians. They still apply today!

Sexual impurity has always plagued man. Many of God's own people have failed God miserably in this regard (Noah, David, and Samson to name a few.) The world has changed; God has not. It is plain sexual relationships outside of marriage are sinful. We need to teach our children the principles of Proverbs chapters 5 and 7. Paul's appeal for sexual purity is made from the strongest possible base. I Corinthians 16:13-20. It not only defiles our relationship with God but with our own bodies.

Proverbs 4:23 "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." What we allow to dwell in our hearts will largely determine the things that become important to us. Jesus warned of the relationship between a defiled heart and sinful acts. Matthew 15:19-20 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

The things that come out of our mouths generally reveal what kind of person we are! (Matthew 12:34; Titus 2:8.) I once heard an elder of the church refer to black members with racial slurs and other members as white trash then got angry when approached and told he was a bigot. Then the others elders explained it away as everyone having a right to their own opinion. Ahhh! The things we say and justify! Profanity has become common in our society! Words that were never said in "polite company" are words we have grown so accustomed too we rarely are ever offended if we heard them spoken. People get angry at me if I hear that talk and I remind them I am not only offended but I have a 5 year old daughter hearing their words. Maturity in Christ DEMANDS Purity of speech (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8; James 3:1.) The idea of being swift to listen and slow to speak applies to many aspects of how we use our mouths.

Modest Dress Is Another Area We Seemed To Have Forgotten. What is acceptable in society does not mean it is acceptable to God. God thought one manner of dress to be important (I Timothy 2:9-10.) Do not let modern society and its fashions dictate your dress allow God! There is more than one way to be immodest - tight clothing can reveal as much as very little clothing. Along with modesty in clothing is chaste behavior. The Christian is supposed to be different. Let That Difference Show! (Philippians 2:12-16; Matthew 5:13-16.) One of the distinctive behavioral features of our lives is being chaste, or it ought to be anyway. The polar opposite of "chaste" is "lascivious". Lasciviousness *is listed* as a work of the flesh (C\ Galatians 5:19-21.) Listed in the passage of Galatians 5:19-21 is drunkenness and drug abuse something our society is plagued with. Not only with the abuse itself but the harm it causes those around us.

These fall into categories of absolutes. Why do I say God condemns drinking in any form (yes even social drinking) is because God says He does (Galatians 5:19-21; I Peter 2:-4.)

It boils down to this. You can never reach spiritual maturity in Christ until you are willing to commit yourself to moral purity. Moral purity is a choice. NO ONE accidentally remains pure. What will you choose?

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Making Havoc of the Church

(Author Unknown)

Saul of Tarsus is first introduced to us as an enemy of the cause of Christ. He consented to the death of Stephen and vigorously took part in the great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem. Acts 8:3 describes Saul's actions in these words: "As for Saul, he made *havoc of the church*, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." The ASV renders the verse thusly: "But Saul *laid waste the church*, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison."

W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* defines the word *lumainomai* as "to maltreat, outrage."

After Saul was converted at Damascus he preached Christ in the synagogues, "that he was the Son of God." (Acts 9:20). "But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that *destroyed* them which called on this name in Jerusalem..." (Acts 9:21). The ASV says: "And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made *havoc of them that called on this man?* "

This word is from *portheo*, which W.E. Vine defines as "to destroy, ravage, lay waste, is used of the persecution inflicted by Saul of Tarsus on the church in Jerusalem, Acts 9:21, and Galatians 1:23..." Paul said in Galatians 1:13 that "beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and *wasted it.*" In the ASV he said: "beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made *havoc of it.* "

In Galatians 1:23 those in Judea who knew not Paul by face had heard "that he which persecuted us in times past not preacheth the faith which once he *destroyed.*" KJV. The ASV renders it: "He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made *havoc.*"

What is obviously meant by making *havoc of the church* is the persecuting or destroying of both the faith (doctrine) and those who believed it. To lay waste is to render to nothing. This was the work of Saul until he came face to face with the Christ whom he sought to destroy.

