

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 9

ABORTION-LEGAL BUT WRONG

By *RONNY F. WADE*

There are a number of things that are legal, but wrong. Prostitution is legal in a number of places, but it is morally wrong and condemned in the Bible. Abortion was made legal by the Supreme Court in 1973, however it is wrong. In Romans 1:31 Paul speaks of those who are without natural affection. This refers to those who do not possess the love and attachment which nature teaches all mothers to have for their young. The word literally means “no love of kindred.” Abortion is one of the clearest expressions of this vice that is condemned by God. We are all shocked when we hear or read about some parent who mistreats or murders his or her child. We don’t understand that. Even though we reject such events, history confirms that the practice of murdering small children was common among the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Chinese, and Hindus. The Nazi Holocaust began with the elimination of almost 300,000 Aryan German citizens who were considered defective. Before Hitler finished, his Nazi war machine had murdered six million Jews, plus another six million Gypsies, Poles, and prisoners of war. What a horrible deed. We are repulsed by such actions. Any woman who could destroy the child within her womb would have to be judged as one “without natural affection.” During the decade of the Vietnam war there were 58,655 American war casualties. Our country now kills more unborn babies than that every fifteen days. During the six major wars fought by this country we sustained 1,160,591 casualties. This is a terrible loss. However, since abortion was legalized in this country in 1973, over 28 million unborn babies have been murdered by their mothers.” Proverbs 6:16-17 “There are six things which Jehovah hates; yea seven which are an abomination unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood...” “Abortion sheds innocent blood. It is

estimated that in a recent year in New York city alone more than 600,000 abortions were performed. Think about it, 600,000 innocent lives taken. These victims died without the benefit of a trial or counsel. They are not convicted criminals, but innocent unborn human babies. Such make Pharaoh’s extermination of Hebrew boys appear as only a ripple on the ocean of time. The slaughter of babes in Bethlehem by Herod would not equal one abortion clinic’s daily quota.

I. History of Abortion.

In the Greek world, abortion and infanticide were commonly practiced as a means of family limitation. We are not to conclude that such was accepted by everyone. The Hippocratic Oath states “I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel; furthermore, I will not give a woman an instrument to produce abortion” (World Book, under Hippocrates) Abortion was also practiced during the period of the Roman Empire. The practice was punishable by banishment or death, but as the Empire grew more decadent, the laws were not enforced. With the coming of Christianity, abortion was vehemently condemned. Early extra-biblical writings reflect the opposition of Christians to abortion from the earliest times.

The Epistle of Barnabas (AD 138) states “Thou shalt not kill the child by abortions.” The Didache (AD 80) ranks abortion with the sins forbidden in the Ten Commandments. Tertullian (AD240) calls abortion homicide.

On January 22, 1973 abortion became legal in the United States. Since that time countless millions of unborn children have been aborted out of selfishness and immorality. In its ruling the high court stated that any state abortion law in the future would have to meet certain guidelines i.e.: First Trimester: During the first

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Editorial

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

By DON L. KING

How many times have we planned to do a chore but put it off believing we had plenty of time to get to it? Most of us have experienced the panic which comes when we realize we are out of time. This is bad in everyday situations, but it is far more tragic in spiritual matters. Jesus preached a beautiful sermon in the parable of the vineyard found in Matthew 20:1-16. One of the most striking points He made was in dealing with the very thing we are speaking of now.

The parable deals with a man who owned a vineyard and was trying to hire men to work in it for him. Jesus pointed out that the householder went out early in the morning (6:00 A.M.) to hire laborers into his vineyard. He continued to go back to the market place all through the day looking for men to hire. He went back out at the 3rd hour (9:00 A.M.) and again at the 6th and 9th hour (12:00 and 3:00 P.M.) and finally at the 11th hour (5:00 P.M.) he made a final trip looking for help. This parable is a favorite of mine because it deals with so many common problems we still see today.

