

# BIBLE HELPS BOOKLETS

by Various

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*A collection of Bible study help booklets covering foundational topics for understanding Scripture. These concise guides provide practical assistance for new and growing Christians in their study of God's Word.*

31 Chapters

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## 000. About

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All references taken from the Bible are King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

These documents have not been changed ( not intentionally at least, mistakes can still happen ) from their originals except in the case of Bible References. Some instances (i.e. "found in first chapter of Romans" changed to "found in Romans 1") have been changed to allow Scripture Tooltips to work.

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## 003. Old-Fashioned Parents and Jet-Age Teenagers

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Old-Fashioned Parents and Jet-Age Teenagers by David W. Lehigh A Bible Helps Tract No.3

The family car was all ready to go. The seventeen-year-old driver was behind the wheel, listening with impatience to his father's last instructions concerning speed, time for getting home, and places to avoid. Finally he said goodbye and the car was off. But as they went, the seventeen-year-old said to his companion, "Dad's still living in the dark ages." This remark calls attention to a problem which is old, and yet is more acute at this present time than it has ever been before. More than three thousand years ago a father asked a heavenly visitor the question, "How shall we order the child?" (Judges 13:12). The generation gap has been a problem for years. In conversation, in cartoons, in magazine articles, etc.—one comes across repeated complaints like these: "You just can't reason with teenagers; they want their own way; they won't listen to advice; you can't talk sensibly with them." On the other hand, teenagers sometimes complain that parents are arbitrary and unsympathetic and that they are trying to force their children to follow the same pattern in which they grew up. Teens claim that times have changed, and they want to work out better ways of doing things. It is true that in many ways times have changed. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were no automobiles, no airplanes and no radios or televisions. Electricity was not in general use, for the methods of transmitting high-voltage current had not been discovered. Telephones were few, and generally used only locally, for the small independent companies that operated the local lines did not connect together. Farm crops were harvested with much hand work, and today's mass production techniques in industry were still in the future. The achievements of men have changed, but the Word of God has never changed, and it never will. Jesus says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The principles of the Bible have stood the test of centuries, and they are still valid. The Bible contains a number of principles which apply to the controversy between parents and teenagers. Many are from the Book of Proverbs, written by Solomon, but inspired by the Holy Spirit.

### 1. Instructions to Parents

First: Careful and purposeful child-training is needed. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). This is much more than a command to use the rod of correction. "Train up" means careful teaching and guidance. It corresponds to the instruction in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The best teaching has always been a consistent example. The alert parent will find many opportunities to clinch a lesson. A boy of six, for example, was rejoicing in his newly learned ability to read. He happened to discover that the family's maid could not do this. He ran into his father's study, crying, "Daddy, did you know the maid can't read, and she's ever so much older than I am?" His father picked up a book and opened it. "Here," he said. "Can you read this?" The little boy stood dumbfounded. The book was written in Chinese. In telling the story many years later, he added, "Whenever I am

tempted to despise the ignorance of someone else. I remember my father's lesson: I cannot read Chinese."

Second: Begin child-training early. The Bible says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18). One who trains a dog must insist on obedience, or his training will be unsuccessful. Training a child is much the same, but with this difference: While we train the dog so that he may please us, we train the child to know what is best for his own good and happiness. For this reason the training of a child is so very important. Children do not belong to us. God only lends them to us, and He can take them back at any time.

Third: Don't be so busy that you have no time for the companionship and training of your children. It is true that these are busy days. Children are perceptive. If the family is struggling against difficult odds to make ends meet, they will realize it, and cooperate. But if they sense that the parents are more interested in making money than they are in their own children, the children are likely to become bitter about it. One of the most common complaints made by teenagers in writing to counselors is that their parents are too much concerned with making money to be companions to them.

Fourth: Keep a cheerful attitude and maintain a sense of humor. We do not mean to encourage foolish jesting, which is condemned in the Bible, but the wise man said (Proverbs 17:22), "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." The child whose parents are able to laugh in the face of irritations and disappointments has a priceless heritage. When the one-year-old pulls the cupboard door open and gets plastered with molasses, a cleaning job is called for— but it will go better all around if mother can laugh a little at the sticky-faced child.

Finally: Be honest with your children. If you make a promise, keep it faithfully. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12). One is reminded of a quick -tempered mother who promised her boy a piece of candy for being quiet. When he reminded her, she snapped. "Didn't I promise you the candy for keeping still!" She said, "The longer you keep still, the sooner you'll get it!" Parents should never deal with a child on such an illogical basis.

## 2. Instructions to Teenagers

First: Remember that you must account for the way in which you spend your youth. Just as truly as parents need to remember that children are only lent from God, so young people need to remember that youth, that priceless, irreplaceable gift, is only given conditionally, and must be accounted for. Young folks often say, "I want to live my life my own way." But the Bible says, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). Whatever you sow, you will have to reap some day.

Second: Give respectful consideration to what your parents say. Proverbs 1:8 says, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." You may feel that you know better than they. It is possible that you do. But remember this: they have been over the road that you are traveling, and they have brought you up to be what you are. You can learn from them, even if only to avoid some of the mistakes they may have made. Treat them with respect and consider their advice carefully. Third: Consider your company with care. The Bible says, "My son,

if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, . . . walk not thou in the way with them" (Proverbs 1:10, Proverbs 1:11, Proverbs 1:15). It is important that you choose your company from those who are not infected with the spirit of wanting something without earning it by honest work. Some say, "Only dull people work hard. Smart ones find easier ways to get a livelihood." Sometimes people envy the worker who through greater skill and acceptance of more responsibility, is better paid than they are. But don't forget that the skill required years of work to acquire, and responsibility is entrusted only to those who have demonstrated an ability to handle it well. God told Adam that he must eat his bread in the sweat of his face, and this has never been changed. Fourth: Young people (both boys and girls) should consider the Bible's standard for ideal womanhood. This is most beautifully set forth in Proverbs 31:10-31. Open your Bible to that passage, and notice the qualities which are recommended for ideal womanhood (and many of these are just as needful for the men): (1) Loyalty (Proverbs 31:11). The Scripture implies that loyalty and trustworthiness are of more value than wealth. (2) Skill in homemaking (Proverbs 31:13, Proverbs 31:19, Proverbs 31:22, Proverbs 31:27). Many girls today make light of domestic knowledge. They are constantly being urged to try to make themselves physically attractive in order to secure the attention of the opposite sex. But without skill in homemaking and the graces of good character, it will be difficult to maintain a happy home. (3) Carefulness and orderliness (Proverbs 31:27). Orderly habits can be cultivated. Lack of order in the home has disgusted many a good husband and caused his affection for his wife to cool. We should also add that a slovenly and disorderly husband adds to the burden of his wife's duties and can scarcely help but lessen her respect for him. (4) Generosity (Proverbs 31:20). This is the crown of womanliness as well as of Christian character. (5) Wisdom and kindness in speech (Proverbs 31:26). A sharp tongue spoils an otherwise admirable person. (6) Proverbs 31:30 says that "favor," by which we mean "social prestige," is deceitful. It usually leads to envy and excess in display. A wise young person will not be anxious to secure it. The same verse also says that beauty is vain. The Bible holds high regard for beauty when worn as a crown for virtue (as its statements concerning the beauty of Rebekah and Rachel clearly show), but beauty alone is of no value. Our commercial and educational systems today often tend to encourage and exploit beauty of body at the expense of beauty of character. The qualities named above do not change, and so to summarize the whole matter, we would simply say that things have changed very much since our parents were teenagers, people have changed very little, and God has not changed at all. We do many things differently from the way they were done in the days of our parents, but the principles and qualities which bring happiness and peace and satisfaction in life have never changed. The principles that brought success and happiness to our parents will do the same for us.

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## 016. Prepare to Meet Thy GOD

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PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Tract No. 16

The message you are about to read is based on a brief text found in the Bible. God says, "Therefore thus will I do unto thee O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). This verse states an eternal principle with God. The words are an invitation and a warning to every generation. Prepare to Meet Thy God. Nearly one hundred years ago, the largest railroad company in the United States saw the danger and death that so often resulted from the collision of their steel locomotives with cars and trucks at railroad crossings. And so the company offered a prize of \$2500 to the person who would suggest the three best words to be used as warning words at railroad crossings. The person wise enough and fortunate enough to win the prize offered three words which you have often seen: Stop, Look, Listen. Each of these three words cost \$833, but the words are of no avail whatever for the safety of persons crossing railroads, unless they are obeyed. What good is the word "stop" if people don't stop? What protection does the word "look" offer if one doesn't look? What warning does the word "listen" give if we don't listen? And just so you can come in contact with lots of teaching about preparing for Heaven, and still go to Hell, unless you prepare.

### 1. Note the Simplicity of the Words

Every word of the text is extremely simple. The Bible says, "Prepare to meet thy God." To "prepare" simply means to "get ready" get ready for death, get ready for the judgment, get ready for the coming of the Lord. The Scriptures are saying that people are not ready to meet God when they are born into the world. God says that every person is born in iniquity. This means that our sins must be covered in order to meet God in peace. And the Bible is clear in declaring the fact that nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can remove sin. First John 1:7 says "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The word "prepare" is very simple. It is not a mystery to any one. The words of the text are not a problem in mathematics. Everyone knows exactly what they mean. "Prepare to meet thy God" means "get ready to meet God" that's as clear as a path of tar scattered across a field of snow. And yet these extremely simple words are seemingly misunderstood. People get ready to marry. Some get ready to go on vacation trips. Most get their children ready for the first year in school. Many get ready for old age by taking out pensions. In fact, most people get ready for everything and anything except for the most important thing in this life and in eternity and that is to meet God. Listen to these simple words of the Bible, "Get ready to meet your God."

### 2. The Certainty of Meeting God

There is one thing certain all must meet God. The rich and the poor, the old and the young, the learned and the unlearned all will meet God. You may have canceled lots of appointments here in this life, but there is one date you are going to keep. You'll have to face the God who made you. The Scripture says "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans

14:12). You might die suddenly and be ushered into the presence of God without any advance notice. An old preacher in Scotland who was rather eccentric, went to the shop of a man in his community one day. The shopkeeper says, "I was busy in my shop, when right into the midst of my work in stepped the preacher without knocking and without giving a word of announcement." The preacher said, "Did you expect me?" "No sir, I didn't," the shopkeeper replied. The preacher paused a moment, and then said grimly, "What if I had been death?" And then he turned and departed as quickly as he came. The shopkeeper (when telling this experience) says it caused him to stop and think, and as a result of the incident, he turned to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith. For the Christian to meet God will be a thrilling experience. The Apostle Paul, near the close of his life, said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6). Death came shortly after he had uttered those words. But for the unbeliever, meeting God will be a frightening experience. The Bible says "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). And again, "The Lord is longsuffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression," but by no means will He "clear the guilty" (Numbers 14:18). If you resist God's love and refuse His salvation and despise His warnings the day you stand before Him will be a dreadful day.

### 3. The Absurdity of Procrastination

Every one of us has offended God many times. God's justice demands that we be punished for our sins, but God's love has provided a remedy. That remedy is the death of God's own Son. Isaiah says "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And in order that Christ's death becomes effective as an atonement for our sins, we must receive Him into our hearts. The tendency however is to procrastinate. To "procrastinate" means to "put off until later." The Bible tells how Paul preached to Felix (the Roman governor of Judea) about God's plan of salvation, and Felix answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Any of us might die before 10:30 tonight. We never know when our moment of death is coming, but when God calls our number, we're going to go. Some people have the idea that they are going to wait until the eleventh hour before they give their hearts to the Lord. But most people who plan to wait until the eleventh hour, die at ten-thirty. They never get it done. It's always a dangerous thing to procrastinate.

"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to say just when the hands will stop, at late, or early hour."

### 4. The Folly of Rejecting Christ

Salvation is a gift. It is not something that can be earned. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23). Sin is pictured as a master who pays wages. And the awful wages of sin are the separation of body and soul from the presence of God forever. But if "the wages of sin is death" -- we would be rather inclined to think that the second part of the verse should read, "the wages of holiness is life." But it simply says, "The gift of God is eternal life." Eternal life is a gift. God absolutely refuses to sell salvation. On the last page of your Bible you will find this final invitation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). Salvation is the free gift of God. Many are hoping that by works, and good deeds, and ceremonies, and lots of church activity they'll be prepared for this meeting with

God. But the Bible says we are saved "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy" (Titus 3:5). No person can ever stand up and say, "I've done so and so, and God owes me salvation." Good works are extremely important in the life of the Christian, but they'll never atone for one's sins. We are saved through faith in Jesus who came to the earth, shed His blood on Calvary, and took our sins upon himself. By this act, He secured pardon for our sins. This is a favor that God did for us and God offers this salvation as a gift to you. I am sure that you are aware of the fact that a gift is not a gift unless it is accepted, and that a pardon is not a pardon if it is refused. One of the strangest cases in American history centered around a man named George Wilson. He was sentenced by a U.S. Court in Philadelphia (back in 1830) to be hanged for robbing the mails, and for murder. Andrew Jackson was president of the United States, and at the request of many of George Wilson's friends (three weeks before he was to be hanged), Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson. But Wilson startled the world by refusing to accept the pardon and insisted that he be hanged according to the court's decision. George Wilson declared the pardon was no pardon unless he accepted it. This was a point in law never raised before, because whenever a pardon was issued previously, it was always joyfully accepted. Should the sheriff accept the court's decision and hang Wilson, or should he accept the Presidential pardon and release him? Since the law was silent on the point, President Jackson called on the Supreme Court to decide the issue at once. The decision read like this: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under the sentence of death, would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang." And George Wilson was hanged. Most people would agree that Wilson was a fool for refusing to accept the pardon, and yet many of these same people daily reject the pardon which God has provided for them. If you are unsaved today you are a sinner under the sentence of sin and condemned to die eternally in the outer darkness of Hell. But today God is offering a pardon! He is saying that you don't need to die, because Jesus died for you. It is hardly to be supposed that any person in his right mind would reject the pardon of God's love which Jesus purchased on Calvary but if you do reject that offer, it is no pardon. Then you will have to bear your own punishment and pay the penalty for sin yourself. God in His Word pleads, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. . . repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 16:31; Acts 2:38). Won't you do it today?

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P0 Box 391 Hanover, Pa. 17331 U.S.A.