Individuals in the church now are not maltreated physically as Saul did, but they are spiritually mutilated by grievous wolves in sheep's clothing. Almost every congregation has its own internal agents laboring to make *havoc of the church*. There are many ways by which havoc is being made of the church today. I mean exactly what the scriptures meant by the words which are translated by "havoc"— *destroy, maltreat, outrage, lay waste, and persecute*. Many ways are being used to accomplish this goal, but three are prominent in my mind as I write this.

Lack Of Spirituality

The almost complete lack of spirituality on the part of bishops, preacher s, teacher s, deacons, saints and all, make it obvious that some force has been at work making havoc of the churches in the land. I lay no claim to having all the answers to this serious problem, but I think I know some of the reasons for it. For ten to fifteen years brethren have been seeking "some new thing": some gimmick by which to attract numbers and compete with the denominations about

them. Little by little the great distance between truth and error has been closing, so that now in many areas there exists no longer a scriptural difference between the people who were the Lord's and the denominational world.

The pseudo-intellectuals are the leaders of the attacks that make havoc of the church. More and more emphasis is being put upon schools and education and less and less upon the nature and function of the church. Although many educators vehemently deny this, the fruits are too obvious.

I seldom go to the post office that I do not get some announcement of some "workshop," "forum," "dialogue" or some such meeting for the purpose of finding a compromise among dissenting brethren. These are almost always arranged and directed by schools and educators and their influence has its impact upon those who assemble.

In the absence of inspired apostles who could and did deliver the decrees of the King in heaven, there is not an ounce of authority in the New Testament for such conduct. Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus Peter, John and all those of the first century "debated" and "contended for the faith" with all comers, both in the church and out. They spoke boldly the word of truth and cared nothing for the wisdom of this world. They "disputed" in the market places, synagogues, and streets of the towns they entered. They were, for the most part, considered unlearned and ignorant men (Acts 4:13), but those who heard them took note that they had been with Jesus. This makes the difference!

I know a few men who have attained the highest recognition in the educational field, but have always recognized the difference between the wisdom from above and worldly wisdom. On the other hand, I know hundreds who have thrown over the wisdom from God in favor of the wisdom of this world. This is where the spiritual drain originates. Spirituality has been virtually lost in many congregations because the preachers and elders are so enamored with the worldly wisdom and devices of "smart" men that the tricks of drawing a crowd and making them like you are being used to replace the powerful preaching of the pure simple gospel of Christ that makes a sinner realize he is lost and headed for hell.

In case you get the idea that I am opposed to education, let me make this one thing clear: I am certain that God expects every man to prepare himself to the fullest to do the best work in life he is capable of doing. But this does not mean that education of this world will ever save one sinner from his least sin. It is only important in making a livelihood and serving mankind in some better way.

No Respect for Divine Authority

The complete lack of respect for divine authority is making havoc of the church. I can well remember within my lifetime when a statement from the word of God usually settled a matter between brethren, but now many do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures. They even debate that we do not need authority for all that we do. Many even become involved in great projects without ever thinking to inquire whether it is authorized by Christ. This is the reason we have had all the trouble with institutional questions, unauthorized works by the church, and the involvement of the "Christian" schools with the church. The determination of most school men to get the schools into the treasuries of churches (several have now admitted doing this for years, but they have carefully kept it from the brethren), creates one plan after another to get this easy money. As far as I know Florida College and the school at Athens, Alabama are the only ones not now accepting funds from churches. About all the rest are accepting church funds and even soliciting it with the same zeal as they did a few years ago for orphan homes. Now the men who then strongly denied their belief in schools being supported by

churches are now yielding to the pressures of the great force of these in high authority; and I must say here that these are in authority against Christ.