The “vineyard” was a way of speaking of the church. Jesus often spoke in parables and many times began with the statement: “For the kingdom of heaven is like unto ... “ This parable begins that way also. The Lord was not teaching how to operate a physical vineyard. His audience understood that already which is why He used the term “vineyard.” A parable is literally a “laying along-side.” Jesus often used something in the agricultural realm which was commonly understood among the people of His day, to lay along-side it something in the spiritual realm which the people did not understand. He would go through some things which all readily understood and then say, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto ... “ In that manner our Lord managed to help those who had no knowledge of the church understand more about it. The parables of our Lord are wonderful because while simple on the surface, they are profound beneath the surface. In the New Testament, some of the greatest and most profound preaching is found among the parables of Christ. They

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

1. Is it a sin to commit suicide? (CA)

Response: The bible teaches that it is a sin to murder (Romans 13:8-10). Murder is the intentional, unauthorized, taking of a human life. Taking one's own life is a murder if it is intentional because no Christian is authorized to intentionally kill anyone under any circumstance. In fact, the word itself means "self-murder."

Often, mental illness is a factor in cases of suicide. If this is the case, the intentionality is removed and the person would not be accountable for his or her action. In our culture, the value of life is being undermined by godless philosophies and scientific theories and the afterlife is usually denied outright. Many people may view suicide as the only solution to their failures and weaknesses -this is tragic. The modern prevalence of suicide in our culture, even among the most successful and accomplished in society, proves that the fullest life is empty without God. When intentional, ending one's own life is sinful and only hastens judgment. The message of the gospel is precisely what this hurting, hopeless world needs.

2. May Instrumental music be used at weddings or funerals held in the church building? (CA)

Response: The scripture gives no special meaning or sacredness to the meeting place where Christians gather for worship. Often times, the ancient Christians met in private homes (Romans 16:3-5; Philemon verse 2). Of course, from day to day things happened in these homes that had nothing to do with the church and would have been sinful to incorporate into the worship services. Eating common meals, playing games, tending to domestic chores, playing or listening to instrumental music, and many other activities are common place in private homes, but none of these things should be practiced in the assembly of the saints - where ever it meets. There is perhaps some wisdom in considering how those "on

the outside" might be confused. In our culture and country, most congregations meet in buildings built by the Lord's money and specifically designated for the worship assemblies of the church. Perhaps using those buildings for secular purposes is unwise and sends a confusing message to the community. But I do not suppose that it could be condemned as sinful.



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**THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY-THE INCORRUPTIBLE
BEAUTY OF A GODLY WOMAN**
By GREG GAY

In the early 1900's, author James Oliver Curwood was a prolific writer of adventure novels set in the great Northwest areas of Canada and Alaska featuring the hardy men, women, and animals who inhabited such a wild and largely unoccupied land. As a fan of that genre of fiction, I never tire of his stories and have read them multiple times through the years. The heroes of his stories are always as expected: strong and brave, and the heroines are the same, yet in a very feminine way. I am always impressed by Mr. Curwood's descriptions of his heroines. Her beauty is usually described in a respectful, almost reverent, fashion, especially when he describes her hair. The hero of the story is always awestruck with her beauty and her hair is frequently mentioned throughout the story as a major element of that beauty.

I believe that sentiment is in keeping with the scripture, "But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11:15). Whedon comments on this passage: "And beauty is the rightful prerogative of womanhood... And this divine gift of beauty it is her right to cultivate within the laws of modesty; and, united with cultured gifts of mind and character, it forms a loveliness which is the true source of her rightful power." Dunagan quotes others: "It gives her that womanly distinction." (Lenski p. 449) "Glory in this instance, since it is the opposite of dishonor, must mean something like distinction or honor...it functions as something that distinguishes the splendor of the woman." (Fee pp. 527-528). Indeed her hair "distinguishes the splendor" of a Godly woman!

When we look closer at the "covering," as we have briefly in this series (OPA, January 2018) we remember that the measured length of a woman's hair is not what is being taught in this passage. The phrase, "long hair" in 1 Corinthians 11:15 in the KJV and NKJV Bibles is an attempt to translate a word in the Greek, a verb referring to hair that is allowed to continue to grow. Specifically, the word is a Verb - Present Subjunctive Active - 3rd Person Singular, which includes the meaning that the action being described is not a one-time event, it is always continuing, and is never finished. A few translations attempt to show this: "And whenever

a woman grows her hair, it is a glory to her, because her hair is given to her in place of a covering" (Aramaic Bible in Plain English). "But if a woman lets her hair grow, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering" (Jubilee Bible 2000).