## 035. The Vice of Sexual Immorality

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The Vice of Sexual Immorality by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Tract No. 35

We are living in the midst of a tremendous moral revolution. New systems of belief are springing up everywhere. Most of our society is pleasure oriented. The mood is permissive and daring. There is an attitude of irreverence toward God and toward sacred things. There has been a very definite change from the standards accepted just a few decades ago. Our age is reeking with sexual immorality. The Bible speaks clearly about the sins of sexual impurity and emphatically condemns them (1 Corinthians 6:9), while at the same time it holds forth the hope that those who have been guilty of practicing immorality can be saved (1 Corinthians 6:11). The 7th Commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). These are God's negative words of prohibition. The Lord states the positive side in Proverbs 5:18-19 when He says that we should rejoice with the wife of our youth and that her affection should fill us at all times with delight. The key Bible passage on the subject of sexual purity says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). Why is the sexual relationship only proper within marriage? One answer is that God knew that a physical relationship between a man and a woman might lead to the birth of a child, and God knew that the child would need the loving tender care of a father and mother—and therefore He has given His blessing to the sex relationship only within the family situation of marriage where the children will most likely get that loving care. And thus any sexual activity outside the honorable bond of marriage is immoral and impure. It is a wicked and shameful sin.

### 1. The MINDS OF ADULTERY

The word "adultery" means "to corrupt, to make impure" and thus adultery is a broad term that refers to a variety of perversions and illicit activities. Adultery (in its broadest sense) includes any violation of the sanctity of sex. It includes incest and rape and seduction and fornication and lewdness and lasciviousness and unfaithfulness and promiscuity and homosexuality and harlotry and whoredom and a whole realm of related impurities.

a) Physical adultery is the act of having sexual intercourse with someone other than one's own married partner. Leviticus 18:20 spells it out plainly: "Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife." That is physical adultery.

David, in the Old Testament, committed adultery, and while he was forgiven, he carried his sorrow down to the grave. Some of you may have committed the sin of immorality. You husbands may actually have gone to bed with another woman, and have been unfaithful to your wife. Or perhaps some of you wives may have had illicit relations with another man and have been unfaithful to your husbands. Unless you have confessed your sin and righted things with God and man, someday you will find yourself a sinner in the hands of an angry God. God will judge all forms of impurity—fornication, adultery, lesbianism, sodomy, etc. No one can get away with it, no matter how hidden the bedroom is!

b) Legalized adultery ■ is possible because the laws of many countries permit divorce and remarriage. Divorce is legal for most causes in the U.S.A. But Jesus plainly states, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, commits adultery against her" (Mark 10:11). The same words are spoken about the woman who divorces her husband.

It was legal to divorce and remarry in Paul's day (and in John the Baptist's day) under Roman law. But John the Baptist plainly told Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother Philip's wife" (Mark 6:18). In God's law, the marriage vows unite a man and a woman for life, and only death can separate that union. The remarriage of a divorced person constitutes a state of adultery, and while it is often legal according to the laws of the country, it is sinful in the eyes of God.

c) Mental adultery ■ is the kind of adultery resulting from the lustful look. It is possible not to touch a woman, and yet at the same time, dwell on books and pictures and magazines and TV shows in such a way that the imagination runs wild. Many dream of sin, and imagine sin, and if granted the opportunity would indulge in sin; all they lack is the occasion of sin.

We must never allow sinful imaginations to accumulate in our minds, any more than we would permit garbage to pile up in the living rooms of our houses. Jesus not only forbids outward acts of filthiness, but He also condemns unchastity of heart. He says that anyone who looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matthew 5:28). The word "looks" speaks of continuous action. Jesus is not talking about the momentary involuntary glance which might arouse a wrong desire, but He is condemning the act of being habitually preoccupied with illicit sex. Most physical adultery is an act that begins with a lustful look.

d) Provoked adultery ■ is the adultery that results when someone makes it easy for another to commit adultery. In Matthew 5:32, Jesus speaks about divorce and says that one who puts away his wife "causeth her to commit adultery." Or, some delight in stirring up the passions of others by telling dirty stories, showing filthy pictures, and dwelling upon the unclean. Still others dress immodestly, parading themselves in shorts, transparent, form-fitting clothes ■ seemingly purposely to accentuate parts of the body to attract the opposite sex.

If a person is a partner in a crime, or helps plan a crime, or if he provokes the crime ■ he stands as guilty as the one who committed the crime ■ even though he himself did not actually commit the wrong act. Just so, the one who by actions or dress, incites wrong passions in others ■ is just as guilty of immorality as is the person who is wrongly attracted. For example, the jeans and slacks that the girls wear are often so tight-fitting in the right places, that they are clearly immodest and thus provoke adultery in the minds of men. The man who is wrongly attracted, as well as the girl who dresses in a sinfully attractive way ■ both are equally guilty before God. These have been various kinds of adultery.

## 2. THE RESULTS OF ADULTERY

Adultery is wrong for a number of reasons. It violates God's law. It hurts people. It affects future generations. Adultery is a serious sin.

a) Adultery destroys society. Immorality and licentiousness have swept nation after nation out of existence. The sins of impurity brought fire and brimstone upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The sin of adultery strikes at the heart of the social order. It strikes at the home, and

when the home is weakened, society crumbles. The Roman Empire and other great nations of the past toppled because sexual immorality ran wild.

b) Adultery brings guilt to the individual. Illicit sex brings feelings of guilt and shame. It robs a person of peace. It makes the conscience hurt. In Psalm 51 we find the Psalmist David seeking God's forgiveness because of the sting of guilt which his adultery with Bathsheba had brought upon him. David reaped what he sowed, because after his escapade with Bathsheba, things were never quite the same. He would gladly have traded the tragic later years of his life, for the innocence he had once known when he was still a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep.

c) Adultery harms other persons. A man who commits certain kinds of sins can say, "This is my own private business." But sexual sins are different; they harm other people. Many say that sex is a function of the body just like eating and sleeping and drinking, and thus it is a bodily demand that must be satisfied. They reason that if one does not satisfy the demand it will cause all kinds of emotional problems. But we must remember that eating and sleeping and drinking are individual actions whereas sex by its very nature is an inter-personal relationship. More than one person is involved. Therefore, when it is misused, it has far-reaching effects. It harms not only one individual, but also the partner in the act.

### 3. THE REMEDY FOR ADULTERY

Today everyone of us is living in a world full of suggestions to commit sexual immorality. And so each of us needs a defense system that is strong in order to withstand the temptations to become lascivious.

a) Dare to be different from the world about you. Fix it clearly in your mind that Christians should be different. The world around us (unsaved people (perhaps our neighbors, our associates at work, our classmates in school)) we love them; there is much to admire in them; we want them to come out on the Lord's side; we need to pray for them and be kind to them but those who are unconverted live in a different world and are headed for a different destination. They are slaves to a different master. The way we live, the kinds of company we keep, our manner of speech, and the way we dress must be different from the sinful practices of the world.

b) Avoid circumstances that may lead to problems. God tells those who seek purity to "flee." We are to "flee fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18) and to "depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). We must steadfastly avoid any person or activity or occasion which might cause us to fall. Make a covenant with your eyes (Job 31:1). Stop your ears from all filthy conversation. Limit television viewing. Read nothing that defiles the imagination. Stay out of places and away from people who lean toward immoral activities. If you don't want to do business with the devil, then stay out of his shop!

c) Turn to Christ for the gift of moral strength. One who receives Christ as Master and Director of his life, has One who helps him face temptation, and gives him power to say "yes" to purity and to say "no" to the frightening pull of sin. One who receives Christ, receives also the gift of the Holy Spirit—a Custodian who helps us keep the body pure and clean. We must cultivate a sense of the presence of God, realizing that the eyes of the Lord "are in every place beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). We need to pray often the words of the hymn, "Purer in heart, O God, help me to be."

To those who have trifled with fornication and adultery and homosexuality there is good news. Mary Magdalene had been immoral, but Jesus changed her life. Jesus told the woman who was caught in the very act of adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Jesus never once condoned sins of immorality. He always condemned sexual impurity, but for those who acknowledge their sin, and make the appropriate confession, and break up wrong relationships, and resolve to live a clean life■there is complete forgiveness and total cleansing. You may very well carry scars of your sin down to the grave, but Jesus Christ can save you if you are willing to meet the conditions. Why not turn your life over to Him?

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**BIBLE HELPS**

P0 Box 391 Hanover, PA 17331 U.S.A.

## 038. The Days of Noah Repeated

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The Days of Noah Repeated by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Tract No. 38

Luke records the words of Jesus: "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). When conditions that existed before the Flood are repeated again, then we may know that the coming of the Lord is near at hand. The language is plain. Jesus foresaw that world conditions at the end of the age would be like the conditions that existed in the days of Noah just before the Flood. And so we need to find out what conditions were like before the Flood and then compare them with the events taking place today, and in this way we can see something about the approaching end of the age. The entire record pertaining to the days before the Flood is contained in three short chapters in the Bible (Genesis 4, 5, 6). They are the only authentic record of the conditions that characterized the days of Noah. Secular history does not record the events that took place before the Flood. In Genesis 4:16-24 there is a description of seven striking conditions that prevailed in the days of Noah.

### 1. THE PRE-FLOOD AGE WAS AN AGE OF GODLESSNESS

Notice the words of Genesis 4:16, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." Cain forfeited God's favor and moved to the land of wandering and his descendants became the founders of a great but godless civilization. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. He simply did not want God in his company. The general godlessness of the times in which we live can be demonstrated in many ways. For the most part, people have said out to amusements, gambling, and sports. Even some church members can enjoy a double feature at the movies, sit up and watch TV until late hours, and shout at a double-header ball game—but just let the preacher preach overtime on Sunday morning and those some people became quite disturbed. Many can sit for hours and read some secular magazine or a comic strip in the newspaper, but the Bible is dry and dead and uninteresting. The general godlessness of the times is also noticed in the fact that many tend to put confidence in science and in the achievements of man rather than in the power of God. Instead of looking into the heavens and saying with the Psalmist, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?"—many are looking into the heavens and saying, "When I consider the satellites and the space vehicles which men have made, who is God that I should pay any attention to him?" We are living in an age of godlessness and this was a condition that existed in Noah's day.

### 2. THE PRE-FLOOD AGE WAS AN AGE OF CITY-BUILDING

Genesis 4:17 says, "And Cain . . . built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch." Up until this time people had lived in the wide open spaces. They were not crowded into cities. When God created man He placed him in a garden, not in a city. Cities were first built by fallen man and have over the years been marked by wickedness and corruption. In the crowded life of the city, sin develops at an alarming rate. Thus large cities are often beds of crime. The first

great city-building boom took place in the days before the Flood, and we are seeing a repetition of the days of Noah. Less than a century ago, most of our population lived on farms and in small rural communities. But with the invention of labor-saving machinery (the Industrial Revolution) there was less labor needed on the farm, and more help was needed in factories. And today a large percentage of the population in many countries live in cities and metropolitan areas close to the factories, and fewer people live on farms. So it was in the days before the Flood.

### 3. THE PRE-FLOOD AGE SAW THE BREAKDOWN OF THE HOME

Genesis 4:19 says, "And Lamech took unto him two wives." Lamech was the first man in history to break God's law of creation—one man and one woman. Jesus deplored the abuse of marriage and said that in Noah's day they were "marrying and giving in marriage" (implying "trading" or "swapping" in marriage). Yet from the beginning God made one man (Adam) to be the husband of one wife (Eve), and said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife (singular), and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). In our day men divorce their wives for any foolish reason they can dream up. Divorce and remarriage is one of the greatest blots ever to come upon our civilization, and the USA has the distinction of having the largest number of broken homes anywhere on earth. Not too many years ago a divorce was the height of shame. The parties concerned often were so embarrassed that they began life in a new community. Divorces were hard to obtain. The promise "until death do us part" was taken seriously. Churches refused fellowship to those who were remarried while the first partner was still living. Today all this has changed and as a result there are many twisted, broken homes. Jesus said that the days just before His return would be like the days just before the Flood.

### 4. NOAH'S DAYS WERE DAYS OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Genesis 4:20 says, "And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle." This is the first mention in the Bible of cattle raising for a profit. The age before the Flood was a time of great development in farming and in animal culture. Jabal was the originator of commerce. He had a large and prosperous cattle ranch. Today also is marked by developments in agriculture and animal husbandry. One encyclopedia article (under "agriculture") says: "Great strides have been made in agricultural education in the Twentieth Century. Scientific research has developed many new crops and farm animal breeds. Until 100 years ago, agriculture had changed very little since ancient times." In other words, just 100 years ago, farming methods were pretty much like they had been for hundreds of years before that. But now everything has changed and agricultural development is on the rise. Jesus included this concept when He talked about the last days being like the days of Noah.

### 5. THE PRE-FLOOD ERA WAS AN AGE OF MUSIC-MAKING

Genesis 4:21 says, "And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." The descendants of Cain who had alienated themselves from God were without hope for the future and so they tried to entertain themselves here in this life with worldly music-making. It is surely correct to say that never before in human history has there been as much music as there is in our day. A large percentage of radio and television programs are musical in nature. Records and tapes and stereos are selling rapidly. We are living in an age of swing and jazz and rock n'roll which is beyond description. The words of most hit tunes express

everything that is contrary to Christian virtue and to Bible standards. Music does something to a person. It reaches the seat of the emotions. It can be helpful as well as harmful. The music that is popular today can actually stir emotions so that intense sexual lust, and even murder, can result. Some of the music popular today has done more to damn the youth of our nation than any other single thing that the devil has on his list. Music-making characterized the days before the Flood and this too is a sign of the times in which we live.

#### 6. THE PRE-FLOOD AGE WAS MARKED BY THE USE OF METALS

Genesis 4:22 says, "And Zillah . . . also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." The era before the Flood was a metallurgical age. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. Iron is the basic material for all steel. And the Bible says that Noah's days were days when men were skilled workmen in the use of brass and iron. Iron is one of the necessary metals for modern industry. The steel industry today ranks at the very top of all industries. It is remarkable how strikes among steel workers tie up other manufacturers. The price of steel affects the price of many other commodities. As the supplies of wood decreased, men have developed the products of metal to an amazing degree, and today automobiles are made primarily of steel. The ship that plows through the sea is made of metal. Refrigerators and other appliances are made of steel. The implements of farming are made of steel. Early automobiles had a wood frame, a wood dashboard, and even the spokes in the wheels were made of wood. Today we have skilled craftsmen in the use of iron and steel, and our Lord said that when the characteristics of the days of Noah return, then the coming of Jesus is at the door.

