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BULLETIN DIGEST



Gleanings of the best from church bulletins
throughout the brotherhood

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

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VOL. IV NO. 8

Does Anybody Still Care About Doctrine?

With so much of today's teaching aimed at "meeting needs," you sometimes wonder if anyone still cares about what the Scriptures teach on various doctrines. In the June 18, 1982 issue of *Christianity Today*, a little article appeared about the controversy over "infant baptism" in West Germany. They reported that a man named Gottfried Kirschner was rebaptized at the age of 38. "He was dismissed by the regional Protestant church because the church still advocated infant baptism. It said his rebaptism separated him from the church and its ministry. Earlier this year, several young people were excommunicated by the Lutheran regional church in Saxony over their rebaptism. Ironically, they were rebaptized because they wanted to take the matter of being a Christian seriously."

How long has it been since you have read about something like that happening? Could it be that as people are studying the Bible more today, they are discovering the New Testament teaching on baptism, the church, salvation and other important matters? I hope so. Consider:

1. *God has always been concerned about doctrine.* To Timothy Paul wrote, "Watch your life and doctrine closely" (1 Tim. 5:16). A good life is essential, but so is "sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10).

2. *One can teach about Jesus accurately, yet not teach sound doctrine.* Of Apollos it is said, he taught "about Jesus accurately" but he knew only of the "baptism of John" (Acts 18:25). So Priscilla and Aquila took him to their home and "explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26). His Christology was fine, his doctrine was not.

Let's keep the balance God wants in our teaching. His word includes doctrines that He wants taught to every generation.



Dick Marcear
Amarillo, TX

BULLETIN DIGEST

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From The Editor..

"When God measures a man, He puts the tape around the heart and not around the head." A degree of self-pride is commendable but we must be careful that we not think too highly of ourselves (Rom. 12:3).

Let's face it, very few will actually *mourn* our passing and be saddened by memory for years to come. Beyond the immediate family our demise will not leave too big a dent.

Observe the conversation as friends visit the family of the deceased. Isn't it noticeably filled with mundane chit-chat void of emotion and real sorrow that we might expect?

I recall a few years back riding to the cemetery with the pallbearers of a funeral I had preached. The death of their friend had apparently made little impact upon them. Their language was coarse, even vulgar, and spiced with curse words. Hardly what you would expect of persons who had lost someone who was supposed to be a close friend.

Prestige and importance are short-lived. At our death loved ones will mourn for some time. A few close friends will experience pangs of hurt occasionally. Beyond that there will only be a matter-of-fact memory which lingers for a decade or so with acquaintance and to all others it will be as if we had never lived. A rather humbling thought but nevertheless true in most cases I believe.

When we begin to think we are important someone suggested we do the following: go fifty miles from home, stand in a crowd and ask how many know of you or have heard of your work. Let's be content with a simple life of serving God, saving souls, doing good deeds and making life a little more pleasant for all we can.

—JMS

Does Anyone Care?

Most of us have experienced giving time, effort or money to people and felt that it was not appreciated. Sometimes we wonder if anyone even notices what we are doing.

If this has been happening to you I hope you will consider Hebrews 6:10. *"For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do."*

We need to be reminded that God is aware of all our efforts on his behalf.

The truth that God is sensitive to all we do for Christ and his church is revealed consistently throughout the Bible.

One of the finest examples in the New Testament is Revelation 2:2-3. *"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false; I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and have not grown weary."*

The prophets of the Old Testament used this truth of divine awareness to past deeds to try to draw Israel back to God.

"I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown." (Jeremiah 2:2).

"Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." (Isaiah 49:15).

The next time you wonder if anyone really notices the things you are trying to do remember God knows. He doesn't miss a thing. He sees every bit of effort and good will you put forth.



Tommy Kelton
Pharr, TX

HONORING THE DEAD



I came across something written by Carl C. Williams that grabbed my attention. The event Mr. Williams describes so captures the nature of man that I thought I would pass it on to you.

"Nothing seemed more important to the crowd than the outcome of a hotly contested championship basketball game being played in O.C. Lewis Gymnasium in Anderson, Indiana. With three minutes to go and the visitors leading by two points, a foul was called on one of the hometown players. Excitement rose as the Anderson boy stepped up to the foul line for his free throw."

"Suddenly, the umpire slumped to the floor. In seconds a doctor was at his side. Solemnly, the announcement was made that the umpire was dead. Within moments the game was canceled; the people left the gymnasium as though it were a mortuary. The formerly loud-yelling, sports-minded crowd had become a calm group of sober-faced individuals who unexpectedly had been reminded of the relative unimportance of temporal activities."

Picture the situation. If it was like any other basketball game, the umpire just mentioned had been vilified numerous times during the period of this game. Yet, when he died, the game was stopped in honor of him. This, I believe, was a noble gesture and should have been done. But, have you ever noticed that people generally get more respect after they are dead than they do while they are alive. Some often speak reproachfully about one while he is alive, but extol his virtues after he is dead. Wouldn't it be better to do this while he is alive and could enjoy and be encouraged by it.



Arnold Sexton
Little Rock, AR

380 BAPTISMS!

380 baptisms! And, those 380 were the results by *one* person and not by a congregation. Isn't that astounding! Virginia T. Brown of Shelbyville, Tennessee, is the very remarkable Christian who accomplished this by teaching through World Bible School.

Sister Brown started with 20 names in 1976. She had no results for over a year. But, then, she went to Ghana with 4 young preachers from Arkansas in 1978 and visited some of her students. Thirty of them were baptized on that trip. She has averaged over 50 conversions a year since that time.

She also credits her experience as a former school teacher to her success. She states this work requires long hours and constant prayers. Her records show she has more than 2,000 WBS students.

Many of us involved in WBS teaching feel some of the students are too young to understand. Sis. Brown tells us of Atonsah Boakye Theophylous, a 13-year-old student of hers, who was baptized in 1979. Since then, his parents, his two sisters and two brothers have been converted.

Here are *Do's* and *Don'ts* given by Virginia Brown: (1) Get a map of the nation. If you can't find the town of the student, write and ask what city is near, (2) Get a church directory of the country, (3) Develop your own system. Every WBS teacher is different, (4) Never send any money, (5) Never send a Bible until the student has completed six lessons, (6) Send only Bible and Bible literature, (7) Be certain to keep a record of every student. Jot down any information...age, size of family, church, etc., (8) Don't be afraid to spend some of your own money. You must remember that money is nothing compared to a soul.

We pray you will find this woman an inspiration. Any Christian can be fruitful with perseverance. Join in this work. If you are already involved, recommit yourself.