Since everyone's hair length can be different when it is allowed to grow, what is being measured with this passage is a woman's heart and her willingness to be submissive to God in this area of her life. When a woman determines she will let her hair grow and leave it uncut, it then fits the definition of the word translated "long hair" regardless of the length. A Godly woman's hair, her "covering," is an important part of her beauty, yet, there is more, much more.

The Apostle Peter helps us understand there is a partnership between the outer and inner beauty of a Godly woman when he describes a beauty that is "incorruptible" (1 Peter 3:4). Anything "incorruptible" in this sense means it is eternal and not subject to death, change, or decay.

Corruptible things we are familiar with include our bodies. In this life, our bodies are destined to return to the dust from whence we came (Genesis 3:19). Not so in the life to come! Paul wrote, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53). We also change in this life as we age. God said to Israel, "Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you!" (Isaiah 46:4 NASU).

Those things we may look to in this life for security are considered corruptible in that they are temporary, with value only in this life. Peter wrote: "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

There are warnings in the scriptures about women paying too much attention to their outward appearance and neglecting proper care of their inward beauty.

Paul wrote Timothy, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and

moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1 Timothy 2:8-10). At first glance this passage seems very restrictive, perhaps meaning a total prohibition of anything external that could be considered decorative.

The scriptures are not saying to never arrange hair, wear jewelry, or wear nice clothing. The scripture from the Apostle Peter explains: “Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel” (1 Peter 3:3).

The object of these scriptures appear to be for a Godly woman to avoid immodest extremes, either in plainness or decoration, but rather to honor God appropriately outside to reflect who she is in her heart in her devotion and submission.

It is very interesting that the Apostle Peter uses Sarah, the wife of Abraham, as an example of the concept of inward beauty. Especially since she was one of the most outwardly beautiful women who has ever lived.

When we look in the Old Testament about Sarah, the Bible says, “So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman [Sarah], that she was very beautiful” (Genesis 12:14). Her beauty attracted the attention of Pharaoh’s princes who “commended her to Pharaoh” (Genesis 12:15) to become part of his harem.

We see a similar thing happening later in the land of Gerar with King Abimelech (Genesis 20:1-2). What is not so obvious, is that these things happened to Sarah when she was approximately 65 and 90 years old.

Yet, in spite of her amazing appearance, Sarah’s outward physical attractiveness is not mentioned at all when Peter describes her beauty in the New Testament. Instead notice carefully what is commended about her:

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel-- rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,

with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous” (1 Peter 3: 1-8).

Notice the praise for a Godly woman’s “hidden person,” and her beautiful “gentle and quiet spirit.” In Sarah, this inward beauty was shown outwardly in her submission to God’s will, in this example by appropriately identifying and occupying the role in her home God desired for her to have. She made the choice to serve God, starting with her heart and then outwardly. Her faithful service included being appropriate in her role in her marriage. Not because Abraham demanded or even necessarily deserved her devotion, but because of her faith in God.

Today’s Godly women in the Lord’s church have the same decisions to make regarding their beauty as Sarah of old. God’s word encourages and requires every sister to begin with “hidden beauty” which will then be reflected outwardly in a passion for obedience. God requires outward physical evidence, a symbol, of a submissive heart in our New Testament times. Even the most casual reading of I Corinthians 11 proves that the symbol is different for men than for women. For men, outward physical evidence of a submissive heart is hair that is obviously shortened (1 Corinthians 11:14). For women, it is hair that is being allowed to grow. 5109 Chicago Ave., Fair Oaks, CA 95628, gregorypgay@gmail.com

ABORTION ... continued from page one

three months of pregnancy the states must leave the abortion decision to the woman and her doctor. i.e. abortion on demand. Second Trimester: During the second three months the states may only enact laws which regulate abortions in ways “reasonably related to

maternal health.” i.e. who may perform abortions and where they may be performed. Third Trimester: After the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy, the states may forbid her to have an abortion that is not determined to be necessary to preserve her “life or health.” The court defined “health” as “social well-being” making it next to impossible for the state to protect a child after the sixth or seventh month of pregnancy.

II. When Does Life Begin

The primary question that demands an answer is this: “is the fetus a human life?” Is that which is growing in the mother’s body alive? The Supreme Court did not address this vital question. They only determined that a woman had a right to an abortion if she wanted one. The answer to this question, however, is crucial in the determination of truth regarding this all important subject.