Another place where this lack of respect for authority shows up is in the organization and function of the church. I am amazed and sickened at the number of churches now who have no elders and do not want them. They make the excuse that they have no one qualified, and I guess this is so in many respects. But I wonder why they did not do something about the preachers and teachers who for years did not and still will not teach the sound doctrine on the need for elders and deacons and try to help men become qualified by being more spiritually minded. Where is the New Testament authority for the "voting" machinery and "committee" systems that have supplanted the scriptural assignment of most of this work to bishops? I am anxious to learn why "sound" churches (when we are talking about institutional problems) ignore divine authority and build a human organization within the church called "The Business Meeting" with all its parliamentary officers and rules. This unscriptural organization functions with the power which often excels anything scriptural for elders, and when one asks for authority, the best I have ever heard is: "How else can we do it?" The same question of the institutional church supported orphan home is asked when they say: "The Lord told the church to do it, but did not tell the how. How else can we do it?" I do not see much difference so far as divine authority is concerned.

If you charge that I am giving aid and comfort to the digressive brethren on the institutional problem, you missed the point. I am in no more sympathy with their disregard for divine authority than before; I am just putting others who have no more respect for God's authority in the organization of the church in the same class. This is what is making havoc of the church today.

If you ask why brethren are doing this, I know of no better answer than to say that they have more respect for human wisdom than for divine authority.

Conforming To The World

The conformity of the church to the world is complete surrender. Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." More and more the language, dress, conduct, principles of right and wrong that are ruled by the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world (Ephesians 2: 2; II Corinthians 4:4) are being accepted by the professed disciples of Christ. Moral decay is everywhere. Where is the standard that once branded a liar just what he was and called upon him to repent of it or be disciplined by the church? What happened to the divine principle that children are to obey their parents, and that fathers are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20,21)? Now the rules are changing: the church is conforming to the world, and the world is making a mockery of God and His word. When it reaches the point that a Christian cannot be distinguished from those of the immoral world by his speech, dress, habits, company, family life, and religious claims, who can deny that these are making havoc of the church?

It must rest upon the people like you who read these words with interest to do something about it. There must be a strong, strict, scriptural discipline initiated in hundreds of churches who have not known one case of discipline in two or three generations. Those who do not love the Lord and do not want to serve him faithfully must "be put away from among" the church (I Corinthians 5:13); "taken away from among you" (I Corinthians 5:2); "deliver such an one unto Satan..." (I Corinthians 5:5); and "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly..." (II Thessalonians. 3: 6). Before this can be done effectively done in some places it may be necessary to do something about the cowardly, faint hearted, untaught elders, preachers

and church members who are afraid to undertake this obedience to God "because we will lose members" and "just stir up trouble." No member was ever lost or trouble stirred up by obeying God. The trouble was already there and the members were already lost. It must take obedience to God's will in this regard to save these. They are making havoc of the church and something must be done about it. Everything done in word or deed must ~~be~~

Please Explain

by Steven Harper

I guess it is one of those things I will never understand. Or maybe it's that I *do* really understand. You might be wondering right about now, "What are you talking about?" Well, be patient because I have a couple of things.

Survival of the Fittest. One of the basic arguments of the theory of evolution is that some creatures, through evolution, added helpful abilities, limbs, defenses, instincts, and even actions that gave these newly-endowed creatures with survival advantages over the creatures that weren't so lucky in the evolutionary game of roulette because they didn't happen to produce these same features. As the argument is presented, subsequent generations of the creatures with the advantage somehow 'assumed' the *beneficial* features while they jettisoned the *useless* [or at least *less useful*] features and caused the generations that followed to become incrementally superior over time — often stated as billions and billions of years.

I won't take the time to argue about the believability or even *credibility* of the argument for now, but I **do** wonder about something: Why is it that those who argue so passionately [Shall we say, *religiously*?] for this theory then turn around and complain about humans destroying, damaging, endangering, or even causing some creatures and/or other life forms in nature to become extinct? Isn't this just nature in action, according to their pet theory? If it is "just the way it is," then why do they insist on trying so hard to make humans — the top of the evolutionary chain, according to their theory — stop demonstrating how much fitter we are than, say, the snail darter or Asian panda? If that's just a demonstration of "survival of the fittest," on what basis are they complaining? If I understand them and our position in nature correctly, we humans are the "fittest" creatures, so it seems to me that there's a little bit of inconsistency here. Maybe you can explain that to me sometime.