Ray Cox
Attala, AL

Too Late



I attended a seminar at a local congregation a few weeks ago. Since I arrived late for a morning session I was seated near the back. Two rows behind me was a young mother with a six or seven-year old daughter seated on one side and a three or four-year old son on the other. At some point the little boy grew restless and created a small disturbance. I could hear the mother's warning voice but could not make out the words. "I be quiet, I be quiet," was the audible response. Only a short time elapsed before there was a much louder disturbance from behind me. This time I heard the mother say "Elizabeth, you sit right here. Eric, you come with me." "I be quiet, I be quiet," there was urgency in his voice and pleading now—even sincerity. The mother's voice was quiet but firm as she half led, half dragged him out of the auditorium, "too late Eric."

The Bible is filled with "too late" stories. It was "too late" for Adam to hide from God, "too late" for the world when the flood waters of Noah's time covered the earth, and "too late" for Achan to confess his theft. Jesus told the parable about ten virgins, five of whom were "too late."

I have seen marriages end because people discovered "too late" their insensitivity and lack of concern. I have seen young men go to prison because it was "too late" to be sorry or to say "I won't do it again." Five minutes after ten is "too late" to get your milk. When

you watch the girl you love walk down the aisle with another man, it's "too late" to say "I love you," or "I'll change."

It is a sobering thing and far more serious when it comes to the kingdom. Perhaps before you read this it will be "too late." Either we will all have heard the voice of the archangel or our personal summons will be delivered; that final summons, which always finds us home, and from which there is *no* reprieve.

If the tone of this article seems ominous—threatening—please know that it was intended to be so. How did Jesus intend for His disciples to respond to the parable of the ten virgins. "Watch," He says. "Get your stuff together because it's going to happen." If you haven't got your stuff together, it is my prayer that these thoughts might motivate you to do it. NOW! How many little ends and pieces have you got laying around that need taking care of?

If I sound as though it frightens me to think of the possibility of being rejected at the last judgment, it's because I am. The words, "*Depart, I never knew you,*" are just as real to me as "*enter into the joy of your lord.*" When little Eric's mother marched him back into the auditorium about ten minutes later, he was red-eyed and sober as a judge. He was also ready to sit still. He may have cause to remember with gratitude in years to come that his mother taught him what it means to be, "Too late."



John W. Smith
Lubbock, TX

"The process of growing old is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!"

A CHILD'S SOUL IS A TEMPLE TO BE BUILT

A builder built a temple,
He wrought it with grace and skill;
Pillars and groins and arches
All fashioned to work his will.
Men said, as they saw its beauty,
"It shall never know decay.
Great is thy skill, O builder,
Thy fame shall endure for aye."

A teacher built a temple
With loving and infinite care,
Planning each arch with patience,
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised her unceasing efforts,
None knew of her wondrous plan;
For the temple the teacher had built
Was unseen by the eyes of man.

Gone is the builder's temple,
Crumbled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the teacher built
Will last while the ages roll,
For that beautiful unseen temple
Is a child's immortal soul.



Author Unknown

TO PUT IT BLUNTLY

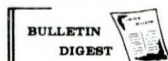
The preacher met a member on Monday morning. "I have not seen you in church services for some time," said the preacher. "No, I've lost my religion," said the other. "Well, I surely hope no one finds it," was the preacher's comment as he went on his way.



via Bennettsville, SC

Which Church Shall I Join?

All up and down this troubled land,
Confusion reigns today;
As honest folks on every hand
In doubt are heard to say,
I do not know which church to join
There are so very many,
To whom we offer this advice
You should never join any,
You cannot join the church of Christ
No man can vote you in,
The Lord himself will add you when
He saves you from your sin,
Then take no chance neighbor
This race but once you'll run,
A church you'd join must be of man
And not the Bible one.
Beware a church you cannot find
within the sacred pages,
Be safe, dear sinner, rest your soul
Upon the Rock of Ages,
Be added to this blood bought church
And drink salvations cup,
For every plant God planteth not
It shall be rooted up.
No mourner's bench on Pentecost
The inspired fitted,
But said, "Repent and be baptized
That your sins may be remitted."
The Lord, who saved and added those
Who did that day His will,
Will do the same for you, dear friend
For He is adding still.
Let not false teachers lead you wrong
Nor close your eyes in slumber,
When Jesus said, "I'll build my church,"
Twas not the plural number.



via East Main Bulletin
Murfreesboro, TN

PRAISE TO THE HOMEMAKERS

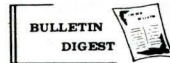
I get very weary of the downgrading and even scornful manner in which the world regards the home and motherhood. Quite often when a woman is asked if she works at a job, she will answer, "No, I just work at home." To be a homemaker, wife, and mother is a most noble and worthy position (Titus 2:3-5). She can and is to be the queen of her "palace"; to be the source of a very pleasant, homey, comfortable atmosphere in which others can find sanctuary from the "rough shod" ways of the world.

Like many other things in life, it is not an easy thing to be a good homemaker, wife, and mother; the daily responsibilities and frustrations are many and varied. There are: clothes to wash and put away; dirty diapers to tend to; house to clean; menu to plan in order to keep a step ahead of meal time; disagreements among children to settle; knees to bandage; phone to answer; PTA meetings to attend; transportation to furnish from here to there and back; sharing a job disappointment with husband; concern that the children will have proper social companionship; and this list can go on.

For mother and wife there is also: Bible class material to prepare; being sure she has sufficient items to help keep little ones interested during worship service (sometimes what is a relatively brief prayer can seem like a very long one when she is trying to keep a little one quiet or hold off what is an inevitable outburst. Those who have twins, "*let them be given double honor*"). This list could go on and on, and if indeed the mother is a single person, some of these responsibilities are magnified.

However, the rewards, blessings, and joys far surpass the responsibilities and frustrations. Proverbs 31 speaks this: "*Charm is*

deceitful and beauty is vain, but she who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands and let her works praise her throughout the gate." To see him take his first step or hear her say her first word; or read his first book or sing her first song; to quote his first Bible verse or see her go hand in hand with her first school chum; to hear the boy word a prayer or hear the girl recite a beautiful poem; to witness his baptism into Christ or to plan and participate in her wedding ceremony as she is united with a good Christian man; to share the success of her husband's business and "through the eye of faith" seeing her children stand before the Heavenly Father's great White Throne and hear Him say, "*Well done, child, enter in.*" Yes: "*Give her the fruits of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates.*"



Bob Bland
Ft. Collins, CO

We Pray

Some people in applying the Bible to their lives are like the little boy with his geography. He prayed as he went to bed: "Bless my mama and papa, and please make St. Louis the capitol of Missouri." When his mother asked him why he said such a thing in his prayer, he said, "Well, Mama, that is what I put on my examination paper."