What The Bible Says

Some Basic Facts

1. Life is a gift from God. “He gives life and breath to all things.” Acts 17:25 God alone has the right to take man’s life. Only human life is made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26 Because of this human life is elevated to a plane above all other forms of earthly life.
2. Christ taught the value of human life in John 3:16 and Mark 16:15-16. Little children were precious to him Matthew 19:14.
3. In the scriptures there is no distinction between babes in the womb and those born. The word “brephos” in the Greek is used to describe the baby in Elisabeth’s womb and is used interchangeably for both prenatal and postnatal babies Luke 1:41. It means “an unborn child, embryo, fetus, a newborn child, an infant, a babe.” (Thayer page 105) Anyone who questions this should ask themselves “was it the Christ-child in Mary’s womb or just a lifeless blob of fetal tissue?”

The following scriptures teach that the unborn child is a human being: Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou comest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee.” If Jeremiah’s mother had chosen to have an abortion, she would have killed Jeremiah. Isaiah 49: 1, 5 “Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye peoples, from far; Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name ... and now, saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant.” This

indicates that Isaiah was a person before birth. Job 3:11 “Why did I not die from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when my mother bore me?” If the fetus had died in the womb, it would have been a person, it would have been Job.

By the time the baby is 18-25 days old, the heart starts beating. At 45 days, electroencephalographic waves can be picked up from the baby’s developing brain. By 9-10 weeks the thyroid and adrenal glands are functioning. The baby can squint, swallow, and move his tongue. By 12 weeks the fingerprints of the hands are already formed, and except for size will never change. At 13 weeks he has fingernails, sucks his thumb, and can recoil from pain. In the fourth month the growing baby is 8-10 inches in height. In the fifth month there is a time of lengthening and straightening of the developing baby, skin, nails, and hair grow. All of the internal organs are present and function. This is the month in which the movements of the infant are felt by the mother.

The scriptures teach “thou shalt not kill” i.e. “thou shalt do no murder.” The deliberate taking of a human life is murder. Abortion intentionally kills a human life. The abortion victim is totally innocent, having done no wrong towards the mother, the doctor or society. What abortionist doctor would want a corrosive poured over his body and forced into his lungs and stomach and then be left to convulse for an hour or more till death? This is the baby’s fate in the saltpoisoning abortion. (Used when the baby is 16 weeks or older--Needle penetrates through the abdomen and into the sac holding the baby) In about a day the mother goes into labor and delivers the baby. What nurse who attends in abortions would want to be ripped apart by a powerful suction machine? By the time early abortions are performed (8-12 weeks) the baby has his entire organ system in place and has the sense of pain. The body parts are sucked into a disposable jar, after being torn to pieces. Psalms 139:13-16 “Thou didst knit me together in my mother’s womb.” This passage obviously testifies to the fact that the fetus is a person-at the-time of conception.

Murderers Will Be Punished

Exodus 20:13 “Thou shalt not kill.”
Deuteronomy 27:25 “Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person.” Proverbs 6: 16-17 God hates “those who shed innocent blood. God hates abortion. What does God think of the premeditated taking of a

child's life? We cannot take the sin of abortion lightly; "Lo children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Psalms 127:3 Abortion may be legal, but it is clearly wrong.

III. The Significance of Abortion in Our Society.

1. Abortion signifies a rejection of the knowledge of God. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful" Romans 1:28-31).

2. Abortion on demand, signifies that family values are on the decline, as well as sexual morals. Marriage is honorable Heb.13:4. Fornication is a sin. 1 Cor.6:18 "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body." The sin of fornication is often responsible for unwanted pregnancy which results in abortion.

3. Abortion is evidence of a loss of respect for human life. "And God said, let us make man in our own image and after our likeness ... " Man is not a brute animal, but a person created in the image of God. Since Abortion is murder, it is but another manifestation of how little we value human life in our society today...Abortion indicates that covetousness is taking our land by storm. Children are discarded, like garbage, because they will cramp someone's lifestyle. Everyone should give serious thought to what God says about abortion. He will not let this grievous sin go unpunished. If God will not permit us to kill a child already born and get by with it, neither will he let us get by with killing an unborn child. Abortion is a sin, it is murder in the first degree.