I will grant that it is simple common sense that tells me the "fittest" animals will survive while those less "fit" will not, but I will **not** grant that the only logical conclusion to that is the entire system we are being force-fed [evolution]. I should demand a visible example of some creature who is now mid-change from one creature into another because many of the evolutionist-scientists demand visible proof of God before they will believe in Him. Surely, *they* must have some visible proof of an evolutionary change from one creature to another! Or is it that *they* believe in something *they* cannot see? Don't they accuse believers [in God and Christ] of having "blind faith" because we believe in a God we cannot see? That being the case, I await the scientist who will admit his belief in the evolutionary theory is thus "blind faith" because he, too, believes in something he cannot [but will *never*] see.

You see, the problem in accepting the evolutionary theory is that we all look at the facts and can come to different, yet just as plausible, conclusions. I would even argue that it actually takes *more* faith to believe in the theory of evolution than it does to believe in God, simply because of the great "leaps of faith" that must be taken to accept the explanations offered to those who still doubt. An honest person would, after examining the evidence, be led to reject much [if not all] of

the theory simply because of the *conclusions* — not the facts. Facts are facts, but they are not the point of dispute; the *conclusions* are what draw the line of divergence.

But back to this “survival of the fittest” argument. If we simply looked at the fact of nature’s workings and how the fittest do, indeed, survive more readily than the weakest, then the only *necessary* conclusion would be just that: the fittest survive more readily than the weakest. It takes some biased inferences to say much more than that, and a closed mind to leap to the theory that this fact of nature *necessarily* means what began as a single-cell blob in primordial ooze eventually turned into the people we see walking this earth. And if it were true, why do some complain that the fittest are winning and weakest are dying out? It’s just *natural!*

Reaping What We Have Sown. Another fact of nature is that when you plant corn, you get corn; if you plant beans, you get beans. In simple terms, every seed produces after its own kind. The same is true in the animal world. As obvious as this may seem, many seem to not realize the same thing is true in society, too.

You see, a few decades ago, we raised a generation in this country who were not taught to respect authority, were not taught about God, faith, and morality, and who were, in fact, taught to be “independent thinkers” [a whopper of a misnomer, if there ever was one] and that it was perfectly normal to question everything they had ever heard and known. The resulting generation threw off conventional behavioral expectations, rejected their parents’ morality, rejected society’s standards, and challenged authority from the lowest [parents] to the highest [the President] levels. Instead of listening to literally centuries [millennia, in some cases] of wisdom, these young folks saw themselves as the “wise ones” and decided they alone were the masters of their lives and coined phrases like “free love” and “question authority” to define their new way of thinking [except it really wasn’t new].

A couple of generations into this “experiment” and we are seeing the fruit of such thinking and living. Births out of wedlock are at an all-time high, lying is considered sometimes “necessary” now, sexual perversion is merely an “alternative lifestyle,” cheating is the norm among students and adults, divorce ends about half of all marriages, pornography is available to our children for free with the click of a button, child molesters and pedophiles are found on just about every street in major cities [and small towns, too], and it is not news to most people that politicians have the lowest level of trust of anyone in the country. We are in the middle [if that] of a recession/depression that was largely caused by greed, lying, and bribery, and thousands of people have lost their jobs, lost their homes, and lost hope because someone with more power and wiles than they had took their money with the promise of exorbitant returns, only to reveal much later [after it was all gone] that it was all a big, fat lie and merely a scheme to live off the riches of others.

With all the sorrow and grief over this, I again have a question: What are we complaining about? Isn’t this what we wanted?

I know, I know. Right about now, you’re thinking, “Now, wait a minute! We didn’t ask for this!”

Well, yes we did. This is what we sowed! What did we *expect* to reap? Did we really think that by rejecting a moral code that condemned lying, stealing, and cheating, we would produce a society that cared about the financial status of those from whom they were stealing it? Did we honestly [now there’s a funny word] think that we could cheat, but it is somehow wrong for others to cheat us? Do we actually think that we can casually lie day in and day out and not suffer and consequences in our society? If so, I’ve got some land to sell you — and a couple of bridges, too! As a matter of fact, I have some magic beans you might want, too!