Some people act in religion without studying and then pray that they are right. The study should come first, and when we follow the will of God, we will then know how to pray aright. People should never ask God to use His divine power to make up for their ignorance.



Author Unknown
via Muscatine, IA

Why Do I Still Hurt?

What is heard in sermons and what is experienced in life often are two different things. The sermons proclaim how great the Christian life is and make it almost seem that if one would just fully devote himself to God, he would never have another problem. When Monday comes, the same old temptations are still there and the same pains of loneliness, discouragement, emptiness, etc., are still nagging at the heart.

The confused listener then wonders what is wrong. Why does this not work for me? Does this mean that I'm not really devoted to God? If God is so good and Christianity is so great, why do I still hurt so much?

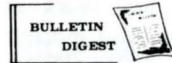
It is true that "...to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). He does promise us a peace that is beyond all human understanding. *"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 4:7). Paul said, *"...I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."* (Phil. 4:11). To have peace and to be content are blessings that come to those who are in Christ.

It is obvious that these blessings are available to the Christian, but it is also obvious that they are areas in which we must grow. Circumstances do not have to affect our inner peace or contentment, but they likely will until our faith is strong enough that we can overcome the circumstances.

To grow and overcome these negative feelings, the Christian must first grow in his relationship with God. He needs to love God more and appreciate Him and come to accept His presence. This will come through personal study of the Bible in an effort to know God, and not just know God's Word.

A personal, private time needs to be set aside for such study and meditation. Part of

this personal time with God needs to be spent in prayer so that a mood is established that will cause one to "pray without ceasing" all day long. When one can develop a mature relationship with God, his values will be so different that hurts, pains, disappointments, etc., will be understood differently. He will literally learn to be content and will have a peace from God which will continue to grow.



Bill Long
Atlanta, GA

JUST ONE TRACT

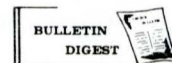
It is not often that we realize the importance of the simple things we regularly do. Think of how often we pass the tract racks and forget the power of the word of God in printed form. Perhaps the following will increase our awareness of hidden opportunities.

Several weeks ago one of the members at Palm Beach Lakes took one of the tracts we feature each week. She probably had no idea of what lay ahead for her. Some time later while waiting for a bus she began a conversation with another person who was also standing there. When the subject of religion was brought up she was able to give the tract to her new friend.

One thing led to another and soon they were having regular Bible studies. Other members at Palm Beach Lakes were brought in and more studies were conducted. When our gospel meeting was conducted, both were present at the services.

Then just a few weeks ago Brenda Nestor became a part of the body of Christ. How thrilling it was to see her joy and that of all those who were involved in teaching her. There was no one who had greater joy than Irene Williams, who used the tract to help Brenda start on a journey toward heaven.

Think about it for a minute. Suppose there had been no tract, no conversation at a bus stop, no home studies? May God help us to seize our opportunities!



Dan Jenkins
Palm Beach Lake, FL

I'VE BEEN DOWN THAT ROAD

Feeling good about ourselves is something we are encouraged to do by psychologists and psychiatrists, to say nothing about advertisers. Feeling guilty is *passee*. We should work on not feeling guilty about anything—or should we?

When it comes to our spiritual lives, we do not like to be made to feel guilty by the preacher or anyone else. I have been down this road, too, but now I'm beginning to wonder if we don't need some guilt to motivate us when love doesn't. In Acts 2, Peter laid the ultimate guilt trip on the Jews when he preached the first sermon on the day of Pentecost. Wasn't it guilt that made the 3,000 respond that very day? After all, Peter said: "You crucified the Son of God."

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit when he preached this sermon, and God made it possible for all the different nationalities represented there to hear it in their own languages, so it must have been an important message. They were guilty, they were "*pricked in their hearts*," and they responded to the guilt they felt.

Feeling guilty over everything is a bad thing; not ever feeling guilty is a bad thing, too. Constructive, motivating guilt can cause us to reevaluate where we are spiritually in our lives and make needed changes. If the preacher preaches about lying and I have told a lie that morning, chances are I will feel guilty. If he hammers away at it enough, I probably won't lie again, because I don't like to feel guilty. God doesn't like for me to lie, either. Therefore I have benefited by being made to feel guilty over something I'm really guilty of.

Motivation by love is what we are all striving for, but when love for God and the truth just isn't working, a good dose of guilt could prove to be very effective.

Neville Lansford
via Jay Road Bulletin
Boulder, CO



...on the lighter side



Couldn't Do It Alone

A little boy called the house selling picture cards for ten cents a piece. "What are you going to do with the money?" he was asked. "I'm raising one million dollars to give to missions," answered the little boy. "ONE MILLION DOLLARS" the startled man replied. "Do you expect to raise it all by yourself?" "No, Sir," he replied, "there is another boy helping me."

Sorry

QUOTE ATTRIBUTED TO PAUL REVERE'S WIFE: "I don't care who's coming. Tonight's my night to have the horse."

So That's Why?

A mother saw her seven-year-old boy repeatedly dunking his little brother in a mud hole. Stopping him, she demanded an explanation. The child said he was baptizing his brother "in the name of the Father, and in the Son, and in the hole he goes."

For Sons-In-Law

One of the mysteries of life is how the boy who wasn't good enough to marry the daughter can be the father of the smartest grandchildren in the world.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

In the daily gossip column of a Houston, Texas newspaper is a section entitled "Movers & Shakers." I assume the society editor to be using that title to describe individuals whose accomplishments are having a major impact on that city.

In the Bible are to be found the stories of many "Movers and Shakers." One of the most notable is Barnabas whose very name means "*Son of encouragement*" (Acts 4:36). Barnabas was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, and a prominent early proclaimer of the gospel of Christ.

What I admire most about Barnabas is a certain outstanding trait: when he saw a job that needed doing, he just did it. Take, for example, the precarious status of that persecutor-of-Christians lately become preacher-of-Christ Saul of Tarsus. Very few of the disciples, apparently, were convinced of the genuineness of Saul's conversion. Barnabas was. He *"took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus"* (Acts 9:27).

Now suppose that Barnabas had been like some brethren today. Saul's great missionary activities and the writing of 13 books of the New Testament might never have happened. First nothing could have been done until the monthly business meeting of the Jerusalem church. At that meeting perhaps Barnabas might have brought up Saul's name as someone who wanted to preach. After lengthy discussion the matter is referred to the committee on ministerial credentials with the instructions that a recommendation be presented by the committee at the next monthly meeting. Thankfully things didn't happen that way. Barnabas recognized the ability and dedication

of Saul, the urgency of the situation, and put his reputation on the line by standing up for this new but controversial brother.