DOWNSIZING GOD

By RICK MARTIN

In today's economic climate we hear about many companies and organizations that are going through downsizing. Sometimes, couples talk about downsizing when all their children leave home. Even our government talks about downsizing. The thing I want to consider in

this article is the downsizing of God.

One day a little boy was drawing a picture on a sheet of paper and his mother asked him what he was drawing. The little boy replied, "I am drawing a picture of God." His mother informed him that no one knows what God looks like. The little boy then said, "they will when I finish my picture."

What kind of mental picture do you have of God? The danger we face is that we try to recreate God in our own image, rather than seeing Him as He is revealed in the scriptures. Many times, our thoughts about God are adjusted to our own desires, rather than adjusting our thinking to see God as he is. When we do this, we end up with a distorted and inaccurate view of God.

The God of the Bible is not a product of human imagination and His nature is not changed by our opinion of Him. So, it really doesn't matter very much what kind of god we would like to believe in.

As we go back in history we see that man has often tried to downsize God. Almost immediately after Moses had led the people out of Egyptian bondage, he left them for a period of forty days. He went up to the mountain to receive the law from God. In forty days, they began to wonder what happened to Moses. In Ex. 32:1-6, we see that they went to Aaron and told him to make them a god. Aaron made them a golden calf. The God that had led them out of slavery wasn't enough anymore. When we spend our lives trying to fit God into the pattern we think He ought to follow, we have done the same thing.

Many people may be professing a faith in God, but they have downsized Him to a god of personal liking and needs. The idols of men today are no more meaningful than the idols of the pagans. A god of your own making is worthless.

People downsize God when they give Him only the crumbs from the table; People attempt to crowd Him into some convenient little comer of their lives, where He will not interfere with the important things they want to tend to.

People downsize God when they make Him into the likeness of a man. Balaam learned the hard way that, "God is not man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent or change His mind." God

will not be compromised or made to conform to or approve what is politically correct at any given time. God cannot be used for personal gain or glory.

An inadequate view of God is the root of many sins. Wrong thoughts about God in Eden led to the fall. It was in Eden that we begin to understand that knowledge of God is the key to life. This is the theme that runs throughout the Scriptures.

We need to realize and know the greatness of God and to manufacture a god in our carnal mind is a dangerous thing. The only hope of transforming our lives and the world is coming to know God as He is revealed in the scriptures.

If we are going to see God as He is, we must know His ways and character. How else can we know a person? Knowing a person goes beyond knowing what they look like-it involves knowing their character and their ways

Moses longed to see God, but when God descended in a cloud and passed in front of Moses, God stressed His character traits. Looking at God's brilliance would be as blinding as looking at the sun. Yet God's character is where He really shines. In Ex. 34:5-8 God tells Moses of His grace, compassion, loving-kindness, holiness, and His justice. These attributes reveal God's glory. Unless we know of the attributes of God's character we cannot know and worship God. It is little wonder that Moses bowed when God revealed His character traits. It is the attributes of God that demand our time and attention.

Throughout the Bible, when God is worshipped, He is worshipped in response to His attributes. It is only when we come to know God's attributes that we can bow in humble adoration. God attributes are a description of who He is. Knowing God's character is the very basis of our faith and trust in God. Knowing God's character gives us a new perspective on life-God's perspective.

As we view our gracious, loving, forgiving God we realize that His love also demands that sin be punished. This is the basis of God's grace. There is no way that God can love what is good without hating what is evil. Some have downsized God by saying, "If God is an all good God, how can He send someone to hell?" In reality, I guess you could say that God doesn't send anyone to hell; the people get what they deserve. God's

grace demands justice, but true justice demands peace. If this seems cruel remember that it was God who gave His son to die on a cross to meet the demands of His own character that demanded grace and justice. He is not asking anymore of us than He did of Himself.

When we understand God's character we will have a basis for understanding the Bible. Nothing will enrich our study of the Bible more than seeing God as He is. If we read the stories of the Bible and fail to see God reveal himself through the circumstances and lives of real people, then we have missed the purpose for which it was given. When we come to the scriptures to see God as He is, we will not be disappointed.