#### 7. THE PRE-FLOOD AGE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY VIOLENCE

Genesis 4:23 says, "And Lamech said unto his wives . . . hear my voice (and) hearken unto my speech, for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt." Lamech was saying, "I have slain a man because he wounded me. I killed him because he hurt me." He was proud of his own violence and bragged about it. Human life was cheap in the days before the Flood. It was an age of merciless killing. But has there been any age in human history that was more brutal and more full of acts of violence than ours is today? There are some who will blow another's brains out for the price of a bottle of beer. Wife-beating, child abuse, and forcible rape are rapidly increasing. One mother in a fit of anger choked her six-months-old baby to death because "he kept me awake with his crying." We all know too that nearly every nation on earth is working night and day to prepare greater weapons of war to be used in the wholesale killing of human beings. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:37). The violence of the pre-Flood age is magnified many times in our own age. With Lamech's boast of bigamy and bloodshed in Genesis 4, the history of the line of Cain comes to a close. It was a brilliant generation. It was characterized by factors which are very much evident in our own generation. These are signs of a civilization which is overripe for the judgment of God.

In light of the times in which we live, none of us can afford to trifle with his soul. If you have never done it, why not turn your life over to Jesus so that you will be ready to meet Him when He comes? Jesus says that no person can come to the Father but "by me."

BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

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## 041. A Call To Thought Purity

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A Call To Thought Purity By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Tract No. 41

An older proverb says, "You are not what you think you are, but you are what you think." The statement is not merely an ancient proverb, but it is also a Bible truth. The Bible states that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). Satan attacks all of us in many ways, but perhaps his most vigorous assault is brought to bear upon our thought lives. Satan knows that what we think, eventually makes us what we are. He knows that our thoughts often lead to actions—and so he works on our thought lives. Each of us is responsible for what he welcomes into his mind.

### 1. THE MIND'S CAPACITY FOR EVIL

The Apostle Paul was keenly aware of the capacity of the mind for evil thoughts. One may dwell upon lustful thoughts, wrong thoughts about some member of the opposite sex. Another may seethe in his mind with jealousy and envy toward other people. Still others are consumed with pride and with high thoughts about themselves. The "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5 is a long list of sins—many of which are sins of the mind. The mind can easily be covered up (at least for a while), and so the mind is difficult to capture for Christ. We can retreat within the walls of our minds, and think about things that are known only to ourselves and God—and so it is difficult for others to detect what we are really thinking. We must remember however that God does know our thoughts, and He is concerned about them—and often they eventually do come out into the open. In the European country of Italy nearly 2,000 years ago, there was a thriving town called Pompeii. It was nestled on the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius. One man who lived in Pompeii painted filthy pictures on the walls of one of the rooms of his house. He normally kept the door to that room shut. He thought no one would ever know. But in 79 A.D., Mt. Vesuvius erupted and buried the town of Pompeii. And in more recent years archaeologists began to uncover the city, and they found houses just as the owners had left them. The house with the bad pictures was discovered, and today, those who tour Pompeii find that the guide keeps the door to that room locked so that people will not walk in accidentally, and become embarrassed. His thoughts came out into the open. The greatest area of sin in the believer's life is not usually in the area of actions, but in the arena of the thought life. Pride, for example, is a sin of the mind. And so is lust and suspicion and discouragement. These are all sins of the mind. Because all of us contend with the old nature (even after we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ), all of us have trouble with undesirable thoughts popping into our heads. These thoughts can be surprising, sometimes confusing, and sometimes even condemning. Most of us would not want the thoughts that have gone through our minds during the past month to be flashed on a screen in front of a room for all to see. It could be kind of embarrassing, and perhaps even frightening.

The secret thoughts, however, that pop into our heads are not really an accurate barometer of our spiritual condition. It is what a person continues to think about, and what he delights in—that tells more accurately what he is and where he stands spiritually. While we cannot ever completely get rid of the sin-nature here in this life, we can keep it in relative control.

## 2. THE MIND'S OCCUPATION WITH THE GOOD

The mind is like a garden which can grow beauty or it can grow ugliness. It can produce flowers or it can bring forth weeds. It must be tended with care and with diligence. It must be disciplined by conscious exercise. The mind must be exercised like the body—thinking on good and wholesome things. The Bible says in Php 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." We must cultivate spiritual thinking, and the Scriptures give a list of worthy objects that we ought to be thinking about. The list is recorded in Philippians 4:8.

"Whatever things are true"—that is, reliable, in agreement with fact; the opposite of lying and deception. We must never let our minds dwell on every piece of gossip we hear, because it may not be factual (true). We must be willing to hear the other side of a story, and not hear only the one side. According to Ephesians 6:14, we are to have "our loins girt about with truth." We are to think about truth, and to think about truth is to think about Christ and the Scriptures. Both are called the "truth" (John 14:6 and John 17:17).

"Whatever things are honest"—that is, whatever is earned or received by fair methods, not by cheating and falsehoods. For most of us, it is not the big things that test our honesty. We will likely never embezzle ten thousand dollars from an employer, but we must be careful about the dimes and quarters. We must guard against considering stealing towels from a motel room or accepting too much change from a store manager. Satan tells us, if we receive too much change in a restaurant: "That lunch really wasn't very good; I'll just keep this extra coin as a sort of refund." By way of contrast, every Christian needs to think in terms of old-fashioned, second-mile honesty. "Whatever things are just"—that is, things that are right and fair and impartial. It is right to give a customer full measure when selling merchandise in business. It is right to expose doctrinal error and false teachings when presenting the Word of God. It is right to play it fair-and-square in all our dealing. Parents must diligently seek to be fair with their children and treat them all alike. We should never plan in our thoughts to do anything that is unfair and partial. "Whatever things are pure"—that is, free from anything that is tainted. Purity speaks especially about chastity in the realm of sexual relationships. It is very hard to live through a single day in our society without having the mind bombarded with sex in some kind of distorted form. Unclean thinking is stimulated by abbreviated dress, obscene pictures, and dirty stories. For this reason, the follower of Christ does not attend the movies, he carefully censors his reading material, and he avoids participating in a joke that is not noble and pure. Most television programs and television commercials are not acceptable to him. Whatever things are pure, think on these things. "Whatever things are lovely"—that is, things that are beautiful, winsome, and pleasing. "Lovely things" are the opposite of the ugly and bizarre. The Christian should cultivate the traits of courtesy and pleasantness. He should avoid the snapped answer, the harsh reply, and the sarcastic response. It is sad to see a husband who cannot answer his wife in gentle tones. Such things are not "lovely." We should think of things that call forth admiration— incidents of faithfulness and courage and loyalty. Paul Harvey, on a news broadcast, sometimes tells of a marriage that lasted 60 or even 70 years. That is a "lovely" kind of report to hear. By way of contrast, television programs and magazine and newspaper articles that emphasize stories about wife-swapping, child abuse, lesbianism, and crude violence—are ugly things that are the opposite of that which is lovely. "Whatever things are of good report"—that is, things spoken in a kindly spirit; things spoken with good will toward others; things which are the opposite of gossip and the spreading of rumors. Courtesy to others,

respect for parents, Loyalty between husband and wife—these are always things "of good report." The word "think" means "to dwell upon" or "to focus attention upon." Qualities such as kindness, loyalty, helpfulness—these are qualities we should seriously think about. Spirit-controlled thinking can lift our thoughts and bless our whole life. The Scripture passage which we have just analyzed (Php 4:8) suggests that the way to conquer evil thinking is not so much to fight the wicked thoughts, as to cultivate the good thoughts. Php 4:8 is a call to think upon good things.

### 3. THE MIND'S BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT

Living the Christian life involves a daily battle. The Apostle Paul spoke of the great conflict that raged within him. He says in Romans 7:23, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." On the one hand, his mind was bombarded with solicitations to evil; on the other hand, there was the appeal of the Spirit of God, seeking to bring Paul's mind under God's authority. We are all subject to Satan's attacks. Every one of us has had problems with wrong thoughts. It is true that the work of sanctification is a slow process, and never reaches perfection here in this life—yet each of us has a responsibility in the realm of thought-control. God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts" (Isaiah 55:7-9). And again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isaiah 26:3). But how does one go about conquering evil thoughts? One method for defeating evil of any kind, is to run away from it. The Bible says, "Let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). And again, "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22). When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he fled and got away (Genesis 39:12). One way to conquer evil thoughts, is to stay away from situations that can stimulate wrong thinking and provide easy occasions to sin. Another means of achieving victory over evil thoughts, is to intentionally occupy the mind with wholesome things in order to drive out the flood of evil that tries to enter. The devil walks about looking for vacancies in our minds and seeks to make entry. When evil thoughts tap into our minds, we must make it a practice to immediately pause and pray, to analyze a portion of Scripture, or to turn our attention to some pleasant, exciting experience in the past—so that soon our minds will be absorbed with the pleasant memory—and the evil thoughts will more and more fade into the background. A third means of victory over evil thoughts, is to be alert to watch and pray. We must over and over again reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. This takes conscious effort; it takes human resolve; it is not going to come automatically—but it can be done. We cannot keep Satan from injecting wrong thoughts into our minds, but we do not need to dwell on those thoughts. We cannot keep a bird from flying over our heads, but we can keep it from building a nest in our hair. We must continually be a policeman! Bring every thought into captivity, into obedience to Christ. The Bible says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds . . . and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Keep a watchful eye. Guard your mind all day long. Sit in judgment upon every thought that flickers through your mind. When sinful thoughts tap into your head—repeat aloud a Scripture verse; begin to sing a hymn; offer a prayer for deliverance. And slowly but surely (with God's help) you will bring your thought life into captivity. If we give diligence to think upon those things which are lovely and honest and praiseworthy, we will experience growth in grace. May the Lord help us to guard our minds and give us power to reject what is untrue and unwholesome.

BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

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## 043. The Cure for Alcoholism

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The Cure for Alcoholism By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Tract No.43

The most destructive drug in general use today is alcohol. Alcoholism is one of our most serious national problems. Recent statistics indicate that in the United States two out of every three adults drink. There are 18,000,000 problem drinkers, of which 10,000,000 are confirmed alcoholics. Children and youth are increasingly using alcoholic beverages. Nearly four out of five high school seniors have drunk alcohol within the past month. More than sixty percent of our nation's seventh graders drink. One-third of the high school students in our country boast of getting drunk at least once a month. Evangeline Booth (of Salvation Army fame) spoke true words when she said that alcohol has drained more blood, hung more crepe, plunged more people into bankruptcy, armed more villains, slain more children, broken more marriages, wrecked more manhood, dishonored more womanhood, broken more hearts, blasted more lives, and dug more graves than any other poisonous scourge that ever swept across the world. There are a variety of reasons for drinking. Some want to celebrate. Others say that drinking relaxes them. Younger persons often want to belong to "the smart set." Others drink to try and drown their troubles. In other words, most people begin to drink in order to show off, to relieve tensions, to forget worries, or to escape from reality. The media advertises alcoholic beverages by portraying images of happiness, success, power, independence, romance, and sexual fulfillment. Yet these are precisely the qualities that are destroyed by the alcohol user. In recent years, the national preoccupation with the threat AIDS and the widespread use of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and "crack" —have overshadowed the awful magnitude of the alcohol problem. Yet if we add the number of those who die from AIDS to the number who die from the use of illegal drugs each year, the total does not even come close to the number of persons who die from alcohol-related illnesses and accidents and crimes. Alcohol is killing people faster than the deadliest wars of history. It is killing seventy times as many Americans each year as the Vietnam War did.

### 1. HARMFUL EFFECTS

Abraham Lincoln once said that drinking alcoholic beverages is "a cancer to society, eating out its vitals and threatening its destruction." Places where alcoholic beverages are sold and used, are the first places a police officer will look for crime, and the last places he will look for virtue. Alcohol does much to bring deterioration to one's physical well-being. U.S. News and World Report (11-30-87) describes the toll which alcohol takes on the human body: Long-term alcohol abuse causes a striking increase in cancers in the liver, stomach, and colon. Alcohol destroys thousands of irreplaceable brain cells with every drink. Wine and beer cause the lining of the stomach to become inflamed, often leading to the formation of peptic ulcers. Chronic abuse of alcohol frequently causes high blood pressure which increases the risk of strokes and heart attacks. In fact, alcohol "begins to alter the functioning of virtually every organ from the moment it enters the body." Alcoholics live ten to twelve years less than nondrinkers. Alcohol can even pass through the placenta to the developing fetus inside the body of an expectant mother, and harmful effects

can be transmitted through breast milk to newborns. Furthermore, alcohol often leads to a variety of criminal activities. U. S. News and World Report(11-30-87) declares that "alcohol is a factor in nearly half of America's murders, suicides, and accidental deaths. In all, it claims 100,000 lives per year 25 times as many deaths as all illegal drugs combined." The National Safety ( Council reports that well over half of the 1,000 persons who lose their lives each week on America's highways are victims of drunk drivers. Sixty percent of sex crimes against children are related to alcohol abuse. Alcohol is responsible for more admissions to hospitals than any other single cause. Eighty percent of all persons in prison are there because of alcohol-related crimes. Add to all these deaths and injuries—the financial waste, the broken lives, the fractured homes, the heartaches, the fights, the misery, and the agony caused by drink—and we begin to get a picture of the harmful effects of alcohol. Surely these facts alone should be enough to convince thinking persons not to drink.

## 2. MODERATE USE

Ordinarily people do not drink five or six cocktails the first time they taste alcohol. Drinking usually begins as a social act— something that is done to be agreeable in the group—like having a Coke. However, to use alcohol in moderation most often leads to more frequent use. My father gave good advice to me when I was a teenager. He said, "Harold, if you never touch alcoholic beverages, you'll never become a drunkard." And indeed that statement is true! A large proportion of people who drink, intend to confine themselves to occasional use of alcohol, but they are eventually hooked into habitual use. Most of us have seen what alcohol does to people—to individuals, families, and homes—and so our attitude should be a refusal to take the so-called friendly drink. I know the Apostle Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his "stomach's sake" (1 Timothy 5:23), but obviously he was advising a small amount of wine to be used as a medicine. And note too that Christ's turning water into wine (John 2:1-11) is no argument at all for the use of alcohol. The word translated "wine" may have referred merely to unfermented fruit juice, but even if what Jesus made was a fermented wine, the wines and distilled beverages of today are much stronger, and their evil effects are much greater. (It is amazing how many people who hate the Bible, and do not read the Bible, then want to use the Bible as an excuse for drinking). Those who justify the "social drink" are ignoring the recognized fact that one of every ten persons who takes the first drink eventually becomes a compulsive user. And for those who have once embraced the habit of drinking, life is a runaway roller coaster that leads to disaster. For the user of alcoholic beverages, even the most innocent gathering of family or friends—a wedding, a casual gathering on a sidewalk, or a holiday get-together—can turn into a nightmare of temptation and indulgence. Some say drinking is wrong only if alcohol is not used in moderation. If a person is temperate in his use of alcohol, then, they say, drinking is permissible and legitimate. They ridicule the concept of totally abstaining. It is true that total abstinence cannot be defended as a direct Bible command, but (as in the matter of slavery and polygamy) a good case for totally abstaining from alcohol can be built upon basic biblical principles. The use of beverage alcohol has never brought one good thing to the human family. It spoils family life, harms the physical body, and creates a setting for violence and wickedness. When we talk about alcoholic beverages, we are not dealing with an ordinary beverage like lemonade. We are dealing with an extremely harmful and habit-forming drug! Surely, even drinking in moderation is a dangerous practice.