Maybe one reason we don't have more "Movers and Shakers" in the church today is that we are too locked in to an "organized program" mindset. Some seem to feel that nothing can be done in the church unless it is organized through official channels. Thankfully there are a few in every congregation (and there should be a lot more) who, like Barnabas, see a job that needs doing and do it. It may be a home Bible study that needs to be taught, some food for a needy family, a visit, a phone call or a card that needs to be sent—functions of the body of Christ. How vitally important are these "Movers and Shakers," self-starters who get the job done.



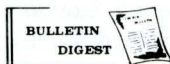
Jim Howard
Memphis, TN

MOM'S MAGIC

The title of the report was to be "How Man Evolved from an Ape." When my mother got word of the title of the report assigned to her only son who aspired to be a preacher, she had a trip to the school to make. After a few minutes of coming to an understanding with the principal and that fifth grade teacher, the report title was changed to "How Man Was Created by God." That was in 1954. Today the secular pressures are tremendously more complex on our youngsters, but it is still Mom's magic that does the work of instilling God's faith in us.

"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother, Eunice, and I am sure it is in you as well." (II Tim. 1:5)

How is it going at your house, mothers? What a treasure, what a responsibility, what a privilege you have. We thank God for you and your "magic."



Paul Thomas
Costa Mesa, CA

HOW DID YOU GET SO SMART?

The Humanist is a magazine published by atheists and agnostics. They recently sponsored an essay writing contest from which the winning compositions were printed in the March/April issue. The first place essay for the "ages 19 and under" category was written by a 17 year old girl. It was entitled "The Gospel of Hate." The young writer says that Christian people like us do not preach a gospel of love, but a "Gospel of Hate." "How so?" you might ask. Because, she says, we commit "one of the most arrogant assumptions a human being can make: that his religious beliefs are the Truth and that everyone else is wrong." Her reasoning is that "Absolute proof does not exist." Even so, she desperately attempts to prove her position throughout her article.

Last Tuesday morning, the *Donahue Show* was dedicated to proving the absurdity of anyone who would be willing to say that (1) the Bible is *the* word of God, period—and that (2) I know what the Bible says about a particular subject. The guests and the overwhelming majority of the audience spent a solid hour condemning anyone who held to either of these positions. Phil, himself, said that such a person showed "arrogance." Their point was to just let everyone have their own ideas and not try to tell them that they are wrong.

I. There is a **SOCIAL** lesson here.

- A. This is a real world. People really do not believe God's existence. People really do not believe that the Bible is His word. People really do not believe that a person can know His word.
- B. Are we preparing our children to deal with such increasingly vicious attacks on their faith?

II. There is an **INTELLECTUAL** lesson here.

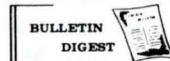
- A. We must ask the young writer and

Donahue "Are you *sure* about that? Isn't that mighty arrogant of you?"

- B. They essentially teach that people must accept every view without reservation, *with* the reservation that you do not accept *our* view.
- C. There is real truth which exists outside our minds. An idea is not true or acceptable just because someone happens to teach it. It is true or false because it describes what actually is the case. Never let anyone tell you differently. If they try, ask them (1) how they know it for sure, and (2) why they are trying to change your mind.

III. There is a **SPIRITUAL** lesson here.

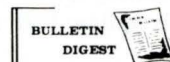
- A. You shall *know* the truth and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).
- B. "*Be ready always to give answer to anyone who asks you concerning the hope which lies within you*" (1 Pet. 3:15).
- C. "*I am the way and the truth and the life and no one cometh unto the Father but by Me*" (John 14:16).
- D. "*Because you are not of the world but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*" (John 15:19).



Kippy Myers
via Ashdown, AR

SNAP JUDGMENTS

While on a walk one day, I was surprised to see a man hoeing his garden while sitting in a chair. What laziness! I thought. But suddenly I saw leaning against his chair a pair of crutches. The man was at work despite his handicap. The lesson I learned about snap judgments has stayed with me for years: The crosses people bear are seldom in plain sight.



via Taylors, SC

COMPROMISE FOR CASH



J. Marse Grant, editor emeritus of the *Biblical Recorder*, a Baptist journal, reports that Shaw Divinity School at Raleigh, N.C., recently gave an honorary degree to Sun Myung Moon. Moon is the head of the Unification Church ("Moonies"). Not only is he the leader of one of America's most notorious cults, but he is also presently serving a prison term for income tax evasion. This would seem to make him an unlikely candidate for honors from any college. But Grant also reports that Moon had given \$30,000 to the school.

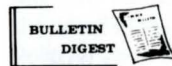
Contrast this with an item found in Dr. Paul Lee Tan's *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* and first reported in *Christianity Today*. A wealthy manufacturer bequeathed \$1 million to Pepperdine College with the stipulation that the college would grant an honorary doctorate to a certain man. The board of trustees unanimously rejected the bequest because, according to then President Norvel Young, "the academic process precludes awarding a degree based on the contingency of any gift." The article observed that neither Pepperdine's "honor nor its honorary degrees are for sale."

Exodus 23:8 warned of taking bribes, "And thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous." What of the business man that sells his integrity for greater profit? What of the woman who sells her honor for career advancement? What of the preacher who perverts the truth to please a liberal friend? What of a church that compromises discipline lest a generous giver be offended?

In view of the eternal consequences money

would seem to be a poor return for the sacrifice of integrity and honor. Still, it remains true, in all areas of human activity, that "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10 ASV).

Thank God for those who would not compromise convictions for any amount of cash.



David Pharr
Rock Hill, SC

Don't Believe Them

Most evolutionists would have you believe that anyone who doesn't accept their theory is really uneducated. They tend to class such an one with those who still believe the earth is flat.

The truth of the matter is that almost half of all Americans believe that God created man in his present form sometime within the last ten thousand years. According to a *New York Times* report (August 29, 1982) of a Gallup Pole—44% of Americans polled (nearly a quarter of them college graduates) accept the Genesis account of creation. Only 9% believe in an evolution in which God had no part, while 38% believe that although man has evolved from lower life forms, God directed the process. The remaining 9% said they didn't know.

Young people, never be ashamed of your beliefs that are based on the Bible! You are not part of an ignorant minority. According to the survey more people in America believe as you do than any other way.