Understanding God's character is the basis of all morality. People today do not want a God who makes demands and interferes with their personal business. Our culture has created a god that does not deal in moral absolutes. They have lost sight of the God in the scriptures.

Our spiritual growth is dependent on seeing God as He is. It is essential for the church which is the body of Christ to see God as He is, so it will, grow up "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ", Eph. 4:13. We have been saved that "we might become partakers of His divine nature", 2 Pet.1:14. By seeing Him as He is we become like Him, 1 John 3:2.

Many have a desire to make God a "personal god", as in a personal friend. God is not an impersonal it. He interacts with us as persons, but He is not a person as we are a person. He says, "I am God, not man", Hosea 11:9. To treat Him as a bosom buddy or old pal is to downsize God. There are some things and positions and relationships that are sacred and holy, and to make them common or ordinary is to downsize them or profane them. God is one of them and our relationship with Him is another. He is to be given due respect and honor.

Unlike the false gods of paganism who were fickle and unpredictable the God who made us and revealed Himself to us can be counted on to always be the same, Mal. 3:6 "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed". With Him there is no variableness or shadow of turning, Jas. 1:17. He is faithful that promise, Heb. 11:11. God has given us reason to believe that even though the world around us

changes and passes through change after troublesome change, He is still the eternal sovereign whose purpose for His creation will not fail to be accomplished.

We live in a day and age when man has endeavored to belittle or downsize God. All too often man has doubted the existence of God, challenged the character of God, denied the authority of God, questioned the integrity of God, overlooked the greatness of God and denounced the word of God. You may say, "well I'm not guilty of any of that." Are you sure? Any time we put anything else ahead of God we are essentially guilty of all of that. Anytime we fail to follow God's word and attempt to go on our own we are guilty.

The pull of our culture is to create God into whatever we want Him to be. The god of our age is a god of individual human choice. Our society is full of people who believe in doing your own thing, if it makes you happy then do it. It's nobody's business what I do. That's your interpretation of the Bible, I just don't see it that way. Don't judge me. These are certainly the thoughts of many during our time, in fact I think you would be safe in saying that it is the thoughts of the majority.

Seeing God as He is, is the greatest need of every Christian. Realigning our thoughts about God with His divine characteristics revealed in the scriptures is our greatest challenge.

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DO YOU KNOW continued from page two

are simply wonderful. The longer one studies them the more profound they become. Small wonder Jesus was known as the Master. In my years of preaching, I have found that the children will virtually sit on the edges of their seats while a parable is being explained. No doubt they had the same effect in the days of Christ.

Many things are taught in the parable of the vineyard but the matter of running out of time is masterfully taught. Notice that no one went into the vineyard after the 11th hour, or 5:00 P.M. The Jewish day normally began at 6:00 A.M. and ended at 6:00 P.M. Those who had not yet been hired by 5:00 P.M. were not hired at all. Their opportunity had passed them by. In the application of

this great sermon, we must realize that this is dealing with life's little day. A person begins life at the 1st hour (6:00); and as he progresses through his life, his day is also drawing to a close just as those in the parable before us. Unfortunately, in real life we cannot know just how near we are to the last hour of work, or the close of our lives. A young person naturally believes there is much time left in life because he or she is young in years. However, that may not be the case at all. One of the best friends in my life passed away of natural causes at 26 years of age. Who would have believed he had so little time left at 26? He had a child born after his death! We all could relate to similar stories. Not long ago I heard of a young man who had been away from God for quite some time. He decided to come back to the church and did so one evening. The brethren prayed for him, hugged his neck, and he left on his motorcycle. In about 20 minutes he was dead in a terrible accident on the highway. He likely believed he had plenty of life left, but the truth was he was already at days end of life for him.

Many years ago, our family lived in Ohio. I had been trying for several months to baptize a man who lived within sight of the river. Always, it was the same with him: "I'm going to obey the gospel someday." When we had made the decision to move back to California and begin a mission work in Fremont, I went to see him. I told him we planned to move within a few days and I wanted to baptize him before I left. I said, "let me take you to the river right now and baptize you into Christ. The river is right here and it will only take a few moments. He refused but said, "I will someday." We left and within days the news came that he had passed away. He thought he had lots of time but was, in fact, already at the end of life.