## 3. GOD'S WARNING

Some try to humorously pass off drinking as an innocent pastime, but from God's point of view, drinking intoxicating beverages is no joke. The directors of some treatment centers are explaining that alcoholism is a disease with a genetic basis. They blame drinking on "neurochemical imbalances." The American Medical Association has formally declared alcoholism a disease. The idea that alcoholism is a sickness is not new. Benjamin Rush (one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence) concluded that drinking alcohol was done involuntarily by those who used it. A recent Gallup Poll found that 87 percent of our nation's population endorse the disease concept. This growing opinion (which labels alcoholism a disease) has taken much of the stigma away from drinking. People view consumption as an illness rather than a sign of moral backsliding. From God's point of view, those who use alcohol are not sick, but sinful. When the Judgment Day comes, this lame excuse which claims alcoholism is a disease, will not pass. The drunkard is listed in Scripture with thieves, liars, extortioners, and murderers—as being in danger of missing Heaven—unless the individual repents (Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). The Bible says of alcohol: "At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder" (Proverbs 23:32). And again, God speaks, as recorded in Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." God clearly condemns the use of intoxicating beverages. In fact, He says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, . . . nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Make no mistake about it, the Lord God strongly condemns the use of alcohol! Alcoholism is a sin that keeps people out of Heaven! The preacher who never lifts his voice against the use of alcohol is not being true to the message of the Bible. The Bible passage which says that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God concludes (in 1 Corinthians 6:11) by saying in essence, "And such were some of you, but (now) ye are washed, sanctified, . . . (and) justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." In other words, some of the people to whom the Apostle Paul was writing had experienced God's cure for alcoholism. And just so, my friend, if you are caught in the habit of using strong drink, please know that Jesus Christ can deliver you. To get victory over any sin, we must get help from God, and certainly that is true for the person who seeks deliverance from the drinking habit. The best treatment-goal for persons inclined to use alcoholic beverages is total abstinence. The longer one abuses alcohol, the harder it is to change behavior. Why not resolve today to say honestly to the Lord Jesus, "Come and change my life; give me rest from the craving inside me"? Jesus Christ is the great Emancipator who can set us free from slavery to sin. He came to "preach deliverance to captives" (Luke 4:18), and surely He can deliver you. When you make a decision of your will—and resolve to stick by it—you will gain a sense of purpose in life and you will feel clean inside. It can be done if you really want to. We have a merciful God who will forgive you, if you will come and repent of your wicked habit. Tell the old crowd that you are going to serve the Lord from now on. Turn your back on alcohol and come to a sweet, forgiving Saviour. Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Additional copies of this tract sent free on request.

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BIBLE HELPS Robert Lehigh, Editor

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## 046. Some Observations About Music

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Some Observations About Music By Robert Yohe A Bible Helps Tract No.46 Is music important? If so, what shall we sing? A group of youth was marching in a parade. They were all timed rather well and keeping in step, except for one boy, who seemed to have a tempo all of his own. It was discovered that he was carrying a transistor radio under his coat, and his ears were tuned to music from far away. Music and singing are an important part of our lives. The Bible has a lot to say about music. Ephesians 5:19 says we are to speak to ourselves "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in (our) hearts to the Lord." Colossians 3:16 says that we are to "let the word of Christ dwell in (us) richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in (our) hearts to the Lord." To sing "with grace in our hearts" means to sing with gusto; to engage in spirited singing; to let our singing be heartfelt. The word "psalms" refers to songs which address praise and glory to God, and is a reference to the Psalms of the Old Testament The word "hymns" refers to Christian verse with a strong theological content A good example is found in the words of the hymn "Rock of Ages." We sing, "Not the labor of my hands, can fulfill the Law's demands." The phrase "spiritual songs" is a reference to music which is less theologically oriented, but which conveys spiritual In the Old Testament, we read frequently about music. Someone has said, "Music is a universal language." And indeed music is universal Through music we reveal our loves, our joys, our griefs, our hopes, our disappointments, and our faith. Music is a gift from God. It is the sugar that adds sweetness to life, and keeps us from becoming sour and bitter.

Music has untold power. It can soothe tired nerves and lull a baby to sleep. Music can set laughter ringing in the heart; it can also cheer the sad. Music can bring peace to a troubled mind. Music is a balm for the weary, and the devil knows all this. And so, in many cases, he has stolen the gift of music and distorted it until it becomes anything but sweetness.

God has given us voices to sing praises to Him. And whether we can keep a tune or not, it is important that we sing hymns. We read in Psalms 66:1-2, "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands; sing forth the honor of his name; make his praise glorious." Good Christian music should be an important part of every believer's life.

### 1. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD SING

We sing because the Bible tells us to. Psalms 40:3 says, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." We sing, also, because of Bible examples Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory over their enemies. Asaph, who wrote some of the Psalms, was a singer. Jesus sang with His disciples at the great upper room service (Mark 14:26). Paul and Silas sang in prison at midnight (Acts 16:25). These accounts of singing, and many others, are given in holy Scripture. We also have hymn stories that stir our emotions. Some were written under dire circumstances. The following is one moving account of how a hymn came to be written. In the late 1800s, H. G. Spafford's wife and children left the United States for Wales on an ocean liner. Mr. Spafford, who had some business

commitments, was to join them later. As the ocean liner sailed along in the mid-Atlantic Ocean, it was hit by another vessel. All of the Spafford children drowned as a result of the collision. Later, in Wales, Mrs. Spafford sent a telegram to her husband. It contained two words: "Saved alone." Later, as Mr. Spafford was crossing the ocean, the captain of the ship on which he was traveling called him and told him that they were crossing the area where the other ship had gone down. There, out of heartbreak and pain, Mr. Spafford wrote words that linger in many of our minds over and over again. The words are, 'When peace like a river attendeth my way, (or) when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, 'It is well; it is well with my soul."

## 2. GOOD MUSIC CAN GLORIFY GOD

Music is a means of expressing a joy-filled heart. Suppose all the birds would suddenly stop singing, and all human lips would cease to utter musical sounds. Suppose we had a song-less world before us. Can you imagine it? Suppose when we gather to worship God, there would be no singing. We should be exceedingly glad for singing. It is wonderful that the wood thrush sings today like it always did. Thank the Lord for birds which need not change their music. They have not stepped up the tempo, or increased the volume, or thrown in any wild and weird offbeat discords in order to stay up with the times. Good music glorifies God. A song like, "I lift my heart today in praise.. . I'll count my many blessings, O how bountiful and free, yet I can never count them all, so good is God to me"■certainly brings encouragement to those who sing it, and brings glory to our majestic God. There are other great hymns that edify the singer, such as:

"Blessed assurance Jesus is mine."

"God is love, His mercy brightens."

"There is power in the blood."

Also, there are many songs which are intended to exalt Jesus Christ. Among those hymns are:

"My gracious Redeemer I love." "In the rifted Rock I'm resting."

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand."

"To God be the glory, great things He has done."

These kinds of hymns have words that are theologically correct and they have messages which exalt the Lord God.

## 3. GUARD AGAINST WRONG KINDS OF MUSIC

Someone may ask, "How can I know what kind of music pleases God? Are there any ways to check or test songs today?" The answer is "Yes," and we will examine three tests of acceptable music. a) We should test the spirit of the music. Are the words and the music and the lyrics true to the spirit of Christ and the message of Scripture? All music should glorify God. We read in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

b) We should test the message of the music.

There should be a clear edifying message in music. Not all songs have a good message. Even some "spiritual" songs are shallow and have very little worthwhile content. The function of godly music is to edify Christians. Carnal music and healthy spiritual words do not mix well, because the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. All parts of music should obey God's laws of order. We are to let all things (including music) be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). Satan attempts to corrupt music by promoting imbalance. Lots of noise dulls the senses and causes us to forget what the message is to teach us. Be wary about listening to music where the strong, persistent rhythm overpowers the words and the melody.

c) We should test the fruit of music

Sensuous tactics have no place in Christian music. By a breathy voice and sliding pitches, sung very close to a microphone, a sensuous appeal is communicated. The private space of a person is violated. Christian singers and musicians should see themselves as ministers, not as performers or entertainers. It would be less dangerous to let an unskilled doctor operate on our hearts, than for an unspiritual musician to minister to our souls. The function of music in the church is to teach and to admonish. Another purpose is to bring praise to God. It is important for us to think about the words we are singing, as well as to be aware of the musical tones. There are good reasons for not using musical instruments in church services. For one thing, there is no indication that the New Testament church used musical instruments in its services of worshiping God. We do read about heartfelt singing. Another reason why many worship without musical instruments, is that when there are instruments, the voice singing is not as good. Worshipers tend to listen to the instrument rather than sing with their voices. Another major reason for vocal singing is that there is a special blessing to the soul when there is four-part harmonious singing of edifying hymns. Our singing should always be reverent and dignified and in keeping with the seriousness of the message. Godly music is for instruction and inspiration, not for entertainment and show.

#### 4. NOT ALL MUSIC IS ACCEPTABLE

Supper was over, and the dishes were finished, when dad and mother settled comfortably in their living room. Suddenly a series of discordant sounds broke loose. Their teen-age daughter had gone to her room to play some of the latest hit tunes. It was loud and it was raucous. A hoarse voice scratched out a monotonous drone to an accompaniment that sounded like an African rhythm band. Many people don't realize the direct connection between their musical diet and their spiritual growth. What difference does it make? "We like that kind of music," some folks will say. A well-known recording company advertises this slogan: "We tend to live on the level of the music we listen to." Music creates an environment and sets an atmosphere for living. Subtle and insistent it creeps into the crevasses of our minds, and lodges there. One kind of music that is undeserving of our listening is rock 'n' roll music. It is one of the last great thrusts which Satan is making to invade and confuse those who are gripped by it. A certain man went to a rock concert. He said the first chord exploded with an ear-splitting roar. They had two levels—loud and louder. He said, "I left the concert that night with my ears ringing, my senses dulled, and my spirit depressed." Those who profit financially from the rock music don't care about the effects it has upon their listeners. A young man said, "Some young folks like rock 'n' roll simply because their parents don't like it." How sad it is to note such signs of rebellion. Someone may say, "But I don't listen to rock 'n' roll; I listen to country and western singing." Country and western is hardly any more worthwhile.

listening to than rock music is. One well-known woman sings about lyin' and cheatin'. Mother sings about woman chasing, honky-tonk. and whisky drinkin'. Another male singer sings about sex and drinking. Some of the songs lift up the occult Other songs contain filthy lyrics and illicit sexual insinuations. Much country singing gives one the blues. There is no other form of music that tries to mix a little religion in its lyrics to confuse people like country and western music does. We appeal to readers to remember that Christians cannot make worldly music clean. Worldly music will make Christians unclean. Christian music needs to teach the doctrine of Christ as revealed in God's Word. The lyrics of Christian music will echo the attributes of a holy God. Christian music will advocate sexual purity and permanent marriage relationships. Christian music will strengthen the home and family ties. The music we listen to should be reputable and strengthening to the inner spiritual life. If you are not sure about the value of the kinds of music you are listening to, the challenge is to show it to the most godly person you know, and get his or her evaluation of what you are feeding into your mind and emotions. For young people, we hope this godly person will be your father.

Our plea is that every reader will choose music that meets God's approval. We challenge readers to listen to and sing the psalms and hymns of the church which have stood solidly for many centuries. Remember that the singing and praise that come from your mouth have the potential of causing many to put their trust in the Lord (Psalms 40:3)! Additional copies of this tract are available free on request Ask for our sample packet of Bible Helps.

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## 047. Lessons From September 11, 2001

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Lessons From September 11, 2001 By Daniel Lehigh A Bible Helps Tract No. 47

September 11, 2001 will forever be imprinted upon the minds of the American people. When we heard about the planes that slammed into the World Trade Center Towers in Manhattan, and later saw pictures of the buildings in smoke and flames, we were stricken with horror. And then the news commentator announced that the Pentagon building near Washington, D.C. was hit. A huge plume of smoke rose from that five-sided, five-story building. A short time later we were informed that a passenger jet had crashed into the ground southeast of Pittsburgh in rural Pennsylvania. That plane narrowly missed hitting a school where nearly 500 children were in attendance. If it had hit the school, there likely would have been a massive loss of life. The death toll from these terrorist actions stands at approximately four thousand. Thousands of lives have been affected as families face futures without loved ones. Hundreds of people are slowly recovering from the physical and psychological wounds inflicted by this mind-numbing tragedy. The United States government has been executing a response to this attack. Many are holding their breath waiting to see what will happen next. As we consider this tragedy, we want to think about some lessons we can learn from it.

### 1. We Live in an Uncertain World

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:1-5,. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Certainly these verses are an apt description of the groups of men, who without a shred of regret, took several hundred lives on four airplanes. Also, several hundred fire fighters and dozens of police officers, along with nearly four thousand persons in the destroyed buildings, were cruelly put to death by these people. The world of the terrorist today is frightening and twisted. Terrorists, in the name of God, believe it is okay to hate, murder, maim, and destroy innocent human lives. They believe that there is a special place in heaven reserved for those who kill themselves and others. We live in a world of drive-by shootings, violent rapes, rampant destruction of human fetuses, and senseless sexual exploitation of children and young people. There is a general disregard for God and His moral absolutes. Our world today is a world of sex-soaked immorality. Images and language which would have been banned twenty years ago are now commonplace in many living rooms. Nudity and bad language assault our nation on the television tube. Many youth have no respect for authority. Our perilous world today is closer to destruction than we may think.

### 2. We Need to be Ready to Die at any Moment

Death is certain. Hebrews 9:27 says that "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." There is probably nothing more certain than the fact that unless Jesus Christ returns

first, every person in the world today will die and stand before a holy God in judgment. The people who died on September 11 had no idea when they started their day, that this would be the day of their death. They were sipping coffee, riding elevators, boarding airplanes, and doing countless other ordinary things. In a moment, many without warning were in eternity. Many of them were ready to face God, but what a tragedy that many more were not prepared to die. What a lesson this is for each of us. Jesus Christ came to this earth two thousand years ago and died on the cross to pay for our eternal salvation. That salvation is free and it is available to all, but it is not cheap. It cost the blood of God's only Son. It is not effective in our lives until we reach out by faith and accept it. We do that by acknowledging our sin to God, repenting of that sin, acknowledging that Christ is God's Son and that He died to pay for our sin. We then must accept that payment and allow Christ to live within us. Then we must live lives of obedience to Him. If you do not have the assurance of salvation; if you are not sure that if you died tonight you would go to Heaven — as Christ's ambassador, I urge you to make it a top priority to come to Christ for salvation. Even in the midst of a perilous world today, the "good news" is that we can be ready to face death at any moment through the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.