Scientific evidence is rapidly accumulating in favor of the Bible believer and against the evolutionist. Today it takes a very credulous man to cling to the ancient Darwinian theory.



Louis Tandy
Wichita, KS

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NAKED I CAME...NAKED I SHALL RETURN

Job's attitude about suddenly losing everything he owned is well known.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Job 1:21

We read that story and nod our heads in agreement with his holy attitude. But that is easy for us because we know the conclusion to the story.

"And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord increased all that he had twofold." Job 42:10

How would we react if that happened to us and we did not yet know the end of our story? Five minutes ago, I talked to a brother who last week was a rather wealthy man. He owned a farm, a business, a nice house, and was a major contributor to the congregation to which he belonged. In fact, the congregational budget depended to a great extent on his personal contribution. But something happened last week. The bank in this city went bankrupt and was bought out by an Eastern firm. Farm loans that were good before as long as the interest was paid were no longer honored. The new bank owners foreclosed on all the loans. Our brother will lose everything he owns, including his house. What was his attitude? Five minutes ago, he said, "I arrived in this town at 10:30 P.M., twenty years ago, with nothing. The Lord blessed me. I do not look forward to starting again. But I will serve the Lord. I will do His will, and if He chooses to bless me again, I will again use those blessings for the growth of His kingdom."

Somehow I get the feeling that we haven't yet heard the end of that brother's story. But, in the meantime, what about the rest of us? Are we using the blessings we now have to His glory? Blessings and tribulation can both result in the glory of God if our attitude is like that of Job, or the brother mentioned in this article, or the apostle Paul who said:

"I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ..." Phil. 3:8.

Rudy Wray
Victoria, TX

SATAN IS NOT PARTISAN

Satan is not partisan. He doesn't care if you worship him or not.

Recently ABC's *20/20* caused quite a stir by airing a report on Satan worship in the United States. Similar reports have been aired before, and TV movies have been made, and magazines have had various articles about Satanism, none of them causing much more than a raised eyebrow here and there.

But *20/20* suggested that Satan worship may be part of the reason for the ever-increasing number of missing children in this country. Maybe, the show suggested, these children are being used as human sacrifices in the worship of Satan.

My mind is still reeling at the very thought. I look at my young son and try to imagine evil so dark, so thorough that a person could kill a baby as an act of worship. And my mind is still reeling at the thought of a spiritual power so wicked as to delight in such a nightmare. (And to think I am tempted to listen to what this Father of Lies tells me is important in life!) Satan is so evil that he cheers when babies die.

But Satan cheers at many other things too. Satan delighted in the worship of Baal. It didn't bother Satan that Baal was really a powerless piece of wood. Satan delights in the worship of money, or power, or prestige, or any other thing that becomes a god in our lives. Satan doesn't care which of his stooges we prostrate ourselves before. Because none of them can save us.

Satan knows that Jesus is the Way, and that no one comes to the Father, except through him. So Satan knows that as long as I am worshipping *anything* except God the Father and Jesus the Son, the battle is won.

Satan is not partisan. He doesn't care if you worship him or not.



Chuck Jones
Peachtree City, GA

THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS



A story is told of a minister who taught an old man to read. He became a proficient scholar. After the teaching had come to an end and the minister was not able to call at the home for sometime, and when he did he only found the wife.

"How is John?" said he.

"He's canny, sir," was the reply.

"How does he get on with his reading?"

"Very nicely, sir."

"Oh, I suppose he will read his Bible very comfortably now."

"Bible, sir! Bless you! He was out of the Bible and into the newspapers long ago."

There are many people like this today. They are out of the Bible and into newspapers, or other literature that does not pertain to the Bible.

As Jeremiah states, "*They have forsaken the fountain of living waters and have hewn out cisterns—broken cisterns that will not hold water.*"

Read your Bible! You never outgrow your need for the Word of God. You need it more and more as time passes.



Ray Crawford
Poplar Bluff, MO

Balanced Preaching

When we abandon the numerous preaching manuals of men and return to THE one and only authority for understanding biblical homiletics, we are struck with awe that the contrast could be so blatant.

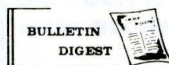
Some say the preacher should never offend or create division by his life or teaching. Granted, some preachers may inappropriately do so. On the other hand, the preacher who is patterning his life and teaching after Jesus will inevitably do so. In Jesus' case, "there was much murmuring among the people concerning him" (Jn. 7:12). Time and time again, Jesus' doctrine and bold actions stirred up division: "So there was a division among the people because of him" (Jn. 7:43; cf. Jn. 10:19; I Cor. 11:19). The prevailing mood in the church of today is "peace at all costs," "smooth it over," and "whatever you do, don't create division." No one wants division for division's sake. But we've missed an extremely important element of biblical religion if we fail to hear the words of our Master when He declared: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Lk. 12:51).

Secondly, among our more sophisticated brethren, a common sentiment suggests that it is inappropriate for the preacher to "call names" or speak too directly about a false doctrine, false teacher, or false church. The "reasoning" behind this tenet suggests that such an approach only serves to alienate people. Granted, human discretion may need to be exercised to avoid unnecessary antagonism. But does this premise, in fact, have biblical support? If so, how do we account for the fact that both John the Immerser and Jesus labeled contemporaries with rather direct names (e.g., "brood of vipers," "fools," "blind guides," "hypocrites,"

"child of hell," "serpents," "of your father the devil" —Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:15-17:33; Jn. 8:44)? How do we account for the fact that Paul publicly called individuals down—by name—for their misdeeds (e.g., Demas, Hymenaeus, Alexander, Phyletus, Peter, Alexander the Coppersmith—Gal. 2:11-14; I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17-18; 4:10,14)? Why did John call Diotrephes' name (III John 9-19)? Why did John come right out and call the name of a false religious group (Rev. 2:6,15)? One gets the idea that maybe publically pinpointing people, groups, and doctrines can be a wholesome activity!

Thirdly, one hears a lot about the need to have "balanced preaching." Presumably, what is meant by this admonition is that the preacher should refrain from being too "negative." Granted, we should "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), but the Bible repeatedly intimates that the human mind is in more need of negative than positive. The inspired preacher Jeremiah was told that his task consisted of 6 activities: to root out, pull out, destroy, thrown down, build, and plant (Jer. 1:10). Notice that 4 of the 6 are negative behaviors. When queried by the rich young man concerning eternal life, Jesus delineated 6 commands, 4 of which were negative (Matt. 19:16-19). When Paul told Timothy what the New Testament preacher's task entailed, he summarized: "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (II Tim. 4:2). Two of the three are negative.