The apostle Paul wrote almost 2,000 years ago, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). We have sown immorality, a love for sinfulness, and atheistic humanism; we are reaping its fruit: dishonesty, ungodliness, and a disregard for life itself. What this illustrates is merely the sad fact that most men do not think beyond the here and now and do not accept and do not want to think about the consequences of their actions. Because of this, we need to be teaching all the more that, one day, we will have to give an answer for what we have done — and sown (II Corinthians 5:10).

It is foolish to think that we can reject the moral standards God established and have either our own [which constantly seeks a lower and lower standard] or none at all and think that anyone would learn honesty, justice, or sexual purity. We are even more foolish when we reject God’s standards for ourselves and act surprised when someone cheats us, steals from us, or tries to exploit us sexually — all because they were merely following our pattern. No society will last long where its citizens expect only *others* to be civil and obedient to its laws.

If we don’t like the fruit, we should start planting different seed — and we know what seed that is (cf. Luke 8:11). ☩

“If The Foundations Be Destroyed, What Can The Righteous Do?”

Psalms 11:3

by Donald Townsley

I believe there is a good lesson in this psalm for us today. We live in a time when the foundations of our society and of religion are being destroyed. It is a time when truth is set aside for error; a time when men do not believe in God; a time of moral decay and religious apostasy. Since we, the people of God, live in a time when the foundations are being destroyed, we must work to preserve:

1. **Belief In God:** Men on every hand are trying to destroy belief in God. They teach that God did not create the heavens and the earth, man, and all things in the world as the Bible teaches in Genesis chapters one and two. They also teach that there is no God, or that “God is dead”. Man’s disbelief in God does not make God non-existent. Paul said in II Timothy 2:13: “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” David of old said, “*The fool hath said in his heart, there is not God.*” (Psalm 4 1). The righteous had better wake up to the fact that belief in God is one of the foundations that is being destroyed in this country today!

2. **Men Who Keep Their Promises:** We live in a day when a man’s word is not his bond. Even members of the Lord’s church won’t keep their word! The God of heaven has always required man to keep his word (vow). The wise man of old said, “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: Pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.” (Ecclesiastes 5:4,5). The psalmist said that the man who is right before the Lord would swear to his own hurt, and change not (Psalm 15:4) – one who will keep his promises even if he comes out on the “short end”.

3. **The Home As God Ordained It:** God conceived and originated the marriage relationship; therefore this relationship has a perfect pattern, revealed in the Bible, for man to follow. Marriage is **MONOGAMOUS** in form – one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; I Corinthians 7:2); **THREEFOLD** in purpose – (1) to satisfy man’s desire for companionship (Genesis 2:18), (2) to perpetuate the human race (Genesis 1:28; I Timothy 2:15), and (3) to prevent immorality (I Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4); **PATRIARCHAL** in government – the man is the head

(Ephesians 5:23; I Peter. 3:1 – 7); MUTUAL in obligation (Ephesians 5:23 – 33; Titus 2:4,5); and RELIGIOUS in spirit (Ephesians 6:1 – 4; Deuteronomy 6:7). The Bible teaches that there are only two things that can dissolve a marriage: (1) death (Romans 7: 1 -4; Matthew 22:23 – 30); and (2) fornication (Matthew 19:9; 5:32). But, in the day in which we live, many do not marry, they just live together committing fornication! It is a day when many married people have “affairs”. It is a day of broken homes and neglected, untrained children. No society can long stand when the divine institution of the home breaks down!

4. Moral Uprightness: Another of the foundations that is being destroyed today is moral uprightness. Some of the prevalent sins in our society today are adultery, fornication, lasciviousness, “men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burning in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:27). All of these sins stand under the condemnation of God (Galatians 5: 19 – 21; I Corinthians 6: 9 – 10).

5. The Church: The church is the most important institution in the world – without it man would be lost (Ephesians 5:23)! Things that are destroying the church today are: (1) institutionalism; (2) the “social gospel”; (3) modernism; and (4) preachers “living high on the flock” who will not cry out against their sins. Yes, brethren, this foundation is also being destroyed!