### 3. The Importance of Family and Friends

This fact was driven home to the nation as we saw images of people describing loved ones who were killed. It was heard in the frantic cell phone calls made by doomed passengers to loved ones. The words, "I love you. I love you" were penetrating and heartbreaking. We saw the importance of family and friends as we heard about and saw pictures of funerals and memorial services for the loved ones. It was felt as we heard about people frantically rushing from building to building, then to morgues and hospitals in a desperate search for missing family members. A number of people who had started divorce proceedings canceled them and decided to try to restore their marriages. Some news commentators said they were forced to think about what was really important to them, and they realized one of the important things was family and friends. All of us need to remember and cherish our family and friends. We should encourage and build each other up. Our family members should feel safe and loved in our homes. How desperate we would be to provide that love and care if they would be taken away from us by death. So let's resolve to treat our family and friends in a way that will help to build legacies of good memories after we (or they) are gone..

### 4. The Value and Comfort of Prayer

Prayers as simple as "O God, help me," along with a variety of prayers uttered at the nation's capital and in churches all over the nation, ascended to God. We were reminded of the importance of prayer for our President and our civic leaders; for the nation and protection for its people; for the rescuers who made such selfless sacrifice in laboring nonstop to find victims of the disaster; for the wounded and injured; and yes, even for the enemies who did this terrible deed. We need to remember that we are to be people of prayer at all times, not just in times of disaster. Our relationship with the heavenly Father should be one where we are familiar with prayer and the worship of God. Then when disaster strikes we don't need to get acquainted with God; we already know Him and can come boldly into His presence and find grace to help in our time of need.

Thank God for the comfort and value of prayer. Let's resolve to be a praying people.

### 5. The Spirit of Unity that Joined us as a Nation

Speaking of the terrorists, Pennsylvania's Governor Ridge said, "They did not drive us apart; they will bring us together." The days and weeks immediately following the attack brought an incredible coming together of the nation. Flags flew. Signs read, "God bless America." People were united around the President. There were of course, a number of groups opposed to the President's action, but the sense of unity was great. The time of national tragedy brought a rare cooperation between the political parties. Differences were forgotten or minimized as they pulled together to deal with the agenda of rescue, rebuilding, and response. Let's take a lesson. As Christ's body, we need to unite in the work of Christ's kingdom. Our focus should be on building each other up, encouraging each other, and spurring each other on to a closer walk with Christ. Our focus should be on reaching a lost world with the good news of the gospel. Unity and focus on these areas will enhance the work of Christ's kingdom.

#### 6. We should use Times like this as Witnessing Opportunities

All around us, there continue to be people whose hearts have been softened by this tragedy. I heard of a Christian organization close to the World Trade Center which said, "We are determined to use this disaster as a tool to share the love of Christ with others. People are open to Christ during the time of tragedy." We need to be open to God's direction and be ready to share the gospel when He gives the opportunity. It's great to pray for and support missionaries, but that does not relieve us of the individual responsibility of obeying Christ's imperative command to "Make disciples of all nations." A survivor of the disaster says, "From now on I will take every opportunity I have to share the gospel. We don't know how many opportunities we will have." What a challenge for every one of us! How are we going to use the opportunities God gives us to witness to a lost and dying world?

#### 7. The Providence and Sovereignty of God

We serve a God who is sovereign in the affairs of men and nations. The stories of people who were doomed or spared that day are a silent testimony of God's sovereign hand in our affairs. For example, one lady missed an elevator. She was walking through the lobby and saw the doors of one elevator about to close. She yelled to the people in the elevator, "I'll take the next one." Within moments she heard a loud whoosh, like a strong wind. She started running. Before she got through the revolving door, all the glass broke, cutting her wrist and slashing her head. But because she missed the elevator, she made it out alive. We cannot understand God's ways, but we can take comfort through our tears that truly "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Our sovereign God loves each person more than any of us can possibly love our children. His timing is always accurate, and He will never do or allow anything to happen to us that is not for our good and for His glory. Charles Spurgeon 8. A Call to Repentance and Humility

As our nation reeled from the terrorist attacks, many people across the land called for a turning back to God. President Bush called for a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance. Tragedy makes us think. The Scripture says that we are to humble ourselves and pray, and seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways, if we expect God to hear from heaven and forgive our sins and heal our land (see 2 Chronicles 7:14). These words are a ringing call to each of us as we reflect upon the tragedy we have lived through. In these perilous days, we need humility and prayer, and a seeking of God's face, and a turning from our sins. God's precious promise is that if we do these things, He will hear, forgive, and heal our land. God can keep us even in perilous

times. But if He chooses to take us through the fire of tragedy, He will never leave us or forsake us. We should always be ready to stand before God, for we do not know when we will be called upon to exchange time for eternity.

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## 110. The Scriptural Headveiling

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THE SCRIPTURAL HEADVEILING by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 110 The City of Corinth was a great city in Paul's day. Its Population numbered more than seven hundred thousand people. It was a city about the size of Boston. Since Corinth is located on a narrow neck of land that connects the southern part of Greece with the northern part, all traffic north and south in the country of Greece had to pass through the city of Corinth ■ there was no other way for it to go. And the extreme southern tip of Greece was a very dangerous cape in ancient times, so most of the traffic east and west also passed through the city of Corinth instead of going around the southern tip. Therefore its location made Corinth one of the greatest trading and commercial centers in the ancient world. It was the largest and most wealthy city in Greece. Its people lived in luxury, and the wickedness that goes along with prosperity and luxury abounded on every hand.

It was to this city that the Apostle Paul came in the year 51 A.D., and in weakness and fear and much trembling, he preached the Gospel, and the Bible says many believed. A Church was started there. And then many years later, Paul wrote a letter to these people, dealing with ten great ever present problems, and one of the problems is that of the veiling for sisters in the Church.

The teaching in 1 Corinthians It is not an attempt to promote the Oriental custom of veiling the head. It is not an ancient Jewish tradition carried over into Christianity. The veiling for women (as given in I Corinthians 11) was a practice different from any previously existing social practice. It was a practice intended to symbolize a great principle of the Christian faith. It is a distinctive practice designed especially for Christian people. We want to look at the principle upon which the veiling is based, the reasons why the veiling is to be worn, and the problems that are closely related.

1. THE PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH THE VEILING IS BASED The principle is stated in 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Too often we fail to emphasize this great principle when we talk about the veiling. Paul says, "But I would have you know." In the Greek language there are two words for "know" ■ the one a strong word meaning "to know with certainty," and the other a weaker word meaning simply "to be aware of." It's the strong word used here. Paul says, "I want you to know with certainty (I want you to know for sure) that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man." The word "head" means "authority." The Bible says to Christian people, "The authority of every man is Christ, and the authority of the woman is the man." Every man who expects to be saved through the merits of Jesus Christ must be subject to His authority, and every Christian woman should gladly recognize her subordination to the man.

According to God's standard ■ headship, authority and leadership (as far as human relations are concerned) are vested in the man ■ and this standard must be observed within the Church. And the veiling is a symbol of the woman's acceptance of this subordination to man's headship.

Beware of the teaching which says that wearing the veil makes the woman equal to the man. Why the very reason she wears the veiling is because she recognizes that she is not equal to him, and that she wants to be subject to him. Wearing the veil gives her equal access to the throne of God, and (with the veiling) she prays directly to God ■ but wearing the veil does not dissolve her social and civil relationships to the man. She is still to be subject to him. In fact, she wears the veiling to show that she is. The man and the woman are equal in spiritual privilege, but they are not equal in social relationships. The basic unit of society is not the individual, but the family. And every family (if it is to be united and operated successfully), like any other team, must have a captain. According to Gods law, the captain of the family team, is the man. And notice too, that the Scripture does not speak in terms of husband and wife, but in terms of man and woman. This means that the principle applies not only to those who are wives, but to unmarried daughters and to widows as well. The man should have the place of leadership, whether it he the husband in the home, the father in the family, or the elders in the Church. The captain of the family team is the man. Final responsibility for making decisions must rest upon him, and the woman should graciously accept this place of leadership on the part of man. To the men it must be pointed out that this principle is not intended to give license to become cruel and overbearing and unreasonable. The man is not to be a grumpy, bossy, domineering sort of person who thinks that all the wheels of the home must turn to suit his pleasure. Headship is not the same as lordship! The man is not to become a tyrant! Rather, it is a matter of shouldering responsibility. The principle of headship is stated in 1 Corinthians 11:3. The man should recognize his subordination to Christ, and the woman should recognize her subordination to the man, and this should be done just as joyfully as Jesus Christ voluntarily became submissive to the Father, and came to this world as a Mediator between man and God. And then in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, Paul says the man should show his subjection to Christ, and the woman should show her subjection to the man (not only recognize that this order exists), but each should show it with a sign. Verse 4 says the man should show his subjection to Christ by praying or prophesying with his head shorn or shaven, and uncovered. Verse 5 says the woman should show her subjection to the man by praying or prophesying with her head veiled.

Notice that the veiling is not only to be worn in times of public worship, but it ought to be worn at all times. The principle of head-ship is a continual, ever present relationship, and therefore the veiling should be a continual, ever present symbol of that relationship. T his is true also when we consider the nature of praying and prophesying. Praying means "speaking to God on behalf of others," and prophesying means "speaking to others on behalf of God," and both these activities should be practiced many times daily, and not only during times of public worship. John Chrysostom (a Christian leader in the Fourth Century) says, "What will the woman who neglects this ordinance (of wearing the veiling at all times) do? Will she stifle the spontaneous prayer of thanksgiving? Will she meet temptation unarmed by prayer? Or will she wear the veiling during all her waking hours, and thus be qualified at any time to fellowship with her God, and to witness for Him?"

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:2 that these ordinances are intended to be kept: they are not something merely to talk about; they should be literally observed and kept.

## 2. THE REASONS FOR WEARING THE VEILING

Beginning with 1 Corinthians 11:6, Paul was inspired to state seven reasons why the Christian woman's hair should be long and veiled:

(1) It is a shame to omit it (read 1 Corinthians 11:6) The Greek word translated "shorn" means "to cut." The word translated "covered" means "to veil." In Paul's day people knew that it is a shame for a woman to be shaven or shorn. Cut hair was a public mark of wickedness and prostitution, only women of the lowest type cut their hair. So long hair has been the badge of virtuous womanhood, and short hair has been the badge of harlotry. The harlot cut her hair because she had difficulty keeping it arranged neatly in her manner of living ■ that's where cut hair got its start. Therefore, everyone agreed that it was shameful for a woman to have her hair cut. But God says in 1 Corinthians 11:6 that refusing to wear the symbol of subjection (refusing to wear the veiling) is as shameful as cutting the hair. In fact, if she is not willing to veil her head, she ought to be consistently wrong and cut off her hair too. The one is just as shameful as the other. 1 Corinthians 11:6 says, "For if the woman be not covered (if she will not veil herself) let her also be shorn." One later translation says, "If a woman will not veil herself, she should cut off her hair as well." The Bible teaches that it is right and proper for the Christian woman to veil her long hair, and that it is shameful and disgraceful for her to cut it off. So you see, there is nothing more ridiculous than for a woman to cut her hair, and then attempt to wear a veiling over it. She already has become a shame by cutting off her hair, and the veiling will never cover the shame!

(2) God's order in creation calls for it (read 1 Corinthians 11:7-9)

Paul says that even in creation, there is a difference between a man and a woman that puts the man in a place of leadership over the woman. God made the man first; the woman was created after he was. This is merely God's order way back at the creation, and it ought to be respected and honored.

God made Adam first, the woman was made after he was, and the veiling is merely a symbol that shows respect for this order established way back at the creation.

(3) The angels expect it (read 1 Corinthians 11:10)

Angels are constantly watching God's people. They observe the conduct of the members of the Church. They rejoice when souls are born into the family of God. When the Gospel is preached and the invitation is given and a wandering sinner comes home, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels. And certainly, they are sorely grieved by any departure from God's plan.

1 Corinthians 11:10 says that the woman should have power on her head because of the angels. The Greek word translated "power" literally means "a sign of authority" ■ a sign indicating that she is submissive to the authority of the man. This is why a hat, or a handkerchief, or an ordinary hood is not acceptable. These coverings have no spiritual significance. They are not a sign of anything. But the veiling is a symbol (a sign) of the woman's subjection to God through man. It is a sign of submission to authority. When an American ship sails (for example), it doesn't display any old piece of cloth from its masthead. A simple piece of cloth is not a sign of anything. Instead, the ship displays a red, white and blue flag. The flag is a recognized sign. It represents the greatest nation on earth. And any nation which insults the symbol, insults the nation that it represents. And just so the veiling is a sign that shows both heaven and earth that the woman is taking her rightful place in God's divine order. And if she refuses to acknowledge the authority of man (and refuses to wear

the sign of authority), she offends even the angels.

(4) Mutual inter-dependence requires it (read 1 Corinthians 11:11-12)

There is a mutual dependence between the man and the woman. Each is necessary to the happiness of the other. 1 Corinthians 11:12 says that the woman is of the man—that is, in creation the first woman was made out of the man. If it hadn't been for Adam (the first man), the first woman would never have been created. Therefore (in that sense) the woman is dependent upon the man. 1 Corinthians 11:12 continues, "the man also is by the woman." That is, every man has been born of a woman. There could not be a man in the world today, if some mother had not given birth to him. And therefore (in that sense), man is dependent upon the woman.

The woman is of the man in the sense that the first woman was made from the man, and the man is by the woman in the sense that every man was born of a mother. And so, you see, the two go hand in hand. And wherever two or more parties belong together, the one must have the place of authority, and the other, the place of subjection. This is true in every avenue of life. It is true of a ruler and his citizens, elders and their congregation, a teacher and his pupils, the husband and his wife, the father and his children, etc. Where two or more parties are inter-dependent upon each other, one must have authority, one must be submissive. Paul simply points out the reasonableness of God's order, and we should gladly submit to this order.

(5) Your own good judgment supports it (read 1 Corinthians 11:13) The Lord appeals now to our common sense. Everyone of us was born with a natural, inborn sense of what is fitting and right—and our common sense tells us that long hair is a glory for the woman. Even the heathen regard long hair as a glory for women. It's a native, inborn sense.