The conclusion is hard for many to accept: Biblical preaching, preaching that is balanced, is divisive, offensive, and predominantly negative. God's proclaimed truth is like a hammer that breaks in pieces (Jer. 23:29). To many, it is foolishness (I Cor. 1:18). Their hard hearts are offended by it (Matt. 15:12-14). Its divisive, negative qualities are accentuated only in the mind of the disobedient (Acts 7:51). But to those who will receive it with humility, it will save their souls (James 1:21)!



Dave Miller
Dongola, IL

MY HUSBAND ISN'T A CHRISTIAN

Many wonderful ladies find themselves in the unfortunate situation of having a husband who isn't a Christian. It's a sad situation which causes in many cases, great anguish of heart, and presents a tremendous challenge to the Christian's faith. However, it is not an impossible situation for the one who has the desire to cope with it, and the faith to do so. Perhaps the following suggestions will be helpful.

1. Don't give up! It was to just such a situation as this that Paul wrote, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" (I Cor. 7:16) Paul didn't recommend giving up and neither do I. Surrendering to his faithlessness is not the answer. It will do nothing but drag you into his lost state and erect barriers which might well seal the doom of both of you.

2. Be a Christian wife. Learn what the Bible teaches in I Peter 3:1-4 and Titus 2:4-5, and then make a conscious, determined effort to practice. What he needs more than anything at this time is the gospel according to YOU.

3. Be an active part of the church. Many husbands are unreachable because the wife demonstrates in her life that the church is unimportant. Let him see how important the church is to you.

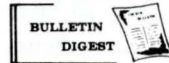
4. Speak well of the church. Criticism of the church will have a negative effect. Emphasis on the bad side will blind him to the good side and to the divine side. Any congregation has a good side. Look for it and talk it up!

5. Keep appropriate literature in convenient places in the home. Many husbands have been brought to the Lord by this method.

6. Pray regularly for him. The Lord's counsel

in Luke 18:1 is important. Let him know that he's on your prayer list. Just knowing that someone is praying for you has a tremendous effect.

These few suggestions will not guarantee the conversion of your husband; but the chances are good, and they certainly won't do any harm. Give it a try.



Jim O'Conner
via LaJunta, CO

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That There Be No Regrets



When I think of relationships with parents, I'm reminded of something my mother said back when I was eight or nine. For some reason (I hope it was a good one) I was home from school, and mother was taking some pies she had baked over to my grandmother's. I remember insisting that we should keep those pies for our own family and let "Granny" as we called her, take care of herself.

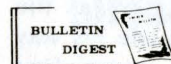
Mom gave my lecture a mild reprimand or two, and when she had about all she could take she proceeded to tell me of a sudden accidental death of her father in an oil field and of deep regrets she had experienced time and time again for what she had and had not done toward him and then she said that she'd give anything if she could go back and be kinder and more considerate but of course that was impossible. She then went on to say, "We've got to do for people what we can when we can because later on we don't want to have regrets for the way we treated them."

You know, that great principle has such tremendous application for our lives, not only in our families, but also in every area of life. A writer of a *Reader's Digest* article a few years ago told of an antique salesman who had made a wonderful impression on her family, so much so that they once remarked: "We should tell him how much we appreciate him." They agreed to do so when he came by for his next call. But when the time came, his daughter came instead. They asked about her father and she replied, "Oh, didn't you know? He

died last month." then when they mentioned how much they had appreciated him, the daughter said, "I would have been wonderful if he could have known that. You see, he was the kind of man who had great need of appreciation and reassurance." Then, the writer went on to say how much her family regretted not having taken time to express their appreciation.

The challenge is to so live "that there be no regrets." Young people do what you can to get along with your parents, that there be no regrets later. Congregation, let's respect and cooperate with the elders, that there be no regrets later. Everyone, let's love the Lord and do his will, that there be no regrets later. One day it'll be too late to do a lot of things that it's not too late to do now!

We can't turn back the clock, but we can use the time as it comes, to obey the Lord, to love and serve each other, and to so live that there be no regrets.



Joe Goodspeed
Pine Bluff, AR

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A CHRISTIAN'S INFLUENCE

Read Matthew 5:13-16.

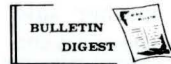
Have you ever stopped to consider as a Christian the influence that you have on those around you? It has been said many times that if heaven becomes your home, you will take others with you because of the influence you have exerted while on earth. I believe the opposite to be true as well. If you are *lost*, you will take those with you into eternal punishment who have followed your earthly example. We are being observed many times when we least expect it. The following story has been around a long time, but I just recently read it again in print. The story is true.

Around the turn of the century in rural Tennessee, an old man crippled with arthritis was very faithful in his assembling with the saints (Going to church services—Heb. 10:25). Twice on Sunday and on Wednesday nights, a little girl watched from her window as the old man with his cane painfully made his way down to the little church on the corner. One Sunday morning following a snow storm, the little girl ran to her window, and looking out exclaimed, "Surely the old man will not go to church this morning." But there he was, right on schedule, plodding very cautiously through the ice and snow.

The little girl could not contain herself any longer. She just had to visit the little church to see what possibly could be there that would bring the old man out on such an inclement morning. The rest is history. The little girl was impressed by the services there at the church of Christ that morning and a short time later she was baptized into Christ, thus becoming a Christian. After high school she enrolled in a Christian college and while there she met a fine young Christian boy whom she later married. To this union a son was born who was to become one of the brotherhood's finest gospel preachers. This brother has literally baptized thousands during his minis-

try. The old man went to his reward never realizing just what an impact he had made for the cause of Christ. Because of his Godly influence many will go into heaven with him.

There can be no greater joy than to reach heaven and hear someone say, "I'm here because you showed me the way." Parents, when you reach heaven, won't it be wonderful to see you children and to hear them say, "Mom and Dad, we made it because of you." (Eph. 6:4).



Jimmy Dorris
Nashville, TN

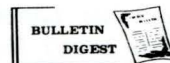
You Can't Ride The Fence



A man, during the Civil War, decided to be absolutely neutral. He put on a gray jacket and a pair of blue trousers to indicate he was for both the Confederacy and the Union.

One day he got caught in a battle skirmish between Confederate and Union soldiers. He walked out in the middle of the troops shouting his neutrality. But the Union seeing his Confederate jacket riddled it with bullets and a Confederate sharpshooter plugged him in the seat of his trousers.

You see you can't change your convictions to suit the occasion. "No man can serve two masters...you cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24) The prophet challenged Israel, "How long will you go limping with two opinions" (1 Kings 18:21). Let us say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).