Do you know what time it is? Are you putting off doing what you know you need to do, intend to do, sometime? Are you also thinking there is plenty of time? Perhaps there is plenty of time but perhaps there is no more time! It could be that someone will read this and think of getting their life in order but never do so because time has expired. Don't let that be you.

Do you know what time it is?

Think on these things. DLK

SALVATION ASSURED

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could know that the salvation of our souls is secure? Well, in the Bible there are a number of passages that give us such assurance.

To most of us in this day and time, insurance is very important. We insure our cars, we insure the houses in which we live. Many people insure the contents of their homes, and add additional insurance if they have expensive jewelry. They carry personal accident insurance policies against injuries sustained by themselves or visitors. And there are those who have large life insurance policies to be sure that after their decease their loved ones will be protected against undue hardship or even bankruptcy. But while taking all these measures, and making all such provisions, which smacks of good business judgment, many make no provision for their afterlife. When life is over and they pay the debt to nature, no provision has been made for their salvation, and they are lost forever.

Insurance policies that we pay for as we live from day to day have certain conditions and stipulations. If these terms are not met, the policy does not pay. We who buy the insurance do not set the conditions, but we recognize the terms and expect that if something does happen that the insurance company will cover the incident.

We are here for only a little while, but eternity is forever. It makes far more sense to make preparation for eternity when this life is over. Yet, most people think very little about where they are going to live when their time here is up. The word of God informs us, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we flyaway" (Ps. 90:10). Our sojourn on earth is brief in comparison with the ceaseless ages of eternity, and while we have time we can prepare for our eternal destiny. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27). This is what we can be sure of, and like the apostle Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-

ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness..." 2 Pet. 3:9-11.

While Jesus was here he explained the purpose of His mission. He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 10). Jesus died on the cross through excruciating pain and untold agony to save our eternal souls. And the Lord gave us the plan of salvation, and the apostles were sent to inform the world of the glad tidings. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Paul poses the question, "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? (Rom. 10; 13). So when the Gospel is preached and men obey its terms the Lord gives the promise, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). There is the assurance by the Lord Himself.

The Romans who had become Christians were told, "... God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17).

Now that they were saved, were they not assured of salvation? The answer is "yes" conditionally. The apostle Peter said, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly

into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Of this we are assured. Remember, the apostle Paul, shortly before his execution, said, “There is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” Paul was assured of salvation, having met the terms, and we, too, can have that assurance.



Field Reports

Herman Cola, Philippines. Good and blessed day Brother...I'm sorry for sending my message late, something went wrong with my account. I can't send any message and I didn't receive any message from you. Last July 28, 2018 we buried our son Harry Bill at Bataraza cemetery beside his brother Harold and his Grandfather Rudy Baagin. Last August 4, 2018 we conducted and continue our monthly fellowship at Tagurldas Bono-Bono Balaraza Palawan. We never stop worshipping whatever happens or whatever challenges God give us...we must accept the happenings but for now it is hard but we are on the process...we know that God give this trials for us to be strong and be more faithful to him. We are praying for each and every one of us that all Brother may God bless us and continue to guide us wherever we go. - God bless you, Brother Cola.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, email: oldpaths@juno.com, August 15. My health is slowly returning and I thank the Lord for all of His blessings. The home congregation has had a great year. There have been about 6 baptisms, one of which was just last Lord's Day. Our teachers study hard and are constantly improving, and interest remains high. We look

forward to our Labor Day meeting with Carl Johnson beginning soon and are looking for many visitors. This issue of the Old Paths Advocate is especially beneficial and more is coming so be sure your subscriptions are current. The Philippine work is growing in spite of terrible weather situations recently. Those brethren are very resilient. Accidents, floods, typhoons, etc. seem to happen too often but they just keep bouncing back and serving God. They are an example to all of us. They often travel far to hear the gospel. Preachers, we need your articles and field reports so we can keep the paper going. Please have them to me by the 15th of the month for publication. Lord bless the faithful.