I taught a Sunday School Class in a neighboring church some time ago, and after class our little girls were sitting with us. We don't cut their hair, because it is our prayer that they will accept Jesus Christ when they reach the age of accountability (and that they will obey Him too) and we don't want to make it hard for them to obey Him. Several of the ladies sitting in back of us said to one another, of our little five-year old daughter, "My isn't her hair beautiful? Look at that beautiful long hair." And then she leaned front, and said to our daughter, "Don't you ever let your mommy and daddy cut your hair." The point is simply this: Even though we are living in a time when our culture has drifted far from God's design, and wickedness abounds on every hand, and many have no respect for God's law—yet many people have enough common sense to see that long hair is a woman's glory, and that short hair is her shame.

(6) Nature teaches it (read verses 1 Corinthians 11:14-15)

It seems that the woman naturally has longer, more beautiful hair than the man. Nature itself is a good instructor. The longer, more beautiful hair of the woman is an object-lesson in nature that teaches us that a man is to have short hair, and a woman is to have long hair. Many sincerely state, "But the Scripture doesn't say how long a woman's hair should be." In this chapter God uses three words to describe the length of a woman's hair: shaven, shorn, and long. Some ask how long the hair must be to be counted long, and the answer is this—if it is not shaven and if it is not shorn, then it is long. If you cut off an inch, then it's shorn; if you cut it all off, then it's shaven; if you don't cut any off, then it's long. That's not too hard, is it?

I know that many say, "But verse 15 says the hair is given for a covering." But 1 Corinthians 11:15 does not say, "Her hair is her covering." It says, "Her hair is given her for a covering." The Greek word translated "covering" in 1 Corinthians 11:15 is not the same as the word translated "covered" in 1 Corinthians 11:6. There it was "katakalupto" (meaning "to veil"), here it is "peribolaiou" (meaning "to cast around"). 1 Corinthians 11:15 literally says, "For her hair is given her to be cast around (the head) ■ for a covering to be put on, you see.

(7) Universal apostolic practice demands it (read verse 16)

If there are some who are deaf to reason, and can't be convinced by the weighty and logical arguments that have just been presented ■ then they'll have to be silenced by apostolic authority. Paul is simply saying that neither he nor the churches founded by him, nor any of the churches in ancient times ■ none of them permit a woman to pray or prophesy unveiled. The sister's veiling was a universal practice of the apostolic church. The catacombs of Rome, the sculptural carvings in the walls of buildings, the early historical records ■ all bear witness to the fact that the veiling was observed in every early church. This was the normal, universal practice in the churches of Greece and Rome and Antioch and Africa ■ everywhere.

Some teach that Paul was saying here in verse 16 that we must avoid contention, and that if this teaching causes contention, we should drop it. Why would the Holy Spirit use half a chapter in the Bible to teach the veiling and to point out the reasons why it should be worn, and then conclude by saying that it shouldn't be practiced if it causes contention?

### 3. THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE CLOSELY RELATED

There are a few questions which are not touched upon directly by the passage here in 1 Corinthians 11. One of them is ■ "To whom does this teaching apply?" Many Bible teachers today dismiss this practice as a mere teaching for the culture of Paul's day, and say it has no relevance for the Church today. But if you read 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, you'll find that this chapter is not addressed only to the people of Corinth, but to "all that in every place call upon Jesus Christ as Lord." In our day, when women are tending to become more and more masculine and are assuming more places of authority, it's all the more important that Christian women wear a symbol of submission. Even in some of our public schools, children are being taught disrespect for God's order of headship. In one elementary school a few years ago, the teacher lamented to her class that men run the world and that women ought to have more authority ■ and all this sort of thing. The girls in that fifth grade class (at the ripe old age of eleven) were so offended they refused to speak to the boys all afternoon. They walked around with their noses held high. They were going to show those boys who could run things. Certainly in our day it is necessary that Christian women wear a symbol of submission.

Another problem is this: "But I know good Christian women that don't wear the veiling. Some are Sunday School teachers and even missionaries, and they don't wear the veiling." It seems mighty strange that some professing Christian people want to teach Sunday School classes, and want to go to foreign countries, and are eager to do great things for God ■ and yet they refuse to do a little thing that gives Him pleasure! It reminds one of Naaman. He came down to the prophet of Israel to be cured of his leprosy, but he became angry when he was told to dip in the Jordan seven times. His servant said, "Naaman, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, you would have

done it■why not do this simple thing he asks you to do?" Naaman did, and he was healed. Those who want to do great things for God, but are not willing to do the small things He requests■surely their lives are not completely pleasing to God. And always guard against a veiling that is too small. Those who drop the wearing of the veiling, usually don't do it all at once, but rather, the veiling grows smaller and smaller, and then it's worn less and less frequently, and then finally it's discarded altogether. There are still many people who will inwardly and secretly respect you, if you are brave enough and humble enough to break with the fashions of the world■to practice the simple life and to wear this symbol of loving subjection. There are still many people who respect this Bible teaching, because they know that it is fitting and right.

True happiness comes from a right relationship with God, and we become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. One who meets the conditions of salvation, and receives Jesus Christ into his heart, becomes a new creation. If you will give your heart in full surrender to Jesus Christ, you'll receive a new outlook on God's Word; His commandments will not seem grievous; this chapter will not seem difficult at all. The Lord Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Revelation 3:20. The invitation is yours.

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## 155. The Bible Doctrine of Nonresistance

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THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF NONRESISTANCE By Harold S. Martin A BIBLE HELPS BOOKLET No. 155

Nonresistance is a principle taught in the Scriptures. The word nonresistance" is coined from the words of our Lord, when He said, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever smites thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." From the very origin of the Anabaptist Movement, nonresistance was one of the chief pillars of its doctrinal belief. The historian, Robert Proud, says that the Anabaptists 'hold it not becoming those who follow Christ, to bear arms or fight, because they say their true Master has forbidden his disciples to resist evil."

Nonresistance is really a result of the doctrine of grace. Certainly those who have become recipients of God's grace In their own lives, should show the same grace toward their fellow-men. God displayed His grace toward us while we were yet sinners. He loved us when we were enemies, and just so we are to love our enemies, and to display grace toward those who persecute us.

The principle of nonresistance must be practiced in times of peace as well as in times of war. The Christian must be careful not to take revenge. The Scriptures teach against retaliation with the tongue, and against suing at the law. The early Christians were commended because they took joyfully "the spoiling of their goods" Hebrews 10:34. They refused to resist evil; they didn't fight back; they knew that they had a heritage in Heaven that the spoilers couldn't touch.

### 1.PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE

Every teaching has some basic principles upon which it is built. We want to name three principles that underlie the doctrine of nonresistance.

(1) The kingdom of Christ is not of this world. There are two kingdoms of men in the world; those who have been regenerated by faith in Jesus Christ, and those who are unregenerate. Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" John 18:36. Christ's kingdom is made up of those who have experienced the saving grace of God in their lives. His kingdom is not supported by armies and maintained by taxes. Rather, it is a kingdom composed of persons who voluntarily believe in Jesus Christ, and seek to become like Him in their daily character and conduct. One who is a member of Christ's kingdom is instructed to bless his persecutors, and to pray for evildoers, and to love his enemies. And if you love a man, you are not going to put a bullet through him, nor ram a bayonet into his body, nor drop bombs on him. The standards of Christ's kingdom are different from the standards of the kingdoms of this world. One who claims to submit to Christ's kingship, will find that the army, the navy and the air force are not for him.

Because Christ's kingdom is not of this world, the early Christians refused to participate in military service. Tertullian says of the legions of the Roman army, "Not a Christian could be found among them." In the early days of Christianity, the Church said, "If they wish to be baptized in the Lord, let

them cease from military service, or not be received." The historian, C. J. Cadoux says that no Christian after his conversion "ever thought of enlisting in the army, until nearly two hundred years after Christ." The early Christians recognized that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that His standards are much higher than the standards of the world-kingsdoms and therefore nonresistance was believed and practiced by the entire church.

(2) The spirit of Christ is not of this world. Jesus came into a Samaritan village one day and the Bible says that the folks there didn't receive Him. When James and John saw this, they wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume these people. But this was all contrary to the spirit of Christ, and it must have sorely grieved Him. Luke 9:55 says, "But (Jesus) turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save Them." Taking the lives of human beings is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

General Leslie McNair (in a New York Times article) described the attitudes and the spirit promoted in the armed services. He says, "Our soldiers must have a fighting spirit; if you call that hating enemies, then we must hate with every fiber of our being. We must lust for battle; we must scheme and plan night and day to kill; we must hit harder and harder; we must become tougher and tougher; the avowed purpose of the army is to make killers out of every soldier." Can you reconcile such an attitude with the teachings and the spirit of Jesus?

One young man who had been in the army during World War II, tells how one of his buddies in training was kind of softhearted. When they were training, they were to drive their bayonets into the stomachs of a dummy victim. This fellow was kind of slow and timid about the whole thing, and finally the officer lost his patience, swore at the young fellow, and ordered him to get up in front of that dummy and "cut out his guts." He reminded him that this was war, and not a Sunday School picnic, and that every man in the camp was there to learn how to kill Germans.

It's impossible to have the spirit of Christ within, and at the same time bear arms. The carnal sword and the spirit of Jesus do not point in the same direction.

(3) The methods of Christ are not of this world. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Jesus endured much reviling and persecution when He was here on earth, and yet never once did He use carnal weapons for defense. And the same thing can be said for true Christians down through the centuries. They have won their battles by using the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Christian doesn't use carnal weapons, but this does not mean that he is helpless in the face of evil and unrighteousness. Take the weapon of prayer for example. When (during the persecutions of the early church) Peter was cast into prison, the Bible says, "Prayer was made without ceasing, of the Church, unto God for him." The people prayed. Here the power of prayer was pitted against the power of the armed might of the Roman Empire and those who prayed won the battle! The iron gate opened, and Peter was set free. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Another powerful weapon used by the believer, is the practice of deeds of kindness. Jesus says, 'Do good unto them that hate you.' Paul puts it this way: "If your enemy hunger, feed him." We

have a beautiful illustration of the victory of kindness over evil in 2 Kings 6. The Syrian army had been delivered into the hands of Israel through the intervention of the prophet Elisha. And when the king of Israel saw that the enemy had been delivered into his hand, he said to Elisha, "Shall I smite them?" And he said again, a second time, "Shall I smite them?" This may have been the most natural course of action, but Elisha said, "Thou shalt not smite them, (but) set bread and water before them that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." Elisha said, "Feed them and let them go." Show them kindness, he said. And that's what the king of Israel did. And you know, there's an interesting postscript to this story: 2 Kings 6:23 says, "So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." The Christian's weapons are spiritual. He conquers with the power of the Cross. Menno Simons used to say, "Our fortress is Christ, our sword is the Word of God, our victory is faith in the Almighty. We let swords of iron and steel to those who consider human blood equal to swine's blood." The Christian has spiritual weapons.

These have been principles upon which the doctrine of nonresistance is based. The kingdom of Christ, the spirit of Christ and the methods of Christ are not of this world.

## 2. PROBLEMS OF THE DOCTRINE

Most every doctrine carries with it some related matters that seem to be problems. We want to look primarily at the problem of Israel's practice in Old Testament days. The Old Testament frequently tells about the wars of Israel, and many of these wars were authorized and commanded by God. It's hard for the Christian to reconcile this with the command to "resist not evil" in the New Testament. Jesus said the Scriptures cannot be broken, and they do not contradict themselves, and so the problem seems to be very real.

There are at least three things we must remember here:

(1) Israel was a nation of this world, while the Church is a spiritual nation not of this world. Israel was a nation just like any other nation, except that God had chosen her for a special purpose. The Israelites lived in a particular location on earth; they had boundaries to their possessions; they maintained a government, with a capital city, a throne, a king, and a royal family. And to maintain this nation in the land, God permitted the use of force. But the Church is not such a nation. The Church is a people called out of darkness into the light of the Gospel, from every land and every nation. There's no particular geographical location; there are no boundaries to maintain; there's no capital city; there's no regal throne. Israel was a nation; the Church is not such a nation.

(2) Israel was not a regenerated people, while the Church is composed of those who are regenerate. Romans 8:3-4 says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Israel could not perform the righteousness of the law, for she walked after the flesh. But Christians have been regenerated, and thus are equipped for a new kind of life, and they are called upon to follow a much higher standard than the Old Testament law.

(3) Israel operated under the dispensation of law, while the Church is living during the dispensation of grace. Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but if any man shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." This is an extension that Christ Himself made. He participated in giving the

Old Testament law, and certainly He has the right to broaden it. Someone says, "But God never changes, and if God doesn't change, then He can't approve war in the Old Testament, and condemn it in the New Testament." But this is a faulty argument. It's true that God's character never changes, but His methods do change from time to time, from age to age, from dispensation to dispensation. The relationship between the Old and New Testaments is a study that requires more space than we will take here, but remember that the truths of the Old Testament receive a new and deeper significance in the New Testament, in light of Calvary and Pentecost. The New Testament is the Christian's final authority for faith and conduct. If we are to have a true understanding of the will of God, we must always accept the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament.

Some folks have a problem accepting the doctrine of nonresistance, however, because of a few statements Jesus made, as recorded in the New Testament.

Jesus said, for example, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." But here the context clearly shows that the word "sword" is a figurative word, which indicates the division and persecution and misunderstanding that will arise in families and communities when there are those members of the family or community who follow Jesus. The parallel reference in Luke 12:51 says, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division; for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided; three against two, and two against three." Sometimes Christians will find even members of their own families turning against them.

In another place, Jesus says "He that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip. And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Luke 22:36. Jesus spoke these words just before He went into the Garden to pray. And just a little later, when the crowd had gathered to take Jesus, Peter used the sword. He smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. But Jesus rebuked him for using the sword, and then He said to him, "All that take the sword shall perish by it." And then Jesus graciously restored the servant's ear. Whatever else Jesus meant by the words, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," He certainly did not mean that the disciples were free to injure others with the sword. A dagger such as the disciples carried, was often used to cut wood and to slay animals for food.

There are other problems associated with the doctrine of nonresistance, but the basic principles upon which the doctrine is built, are clear. Each one of the problems that sometimes is associated with the doctrine, is really only a seeming contradiction.

### 3. PROTECTIONS FOR THE DOCTRINE

There are always some who try and make a teaching mean something that it was never intended to mean. For the purpose of safeguarding the doctrine of nonresistance, several things should be pointed out.