Author Unknown
via Pearl St. Bulletin
Denton, TX

CORRECTION IS ALWAYS NEEDED

Recently I was thrilled to hold the controls of an airplane. All I was supposed to do was to keep it on course. I soon found that flying on a level course was very difficult. I had to make constant corrections.

It dawned on me that life is like that. Things do not always stay on course. If we are not always pressing on, we are losing ground. While we are learning, we also are forgetting.

We slip into bad habits that we often do not realize we have acquired until a doctor or friend points them out to us. But correction is hard to take. Very few of us enjoy being wrong about anything. And if we are corrected in the wrong manner, we are greatly offended.

Since we all know that as humans we will constantly make mistakes; will be correcting our course all through life, we ought to make up our minds that we will be open to correction and will take it in a mature way.

Listen to the wise man, Solomon. *"He who corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning."* (Prov. 9:7-9)

Have you experienced that? Correct some people and they may hit you. Correct others and they hate you!

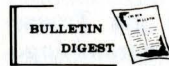
Solomon was right—mean and hateful people will not stand correction. I have known people who would not take any kind of correction and usually others are afraid of them. They are fools by the Bible's definition.

But, look at the one who is open to correction. The wise person will love you for seek-

ing to make him better by correction. He wants to improve. He knows that others can see things in him that he cannot see. He listens, he learns and he is constantly improving. This is the very nature of Christianity.

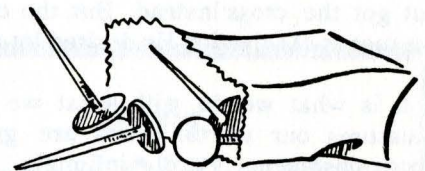
Let's all answer truthfully these questions: Do I permit my wife or husband to correct me? Can my children correct me? Can my parents correct me? Can my fellow-workers correct me? Could the leaders or my preacher correct me in spiritual matters? Could the Lord Himself correct me through His Word?

Remember what Solomon said, *"Reprove a wise man and he will love you."*



Harvey Porter
Albuquerque, NM

Strength In Smallness



Nails are tiny things, but they hold big buildings together. Springs are tiny things, but they feed tremendous streams. Helms are tiny things, but they govern great ships.

A thought, a word, a smile, a frown, a deed—these are tiny things, but they are tremendous things for good or evil. Watch the little things, and the big things will take care of themselves.



via Burlington, NC

WANTING AND GETTING

Paul evidently had planned the work he wanted to do in Bithynia and had envisioned those fields as being "white unto harvest." He *wanted* Bithynia; he could "taste" Bithynia; Bithynia would be *great!*

Yet Luke wrote that "*the Spirit of Jesus suffered him not.*" (Acts 16:7). What Paul wanted to do more than anything else in preaching the gospel, the *Spirit* would not allow him to do. The Spirit of Jesus was in control of his life, and Paul was submissive to that control.

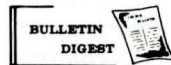
He *wanted* Bithynia, but he *got* Troas. Besides this, Troas seemed unpromising. A vision of a man of Macedonia was required for Paul; the message was clear: "*Come over into Macedonia and help us.*" Paul went to Troas. Come to think of it, Moses *wanted* Canaan, but he wound up in the wilderness for forty years. And David *wanted* to build the temple, yet because of bloodshed got more bloodshed. Jesus wanted salvation for all, but got the cross instead. But the cross was the means of salvation He desired for all men!

It is what we do with what we get that measures our worth. Plans are great, but accomplishments are infinitely greater. *Europe was opened because Paul got Troas instead of Bithynia.* The Philippian church that became his joy and his crown was made possible because he got Troas. And there was also Thessalonica and Berea and Corinth.

Thus, the thing that enabled Paul to find contentment wherever the Spirit of Christ led him was his conviction and great trust that God could use his life—that he was separated from his mother's womb to proclaim God's Word where God would have him go.

Any other approach to life results in men becoming like Clarence Darrow, whose main desire was to "get out of life as soon as

possible." None of us *finds* life worth living; each must *make* it so!



George Tipps
Dallas, TX

A NEED FOR INVOLVEMENT

Someone has said, "That which is prefaced by prayer, should be punctuated by practice." How often we fail to apply this principle in the church. We pray for an unsaved loved one; yet we never go to him with the Word. We pray for God to bless the work of the church and give us a great harvest of souls; but when we are asked to help in some way, we suddenly find a dozen excuses not to do so. We bend our knees in prayer for one who is in need, and then promptly refuse to give of our own abundance to help provide the necessary relief. We pray that the Lord will "*send forth laborers into his harvest,*" but we are not willing to be one of the workers ourselves. We ask in faith that a brother who has become unfaithful might be brought back into the loving fellowship of the Lord; yet we seldom go out of our way to say a kind word, or outwardly manifest any love toward him.

It is good for us to pray for a great harvest, but the Lord's petition was for willing workers! He said, "*Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest*" (Matthew 9:38). There is a time for prayer, and there is a time for action. Prayer was never intended to be a substitute for meaningful Christian action, rather a necessary adjunct.

The church must confront this impasse of personal reluctance. Somehow, we must help our people regain spiritual concern and the desire for personal involvement. There is only one cure for our epidemic of good mannered apathy. That is to deliberately, prayerfully, and obediently involve ourselves as the Word directs.

Tom C. Brown
via Darby Dr. Bulletin
Florence, AL



Baptism and Knowledge

Every religious action commanded by the Bible has a spiritual meaning behind it that needs to be understood by the person doing the action. In the New Testament there is no wasted motion. Everything has meaning and a purpose. There are no unnecessary rituals. Nothing is meaningless.

Baptism is one such religious action. Since it is a religious action, it has a spiritual meaning behind it, and that meaning is the one God has assigned to it. The meaning of baptism is founded in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Its spiritual purpose is remission of sins (Acts 2:38), union with Christ (Galatians 3:27), and, thus, salvation (I Peter 3:21).

A question comes as to whether the person being baptized must understand its purpose in order to make his baptism effective. Christianity is a religion of faith. Faith implies knowledge, for how can a person have faith in something he does not know? Can he have faith in God if he doesn't know who God is? Can he have faith in God's promises if he has no knowledge of those promises? *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). A man can only have faith if he has a corresponding amount of knowledge.

To baptize someone merely so that he might "obey God" is insufficient. Everything the Bible commands can be placed under that generic heading. When one eats the Lord's supper, it cannot be enough that he do it merely to "obey God." He needs to be taught that it is in remembrance of the suffering of Christ and commemorates His body and His blood given for the remission of sins (Matthew

26:28). Prayer cannot be at all effective merely as "obedience to God." One must understand that he is speaking to God. Otherwise he is speaking to the air.