Rick Martin, mmartin@bellsouth.net. Jane and I were able to attend the Springfield 4th of July meeting and appreciate the efforts put forth by the Mission Hills congregation to conduct this meeting. Our meeting here in Marietta was conducted by Barney Owens. Barney did his usual great preaching. We were happy that Bea was able to be with him. We had excellent crowds throughout the meeting. It was a privilege for me to be with the Blanchester, OH congregation. Jane and I made our home with Becky and Phillip Vaughn and their sweet daughter Ruby. Their hospitality was superb. I enjoyed being associated with Michael Kidd who lives and works at Blanchester. We had visitors from many of the surrounding congregations. Barney and Bea Owens were at all the evening services and I am thankful for their support and encouragement. My next meeting was at Weatherford, TX. Our hosts for the meeting were Gary and Carol Robinson. They certainly made us welcome and we enjoyed our stay. Several members of the congregation invited us into their homes or took us out to eat. Many of the congregations in the Metroplex area were represented at the meeting. Preachers who attended the meeting were Melvin Blalock, who attended several nights, and Brett Hickey. It is my prayer that good was accomplished in these meetings. On August 5th, the congregation here at Marietta will begin airing the Let the Bible Speak TV program with Kevin Presley. The program is aired on WATC-TV 57 on Sunday mornings at 7:30 AM. The station covers the Atlanta market. If I am not mistaken, this is the first time that Let the Bible Speak has been aired on an all religious station. Please pray that much good might come from this effort. Our annual singing with Kevin Presley will be on August 18th. I ask for your prayers for myself and the Marietta congregation. May God bless the brotherhood.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

EBENEZER?

By JERRY DICKINSON

“And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer, saying, Thus far the Lord has helped us.” (I Samuel 7: 11-12) Hannah had prayed to the Lord asking for a son. She prayed, “If you will give me a son, then I will give him to you all the days of his life.” What a great vow. “If you will give - I will give!” What great things would be accomplished if more mothers would pray that prayer? God gives us precious little souls and we should all strive to follow Hannah’s model and give our children back to God and His service!

Samuel grew up and fulfilled his mother’s vow and delivered Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. He counseled Israel to confess their sins and pray and they could drive out the Philistines. When this was accomplished he set up a stone and named it “Ebenezer”. When I was little boy in church we would sing the words, “Here I raised my Ebenezer: Hither by Thy help I’ve come.” I did not understand what we were singing. Ebenezer? The only Ebenezer I had heard about as a child was Ebenezer Scrooge! It was not until later I read this story and realized the song had a scriptural basis. The word “Ebenezer” means a rock of help or deliverance. Samuel set up some sort of rock monument to memorialize their great deliverance and called it Ebenezer.

I can imagine many years later when some grandfather walked by this rock with his grandson the boy asking, “Grandfather, what is that strange looking rock over there?” The grandfather would point and reply, “That rock was placed there by the great prophet Samuel after God had delivered Israel from the Philistines many years ago. Its name is Ebenezer which means God helped us. God helped us in the past, and He will help us in the future if we will follow Him!”

This is still true today. You have an Ebenezer in your life. You remember that time when God helped you through a great trial of adversity? You did not think you could make it through the dark valley of illness or family peril, but God brought you through. You did not set up a literal stone or monument like Samuel, but in your heart is the memory of what the Lord did. That is your Ebenezer. God delivered you in the past and that is an assurance that He will deliver in the future.

Robert Robinson was born in 1735 and died in 1790 in England. As a young man he decided to dedicate his life to God but became disillusioned and drifted away from his faith. Before he drifted away he wrote the great hymn, “O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing” which became a popular hymn. He must have known his heart was prone to wander from the Lord because of the words of the last verse.

Oh to grace how great a debtor Daily I’m constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness like a fetter Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Never let me wander from Thee, Never leave the God I love:
Here’s my heart,O, take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.

Years after writing the song, and after drifting from his former faith, Robert Robinson got into a taxi carriage in England along with several others. As they proceeded down the street a young woman sitting across from him began to sing his song very softly. At first he tried to tune her out but the more she sang the more agitated he became. Finally, in a fit of pique, he fairly shouted at her, “Would you stop singing that song? You are driving me mad! I wrote that song many years ago but I no longer believe what I wrote.” Then most tragically he muttered, “I would give anything to believe again.” How sadly tragic! If we forget what God has done for us in the past we too can drift into depression and leave the God we love. Raise your Ebenezer and never forget that the Lord has helped us hitherto!

Here I raise my Ebenezer: Hither by Thy help I’ve come:
And I hope by Thy good pleasure Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God:
He to rescue me from danger Interposed His precious blood.