“What Can The Righteous Do?”: When the righteous see these things happening every day, what can they do? The answer is found in this eleventh psalm. David said that in such a time as this he put his trust in the Lord (Psalms 11:1). So, we today, can only do what the Lord has commanded us to do – be “salt” and “light” (Matthew 5:14, 16) in this old evil world and put our trust in God, knowing that He is the Sovereign of the universe and that He will rule and overrule for the good of His people.

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Even Jesus Did Not Presume to Act without Authority

by Bob Myhan

Many seem to think Christians may act without authority from God in religious matters. However, it has been shown that such had severe consequences under the Old Testament and has severe consequences under the New.

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:28-31)

The Jewish rulers understood that one must not presume to act without authority.

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a

prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." (Matthew 21:23-27)

Inasmuch as He was "born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4), not even Jesus was exempt from the necessity of having authority for what He did. Though He rightly refused to explain the source of His authority in the above incident, Jesus recognized the authority of His Father and used three methods to establish authority for His teaching and practice.

First, He established authority by way of His Father's commands. That is, He knew He was authorized to do what His Father commanded Him to do.

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak." (John 12:48-50)

Second, He established authority by way of His Father's works. That is, He knew He was authorized to do what He had seen His Father do.

But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:17-23).

Third, He established authority by way of His Father's implications. That is, He knew He was authorized to teach, as truth, what His Father had implied.

The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. (Matthew 22:23-34)

His implied defense ran thusly:

1. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been dead for hundreds of years when God first appeared to Moses.
2. But God identified Himself as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
3. In saying this, God implied that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were yet alive—in

some sense—at the time of Moses.

4. To deny this is to **implicitly** affirm that God is "the God of the dead."

This proved (and still proves) that there is part of man that survives physical death. If this is not the case, why did Jesus bring it up? This was such a forceful argument, that it "silenced the Sadducees."

If the very Son of God did not presume to act without authority, who is mere man that he should do so? ❧

Attacking Bible Principles

Weakening Conscience Protection: A Direct Attack on the Bible. President Obama has announced that he will rescind the conscience protection for medical workers that currently provides them legal protection for refusing to violate their conscience by participating in abortions. Significantly. The Bible makes the rights of conscience a repeated subject of emphasis, with thirty references in the New Testament alone. The warning is even issued that if an individual "wounds a weak conscience of another, you have sinned" (I Corinthians 8:12). Christians were therefore instructed to respect the differing rights of conscience (v. 13). (See also I Corinthians 10:27-29.) The rights of conscience have long been a cherished characteristic of the American civil fabric, and America's Framers openly praised these protections: No provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION Consciences of men are not the objects of human legislation. **WILLIAM LIVINGSTON, SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION** Security under our Constitution is given to the rights of conscience. **JOHN JAY, ORIGINAL CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE U. S. SUPREME COURT** Government is instituted to protect property of every sort. . . . [and] conscience is the most sacred of all property. **JAMES MADISON, SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION** Today, the safeguards for the rights of conscience now appear in forty-seven state constitutions. The President's decision to rescind these protections places him in direct opposition to four centuries of America's civic and religious leaders. We have just finished a piece that addresses conscience protection from a Biblical and historic perspective. Please share this information with friends and encourage them to contact their elected officials, urging them to preserve conscience protection for medical workers. Protection for the rights of conscience is just one more reason that Biblical Christianity is so beneficial to a culture and why its principles must be preserved."

(Author's Note: This is just one example of what this president has in store for the American people. Another is what is known as "Card check." That is, when workers for an industry vote whether to unionize, they have to vote openly, not secretly. So, everyone will know how each voted. That leaves the individual open for harassment and intimidation. Both of these acts are in violation of the constitution, beside the Bible, but what is being done about it?

A doctor or a nurse working at a hospital cannot conscientiously take part in abortion procedures. Heretofore, they have been protected, and were excused from these procedures. Now our illustrious president is going to take that away. Freedom is not lost in a single bound, it is lost a chip at the time. The sad thing about all this is that it has the support of a large number of people who don't love what America is. -- James P. Needham) ❧