(1) War is permitted for civil government. Jesus said, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." Jesus recognized that the very nature of the kingdoms of this world, demands that they be defended with armed might. The hardness and greed of unconverted human hearts, sometimes seem to understand nothing but the language of force. The sons of God can live a life of love for their enemies, but the sons of men are living under the rule of Satan, and

are governed by the law of force. Paul says of the state official (in Romans 13), "He beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The masses of this world will not allow God's Word to control their lives, and therefore they must be held in control by the sword. The state has the authority to punish; it has the right to carry the sword; if there had been no civil authority, only anarchy and chaos would exist, because of the wickedness of human hearts. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament recognize the authority of the state to maintain order by the use of force. And because we recognize this permission in the Scriptures (for governments to use the sword), we cannot (according to modern use of the term) be called "pacifists." Pacifism covers many types of opposition to warfare. It is Satan's counterfeit for the doctrine of nonresistance. True Christians have never advocated the doctrines of present day pacifism. The pacifist aims to establish a better world by eliminating war; he attempts to bring peace and harmony among the unregenerate nations of earth, by working through political influence; his primary mistake lay in the fact that he believes in the innate goodness of man. One pacifist group told John F. Kennedy, "We believe there is a divine power in man, that can save the world from war and destruction." But this contradicts the teaching of our Lord when he says, "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed murders and wickedness" Mark 7:20.

The peace-emphasis promoted by most leaders within the churches of America today, is not the doctrine of nonresistance taught in the Bible. Nonresistance describes the faith and life of those who accept the Scriptures as the revealed will of God, and who cannot participate in warfare because their Lord forbids it. He teaches the law of love. Pacifism, on the other hand, is something different. Roland Bainton says that modern pacifism (as promoted by most civil and religious leaders today), is not based so much on Christian principles, as it is on a mere desire for survival. Many of our leaders object to war, not because of loyalty to Christ and the Scriptures, but because they have a fear of death and destruction in this awful atomic age.

(2) Wars will continue until the end. The Bible does not teach that a time will come during this age, when wars will cease. Daniel 9:26 says literally, "Even unto the time of the end, wars and desolations are determined." Jesus, when describing the closing days of this age, says there shall be "wars and rumors of wars". In the closing days of this age, the armies of the world, under the leadership of the Antichrist, will march against Jerusalem for one final burst of rage against God and His people, and there they shall utterly perish (Joel 3:9-12). The Bible teaches that the nations of the world will be universally armed (not disarmed), as we approach the close of this age.

Our early Anabaptist forefathers were not optimistic about the prospects of peace for this age. Harold S. Bender says that they "saw the whole of history (from the fall of the first Adam, down to the Second Coming of Christ), as a great battle between God and His enemies. There was no humanistic vision of getting rid of war in history." The Christian does not expect that economic justice and political cooperation are going to be ushered in by efforts of unrighteous men. Our hope for changing the world, lies in the coming of Christ, who will "judge among the nations," and usher in a kingdom of peace. In the meantime, the Christian obeys his government, pays his taxes, and respects governmental leaders. And only if the government expressly commands us to do that which God has forbidden, only then do we follow the example of Peter and John, when they said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

War is a terrible thing. One of the survivors of the atomic blast at Hiroshima describes what she saw. She says, "All the houses were demolished; the crumbled walls stretched for many, many miles; people rushed out from the center of impact; their bodies were burned; their skin was hanging down like rags; their faces were swollen to twice their normal size; people were crying aloud with pain." She says, "I saw someone walking, dragging something along. To my surprise it was his own intestines. His stomach was ripped open, and he was dragging it along as he walked without knowing what he was doing." She continues, "My oldest daughter had only two slight wounds, but a month after the bombing, she died from radiation." A soldier who witnessed the air raids in Germany says he saw people coming out of their shelters■insane, wandering about, running away, not knowing where to go. Thousands were killed. Still others died of disease and cold and starvation." No one can ever measure the suffering and misery and heartaches that have resulted from war. And on the Judgment Day, God will hardly look down upon the soldier's bloody hands, and say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant." To serve as a conscientious objector to war may bring ridicule from friends, but one who practices nonresistance in life, can stand before God with clean hands, unstained by human blood. And always remember that "a conscience void of offense before God and man," is a greater reward than any human decoration ever offered for bravery on the battlefield. Be grateful to God if your government has provided for alternative service of a constructive nature.

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## 165. Creation and Evolution

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CREATION AND EVOLUTION (Studies in Genesis 1, 2) by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 165

The first eleven chapters of Genesis tell about the first few thousand years of human history. The Book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. In fact, the word "Genesis" is a Greek word meaning "origin." Genesis sets forth the beginning of the heavens and the earth; the beginning of man and of sin; the beginning of salvation and of punishment. Genesis is the seed-plot of the Bible. Almost every doctrine of major importance has its roots in the Book of Genesis. Moses was the writer of the Book of Genesis. He was trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians; he spent long hours in communion with God on Sinai; he had plenty of opportunity to receive direct revelation from God. People sometimes say, "But how did Moses know that God created the earth in six days? Surely Moses wasn't there; he didn't see God create the earth." But if God could reveal to the prophets the details of the distant future (and He did it), surely He could reveal to Moses the details of the remote past. Genesis is quoted more than sixty times in the New Testament. Jesus obviously accepted the book of Genesis as historical and trustworthy and divinely inspired. He quoted from it, and never once did He indicate that anything in Genesis was unreliable. Some of the sharpest attacks against the Bible, have been leveled against the early chapters of Genesis. The devil knows that the quickest way to demolish a building is to strike at its foundation. If a person can be persuaded to pull out the first pages of the Bible, the last pages will fall out too, and soon not much will be left. The first several thousand years of human history are described in Genesis one through eleven, and these chapters revolve around four outstanding events—the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. In this study we will take a look at the Creation.

### 1. THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE (Genesis 1:1)

The Bible begins with the simple and yet profound statement that God is the Creator of all things. Genesis 1:1 is the only original, full, complete, true account of creation found anywhere. It is amazing to observe that the entire story of the creation of the universe is told in just ten words, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." (In the original Hebrew account, there are only seven words in Genesis 1:1, the number of perfection). The Scripture says, "In the beginning." The writer takes the reader back before all time, into the unsearchable reaches of eternity past. We think back to a time before the Flood that covered the earth; before Cain slew his brother Abel; before God created the angels; before God made the sun and the moon. The writer gives no actual date for the beginning. We don't know when it was. He just says, "In the beginning." Certainly it was a number of thousands of years ago. In the beginning (whenever that was), there was nothing but God and His creative power. The verse continues, "in the beginning God." The writer focuses attention upon God. Elohim (God) is the Beginning, the Source, the Cause, the Creator of all that exists. The Bible makes no attempt to prove the existence of God, nor to describe His origin. It simply says, "God has spoken; God has acted," and of course, if God has acted to create the universe, then God exists. This is an underlying assumption. The first

chapter of Genesis uses the word "God" thirty-two times. It is the most God-centered chapter in the Bible. "Elohim" is the word. It is plural in form, but used with a singular verb, and thus suggests the Trinity right here on the first page of the Bible. The verse continues, "In the beginning God created." The word "bara" is the Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:1. It is a word that means "to call into being something that never previously existed." It describes a miracle. Only God can create. Man can build a skyscraper that stands one hundred stories high; man can build a bridge to span a mighty river; man can build a plane that flies more than 600 mph; but in all his building, he must use material which is already here. When God created the universe, He brought into being matter that never previously existed, and endowed it with fixed properties and laws. God simply spoke the word, and nothing became something. The material universe (and all that we see about us) did not come into being by long, slow, gradual processes. In the beginning God created. He brought something into existence out of nothing. It is impossible to be a real Christian and an evolutionist at the same time. Some scientists believe that in the beginning there were several heavenly bodies that collided, and pieces flew off, forming the planets. Of course they can't explain where the heavenly bodies came from in the first place, but still this is one of the theories they offer. Over the years, they say, the earth became covered with slime, and as a result of chemical reactions, the slime began to crawl, and finally developed fins, and became a fish. And the fish became a reptile; and the reptile grew hair and became a monkey; and over the years, the animal developed into a human being. Is it not far more sensible to believe the Bible account of creation, than it is to believe that some kind of primeval slime (and mere blind chance) worked together to produce life? May every believer reaffirm his faith in the great God who spoke all things into existence by the word of His Power! And may we determine to stand with David the Psalmist, when he said, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made . . . for he spoke and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:6, Psalms 33:9). You say, "I agree—but who believes what the evolutionists are saying anyhow?" You read carefully the textbooks that children are using in the public schools, and you will find that nearly every writer assumes evolution to be true and treats it as a fact. As far as I know, there is not a textbook on geology in an American public high school that teaches the creation of the world in six days, or its destruction by a Flood like that described in the first chapters of Genesis. The account of creation in Genesis 1:1 is not something that has to be understood; it is something we need simply to believe. It is "by faith" that "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3). If you can't believe this simple statement on the first page of the Bible, then you can hardly believe the rest of the Bible. The first verse of the Bible is a kind of test of our faith. If the Bible is not true about creation, it may not be true about redemption either. If Genesis 1:1 is not true, then John 3:16 might not be true either, and thus one would need to abandon Christianity altogether.

## 2. THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH (Genesis 1:2-31 - Genesis 2:1-3)

The earth is only a small speck in the vast expanses of the universe, but according to Genesis one, God lavished a great deal of attention upon the earth. It was on the earth that God created man, and it was on the earth that God carried out the drama of redemption. Genesis 1:2 indicates that the earth was empty and formless and covered with darkness. At this stage it was void of all life; it was not yet completed. Of course, God could have filled the earth with all living creatures immediately, but Exodus 20:9, Exodus 20:11 indicates that God created the plants and animals and man, in six days, instead of immediately, to give a pattern for man's workweek. Exodus

20:9-11, says, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day." And then in the rest of Genesis 1 (beginning with Genesis 1:3), the writer describes how God filled the earth with living things, and fashioned it as a beautiful home for mankind. Each creative day described in Genesis 1 was very likely a twenty-four hour day, and not a long extended period of time. When a numeral precedes the word "day" it refers to a twenty-four hour day. We say, "In George Washington's day, there were no automobiles." This refers to an extended period of time. But we say, "Thursday is the fifth day of the week." This refers to a twenty-four hour day. Whenever a numeral is associated with the word "day," it speaks of an ordinary solar twenty-four hour day. We must also remember that the plants were created before the animals. Thus if each creative day was a long extended period of time (thousands or even millions of years), as some would have us believe, how could clover (for example) reproduce itself, without any insects (without any bees) to pollinate it? This is further evidence for the twenty-four hour creative day. The first day (Genesis 1:3) witnessed the creation of light. The light merely existed without being localized in any heavenly body. Light flooded the universe, and dispelled the darkness which had covered the earth. On the second day (Genesis 1:6), God made the atmosphere. He caused the waters to divide into two great reservoirs; there were waters on the surface of the earth, and there were vapors above the earth. These vapors kept the earth uniformly mild year round. This third creative day was marked by two events (Genesis 1:9, Genesis 1:11)—the separating of the land from the waters, and the introduction of plant life. The dry lands appeared on the third day, and the waters that covered the earth, retreated into the deeper basins and formed the oceans. Then God caused a beautiful blanket of vegetation to cover the earth. The earth brought forth living plants. The grass began to grow. Trees yielded fruit. Note, (as you read Genesis 1:12) that the herbs were already bearing seeds, and the trees were already yielding fruit at the time of their creation. Everything was created in a fully-developed and mature form. When scientists try and assign dates to the origin of the universe, they assume that the rates of change in the physical processes have always been the same, and that the entity being measured started from a "zero point." It is impossible for men, however, with all their various dating methods, to determine the age of the universe. Rates of change have not always been the same. The Flood, according to Genesis 6:13, destroyed not only man, but also the earth. And thus the physical processes were interrupted. And neither did life begin at a zero point. The first trees were full-grown trees; the first man was a mature adult. And so the assumption that life began at a zero point, and that physical processes have always continued at the same rate, is a false one. Note that each living object of God's creation reproduces "after its kind." it is true that each "kind" has the power to vary within the species, and thus there are hundreds of varieties of apples and many breeds of dogs, and yet an apple never becomes anything other than an apple, nor a dog anything but a dog. Apples don't grow on peach trees and dogs don't give birth to kittens each reproduces its own kind. And thus the theory of evolution (which claims that higher forms of life gradually developed from lower forms of life) is seen again to be only so much nonsense. The fourth creative day (Genesis 1:16-18) was the time when God appointed the sun and the moon and concentrated light in these two bodies. He assigned them the function of illuminating the earth, and marking the division of time. On the fifth day, the animal kingdom (an entirely new form of life) was created. All kinds of birds and sea-animals were brought into being. Many scientists try to explain the origin of animal life by saying that some tiny plants developed animal-like characteristics and that plants gradually

became animals. But God uses the word "bara" in Genesis 1:21 to indicate that the animal world was another distinct creative act of God. God brought the animals into being out of that which never previously existed. The sixth creative day marked the creation of a more complex class of animals, and also the creation of man. Man's creation differs from the animals, in that he is made "in the likeness and image of God." The phrase hardly suggests that man bore a physical resemblance to God, because God doesn't have a physical body— but man is like God in moral nature. Man has the power to reason; he can think in abstract terms and solve algebraic equations. He has the ability to choose; he can decide between right and wrong. He has the capacity to communicate with God; he is capable of knowing and loving God. These are capacities that animals simply do not have. No animal ever heaped stones together and offered a sacrifice on an altar to God. The animal doesn't have God-consciousness; the animal is not made in the image of God; the animal cannot communicate with God. God created man intelligent and upright, capable of knowing and loving Him. Early men and women were people that looked much like people today. They were not stoop-shouldered, hairy, ape-like creatures with deep-set eyes and gaping lips and protruding mouths. Adam was an intelligent human being created in the likeness of God, not a snorting cave-man swinging a club. The seventh creative day was sanctified as a day of complete rest. It is not that God required rest because He was exhausted. He simply stopped creating and ceased from His labor. The day of rest (the seventh day) was sanctified in memory of the finished creation and in the New Testament, the early Christians observed the first day of the week in memory of the finished redemption.