By the same token, in order for baptism to have its spiritual effect, the person being baptized must know more than that it is in "obedience to God." He needs to have faith in the promises God is offering to him when he undergoes the *"washing of regeneration."* (Titus 3:5) If he doesn't know that he is being born again (John 3:5) how can he have the proper faith necessary to complete the action?

If he doesn't know that he is doing this by faith for the remission of sin (Acts 22:16), then it was not done by faith and was for another purpose other than the one designed by God. A bath cannot accidentally be baptism. Religious immersion for an incomplete or unauthorized purpose cannot accidentally be unto remission of sins (Acts 2:38).



Carson Stephens
Houston, TX

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I'M SHOCKED! (I THINK)

Everyone has a set of self-made guidelines that they follow. As a Christian, our guidelines are greatly determined by what the Bible teaches us. By these guidelines we are able to determine what is good and what is bad; in what we can participate and what we cannot, what is not enough and what is too much, what we can tolerate and what we should not. This, as a whole, is called our value system.

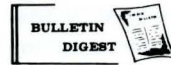
Our value system has anchor points at the place we feel a certain thing is right or wrong. That brings us to the main objective of this article. Have our anchor points moved? By that is meant, have our opinions concerning right and wrong changed? Before answering that question consider this, are we accepting things (tolerating) today what five years ago we would not have tolerated? Are there things happening around us that at one time shocked but now slides off as water off a duck's back? If so, our anchor point has moved.

Remember when one curse word or brief encounter with immodesty or a hint of fornication on television shocked us? Today a show is not complete without all this and more. ARE WE SHOCKED, or do we justify watching by saying, "Well it's on every channel." Maybe we don't agree with it, but are we tolerating something that at one time we would not?

The devil is approaching us from behind. He knows that enough repetition will cause change in a person without their realization of it. When this happens, they will begin to tolerate, and may even participate in, things that at one time they felt were wrong.

It is time we reevaluated our shock level. Does it take more to shock us? Has the Bible changed with the times concerning right and wrong? NO! Since God's word has not changed we should not either. It's time we got our shock level back where it belongs. God's word is steadfast and unmovable.

That is how our attitude toward sin should be. Our shock level should be steadfast and unmovable because sin will always be sin no matter who is doing it or how much is being done. People work harder to conquer things that shock them. Sin should always be shocking to a Christian. With such an attitude we will always be working to conquer sin.



Timothy Kidwell
Fayette, AL

Lost

A poet wrote:

"The loss of wealth is much;
The loss of health is more;
But the loss of Christ is such a loss
That no man can restore."

Someone else has written—"Sheep get lost, not because of the thicket, but because they wander away too far from the shepherd."

When the late Adlai Stevenson ran for president of the United States and lost to Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, he said after the election, "I feel like the little boy who stubbed his toe; I'm too old to cry, but it hurts too much to laugh." It always hurts when we stop to realize that most of the world will be lost eternally, and we can do so little about it. It hurts when we realize that some are "*not far from the kingdom*," and we can't persuade them to be "*altogether as I am*," Acts 26:29. It hurts when we realize that there are so many in the church who were "*once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift*," Hebrews 6:4, and yet have turned their backs on the Lord and serve Him no more.

A very wise writer said concerning those who fall away, "Someone asks why so many church members fall. Here's once answer in a parable. When a boy was asked why he fell out of bed, he replied, "I guess it's because I stayed too close to the getting-in place."

Roy Goodmiller
via Una Bulletin
Nashville, TN



Take Time

"Train yourself in godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way..." Paul in Timothy 4.

One of my favorite lecturers on the subject of mental health is fond of repeating, "If you don't take time to stay well, you will have to take time to be sick." Usually he makes this statement in relation to stress and its effects on the body. But it obviously applies in most areas of health.

The importance of time dedicated to physical health has been strongly emphasized in recent years. The medical evidence is strong enough to convince even the most determined skeptic. But not many of us are under enough conviction to devote much time to a wellness

program. So we end up being forced to take time to be sick.

Even more important is the need to apply this truth to our spiritual lives. It is much too easy to allow the many legitimate activities of normal living to claim all of our available time. Thus our moments are preoccupied, not with evil, but with lesser good. The apparently urgent demands of the flesh prevail upon the spirit to wait.

"Take time to be holy" is more than a sentimental cliché from an old, familiar hymn. It is an absolute necessity of the genuinely good life. Bible reading, prayer, meditation, fellowship, and worship are just as necessary to health as eating, exercise and brushing our teeth. If we won't take time to stay well spiritually, time for sickness will be inevitable.



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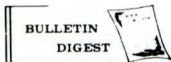
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A Legitimate Fear

So much of the thought of the scripture deals with encouragement. Many of the scriptures are designed to fill us with courage to face life and its obstacles. We are taught to boldly tackle the problems of life with the help and direction of our God. We are also told in Rev. 21:8 that the fearful will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The point of all of this is that God wants us to trust him and rely upon him. This trust and confidence in God helps to eliminate our fears.

While we are to be a people of courage, there exists one legitimate fear in life. Jesus said in Mt. 10:28, "...fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Christians the world over need a renewed respect for God. We must rekindle that respectful fear of the Almighty. This respect needs to be present in our families today. It needs to be present in the church today. It needs to be present in our everyday lives.

God is the only true and powerful God. He does have power to cast us into hell and leave us for an eternity. It is this knowledge that stimulates us to live our life for God and not to please men.



Ken Jones
Enid, OK

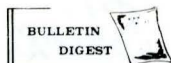
IN MY DISTRESS...

All find themselves in distressful situations. These can be induced by poor health, financial reversals, loss of employment, death in the family, etc. Less severe and dramatic circumstances (prolonged fruitless discussions, marred relationships, temporary deviant behavior in children, broken appliances or car, unjustified treatment by friends or relatives, etc.) likewise can create distress..

How do we respond in distress? Do we choose to attempt ignoring such? Do we become angry and lash out at others? Do we turn against God and His church? Does it drive us to less than Christian behavior?

David said, "*In my distress I cried unto Jehovah, And He answered me*" (Psalm 120:1). David approached Jehovah in distressful times. If we genuinely want superior help, going to God is the only rational and logical choice!

We would not discount the need of going to brothers and sisters in hours of distress, yet we must recognize the ultimate source of support is God. A good suggestion for handling distress: (1) talk to God about it, (2) read His word to find a suitable approach to resolve such, (3) counsel with respected brothers and sisters, and (4) be committed to overcoming the affliction.



Don Canter
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