### 3. THE ORIGIN OF MAN (Genesis 2:4-25)

The second chapter of Genesis gives some additional information about the first man and the first woman. Genesis 2:7 describes man's constituency. Man is really a part of earth, and also a part of heaven. His body was molded from the dust of the ground, but his spirit was made in the image of God. When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, the Bible says he became a living soul. Man received something supernatural, something that can hardly be explained or analyzed. When we look at a person who suddenly passes into eternity, at one moment we see a living human being, but in the next moment we see merely a dead body. And no one can explain really what has gone from the body. We know something is gone; the real person seems so very, very far away. When God breathed into man's nostrils, He made man a creature of eternity. Genesis 2:8-17 describe man's circumstances. God planted a beautiful Garden, and in this quiet place of indescribable beauty, man was to enjoy fellowship with his Creator. Special attention is given to two trees in the midst of the Garden — the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, The Tree of Life was designed to render death an impossibility, but because of man's sin, it was never used. Man was driven from it, for if man in his sinful state would have partaken of the Tree of Life, he would have remained in that sinful state forever. The Tree of Knowledge of good and evil was singled out to provide for Adam and Eve a test of their loyalty and obedience to the will of their Maker. Genesis 1:1-25 describes man's companion. The chapter tells how the woman was created. The same Hand that formed the body of man, took part of that body and made the woman to be a companion for man. The Hebrew word translated "rib" in Genesis 2:21, is really a broad word including not only a bone, but flesh and bone. And so Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (Cutting the flesh of Adam released blood through the open side, and just as God formed the woman from the open side of the man, so Paul says that God formed

the church from the wounded side of Christ). But someone says, "Do you really believe that God put Adam into a deep sleep, and that from his side He formed a woman?" I most certainly do! Paul did. It's a great mystery, but it is nevertheless true. God's provision for marital companionship, for the conception of children, and for their training from childhood into adulthood is wonderful evidence of the wisdom of God. God intended that the marriage bond should never be broken, except by death. Jesus says, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." That's an old statement, but it is still God's Word tom today. Jesus spoke these words to demonstrate that divorce and adultery and other distortions of the marriage relationship, have no place in God's purpose for man. An article in a leading magazine several years ago was entitled "How Man Began." The writer says it is clear that early apes became gorillas, and then chimpanzees, and thus were "well on the way toward evolving into men." He is strongly convinced that evolution is true, but even this writer acknowledges in the closing paragraph of his essay, that evolution is not based on known facts, but on what he calls "reasonable guesses." The Encyclopedia Britannica says "We are not in the least doubtful as to the fact of evolution . . . the evidence is overwhelming.' But a few pages later, it says the evidence is "very imperfect, and often interrupted by gaps." Evolution is of satanic origin. The rapid increase in crime and sadism and bestial sexual acts can in part be traced to the teaching of evolution. What a man believes about his origin, will determine what he believes about his present life. If he thinks that he is merely a complex animal (instead of a creature of God with an eternal destiny), there is no real meaning to his existence, and he eats and drinks and becomes merry, for tomorrow he dies. May God help us to live in light of the fact that we are indeed creatures of God with an eternal destiny, and to live each moment in light of the fact that some day we shall give an account to Him.

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## 178. The Tragedy of Divorce and Remarriage

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THE TRAGEDY OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 178

Divorce and remarriage is a monstrous evil and there is a pressing need for some clear teaching on the subject. We must be loyal to the Scriptures and not be carried away by the opinions of men. When divorce has once taken place, it's often impossible to undo the damage done. It usually results in such a tangle of complicated situations that no human being can unravel it. We speak with sympathy for those already tangled in a marital disaster, but we write specifically with the hope of helping to prevent the tragedy of divorce from happening to others. The knowledge that the Bible doesn't permit divorce and remarriage, is a powerful factor in helping people determine that they are going to make their marriages work. Divorce and remarriage is certainly not a new subject. It is as old as the Scriptures themselves. Divorce was a problem in Noah's day; Moses had to contend with it; the question was brought to Jesus, nearly two thousand years ago. They said, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" John the Baptist lost his head because of divorce and remarriage. He had told King Herod that the woman he married was not really his wife, but that she was still the wife of Philip, her first husband. And this enraged the woman ■ and she took revenge!

### 1. THE SCOPE OF THE DIVORCE EVIL

Every year thousands of American homes are broken by separation and divorce. In 1887, there was hardly a divorce in the entire United States. In 1913, there were only sixty divorced couples in the entire country of Canada. But divorce has rapidly increased, until today in our country, approximately one marriage out of every three ends in divorce. There was a time when divorce carried with it a stigma and shame ■ but no longer. The practice has become so widespread that when a grade-school teacher asked one of her pupils to give father's name, he said, "Which one, teacher, I've got three fathers." One minister reports too that he thought it was hardly necessary to ask the two eighteen-year olds who had come to him for marriage, the usual question, "Have either of you been married before?" (because they were both only eighteen years old) ■ but asked anyhow. And he was shocked when the young man answered boldly, "Yes sir, we've both been married, but we're divorced." The divorce laws in many states are so loose and so full of loopholes that marriage often becomes little more than a day free . One writer says that in some cases today, the wedding cake lasts longer than the marriage itself! in some states, all one has to do to get a divorce is to declare that the partner spilled gravy on the tablecloth, or that he washed his false teeth in the presence of company ■ and sometimes it doesn't take the court as long to grant the divorce as it does to fine a man for speeding on the highway.

### 2. THE CAUSES OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

One of the causes is related to hasty marriages. Only a miracle can prevent a tragedy in the home when people marry, after they've each other only a few weeks. Too many couples marry first and

only then get acquainted. Marriages between believers and unbelievers and between those of differing nationalities and races, often create problems in the home. One's best chance for success in marriage occurs when he is a Christian, and he marries another devoted Christian, and when the married partners of the same race, nationality, and religious faith. Childless marriages sometimes contribute toward divorce. God wants husbands and wives to become fathers and mothers. And to this great purpose of God (where children are physically possible) ■ leads to frustration and sometimes to broken homes. Prayerless marriages are also a factor related to divorce and remarriage. married couple should begin a family altar at very beginning of life. If a young couple pray, and ask to lead them in their marriage (and will keep the family altar going down through the years) ■there aren't enough divorce courts in all the land to put their marriage on the rocks. There is much truth in the slogan, "Families that pray together, stay together."

### 3. THE BIBLE TEACHING ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We must forget our sympathies at this point, what we've heard others say, and what we've read in books ■ and listen to 's book seeking to discover what it says.

#### (1) Concerning Separation

The Scriptures say, "And unto the married I command (yet not I, but the Lord), Let not the wife depart from her husband" (1 Corinthians 7:10). The wife is not to leave her husband, and of course the opposite is also true, "Let not the husband put away his wife." The Christian who has marital problems is to seek to "stick-it-out." it might mean hardship and testing, but it's best for the Christian not to leave his companion. However, Paul does say in verse 11 (of the same chapter), "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." While it is best not to separate ■ if a couple does separate, they are not free to remarry. The channel always be kept open and clear, so that the relationship can be restored in the event the parties repent and decide to make the marriage work. Paul explains why (1 Corinthians 7:14) the wife should not separate her partner:

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the ." In other words, the unsaved husband is set apart into a place where the influence of his good Christian wife may ultimately result in his salvation. As as the Christian wife continues to live with her husband (and lives a devoted life before him) ■ she might be able to influence him for God. But if she leaves him loses contact with him, she cuts off her one great opportunity for ultimately winning him to Christ. However if matters become so difficult that separation does place (and this can happen) ■ the channels be kept open for future restoration. Regardless of how incompatible the partners may seem to be, they are husband and wife, and that union can only be dissolved by death.

#### (2) Concerning Divorce

Divorce not even mentioned in the until 2,500 years after the marriage. It is true that God permitted to the hard-hearted in Israel, but our conduct must be governed not by the which God suffered, but by the laws which He commanded. Matthew 5:32 records the words of Jesus: "But I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away (that is, divorce) his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." Jesus says that divorce does not dissolve the marriage union as death does ■ for if it did, it would be

unnecessary to say, "Whosoever shall marry her that divorced committeth adultery." The in a number of places say that death dissolves a marriage, and that then it is not a sin to re-marry. If divorce would dissolve a marriage like death does, then it wouldn't be adultery to be married to a divorced person. Jesus says that if one marries a person is divorced, he is committing adultery. Divorce does not dissolve the old marriage. Jesus also plainly says that one who divorces his partner, causes her to adultery■that is, he gives her a license in the eyes of the law to go out and re-marry and commit adultery■ and this another reason why divorce is wrong. Even the clause has to do with fornication and not with adultery. means illicit relations on the part of the unmarried, while adultery means illicit relations on the part of the married. It is that the Greek word translated "fornication" sometimes widens out to include all kinds of immorality■but in Matthew 5:32 Jesus uses the words "adultery" and "fornication" in the same . And whenever the two Greek words (adultery and fornication) stand in contrast each other (in the setting), the word "fornication" always refers to impurity among the unmarried. And so Jesus did not make an exception for adultery, but for fornication. Jesus spoke (in Matthew 5:32) not about a marriage divorce, about an espousal divorce. Among the Orientals, engagement was a bond almost as binding as marriage itself. took the writing of a bill of to break it. Even before the marriage place, the young woman is called "a wife." This was true of the virgin Mary. She was called Joseph's wife (and he her husband) even when she was only espoused to him. And when Joseph learned that she was expecting a child, he was minded to put her away (to divorce her). See Matthew 1:18-19. When Jesus said, "Except it be for fornication" ■ He was saying that if the young man found that his espoused wife (the girl he was going to marry) had been immoral before their marriage (that is, if she committed fornication), he could return the girl to her father with a paper of divorcement. God not approve divorce. There are a number of Scriptural commands and principles which a divorce always violates. First, there is the command which says, "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). If I get a divorce from my wife, I am not doing all I possibly can to live peaceably with her. I'm doing all I can to live peaceably without her, but not with her. Divorce also violates the command to forgive "until seventy seven" times. Every divorce (no matter what the cause), demonstrates an unforgiving heart on the part of the person suing for divorce. Divorce violates the promise to be faithful "for better or for worse." We don't hear much about this promise when things go better, but the promise to love and cherish the partner is not only for times when things go better ■ it is also for times when things don't go so well. When we pledge (over an open Bible and in the presence of witnesses and before God) to be faithful "until death do us part" ■we're making a promise for life. The Bible says it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay. Furthermore, divorce violates the prohibition in the Bible against going to courts of law (see 1 Corinthians 1:1-20). One who applies for a divorce must sign a statement which in effect says, "The plaintiff prays that a decree of court may be given to (the married partner) divorcing her from the plaintiff's society, fellowship, and company ■ and from the marriage bond, as if she were dead." Divorce violates the commands in the Bible to be separate from the world. One who seeks a divorce is following the example of Hollywood, and not the law of God. The whole tenor of the Bible is against divorce. It is unthinkable that the God who teaches us to forgive seventy-times-seven times (without limit) ■ would then teach that we may divorce our wives and put them away if we can't get along with them.

### (3) Concerning Remarriage

God never intended the remarriage of divorced persons. Jesus says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commits adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:11-12). Paul says, in Romans 7:3, "So then if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." And in 1 Corinthians 7:39, the Bible says that death is the only thing which can dissolve the marriage vow: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives, but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." The Bible gives license under any condition for anyone to remarry as long as he or she has a former living companion. And so, to summarize ■ the Bible teaches that separation is permissible but usually unwise; divorce is always a sin; and remarriage is an additional sin.

#### 4. THE SOLUTION TO THE DIVORCE PROBLEM

Persons dealing with the dilemma of divorce often insist that divorce and remarriage is a sin to be regarded and forgiven as any other sin ■ and indeed so it is. The Lord forgives the sin of divorce and remarriage just the same (and just as willingly) as He forgives any other sin. But remember that God expects the sin to be discontinued. When a drunkard gets right with God the Lord expects him to quit his drinking, and to give up his bottle. And just so, one who is remarried, and thus living in adultery, is expected to quit his living in an adulterous state. Marriage to a second partner (while the first companion is still living), constitutes a continuous state of adultery. If a murderer accepts the Lord and is received into the Church ■ and continues to comm it murder again ■ does he give evidence of the new birth? Does God forgive, when the sinner has no real intention of forsaking his sin? Just so one living in the state of adultery stands condemned before God. The only real solution for those already divorced and remarried ■ is the voluntary separation of the married partners. This is exactly what the Children of Israel did many years ago, during the revival under Ezra's preaching. They said, "Let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the wives . . . according to the counsel of those who tremble at the commandment of our God" (Ezra 10:3). We can never say (of divorced and remarried persons), that there is no way. There is a way. The Church has always received divorced and remarried persons ■ if they separated and lived chaste lives apart from each other. Some say, "But what about people who were caught up in divorce and remarriage before they were Christians?" They say, "Surely people should not be penalized for what they didn't know, or for what they've repented of." And further, "What if people are happily married the second time? Would it be proper to annul that marriage and break up homes?" To answer such questions, we must remember that Jesus made it clear that to follow Him might involve breaks in human relations. He said that even homes would become divided for His sake ■ and in strong language He said that those not willing to break family ties, are not worthy of Him. Read Matthew 10:37-39. To be separated on earth for a season (from family ties), is nothing, compared to missing eternal union with God. The way of the transgressor is hard. Marriage is a serious step. The vows are witnessed on earth and they are recorded in Heaven. The Bible teaches that marriage is a lifetime contract, never to be broken except by death. There just isn't anything about divorce and remarriage that God approves. His plan is marriage for life. Our prayer is that where brokenness and iniquity are evident, God will bring healing and restoration, and that His blessing will be upon children who are the innocent victims of broken homes, and that He will increase love in those homes not yet broken but which are standing on a shaky foundation.

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## 193. Signs Of Christ's Coming

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SIGNS OF CHRIST'S COMING by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 193 "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"

Luke 21:28.

Many years ago the French scientist, Pierre Bercheldt made a very dramatic statement. Bercheldt said (back in 1860), "Within one hundred years of physical and chemical science, man will know what the atom is." And he went on further to say, "It is my belief that when science reaches this stage, God will come down to earth with His big ring of keys and will say to humanity, 'Gentlemen, it's closing time.'" Bercheldt was right on the first part of his prediction. One hundred years have passed and men have found what the atom is and we have reason to believe that the second part of his prediction may soon come true just as well. God will come down to earth with His big ring of keys and will say to humanity, "It's closing time." One of the truths repeated over and over again in the Bible is the fact that Jesus Christ is coming to the earth twice. He came once nearly two thousand years ago (born as an infant and laid in a manger); He is going to come again (to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords). He is not going to come as the lowly Nazarene; His coming will be with great power and great glory. The New Testament says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed From heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8). None of us knows just when He is going to come, but Jesus did speak of a number of events and conditions that would take place on earth just before He returns to reign. And God expects us to know something about general conditions that will prevail on earth just before Jesus returns. Hebrews 10:25 says "Exhort one another daily, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." The Scripture clearly implies that it is possible for us to see the day of the Lord approaching. 1 Thessalonians 5:4 says further, "But ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of light." It is true that the coming of the Lord will be like a thief in the night, but believers have the Scriptures and are thus not in darkness about His coming. We should be able to see as the time draws near. Jesus says that we ought to know when the time is close at hand (Matthew 24:33). There are a number of signs that tell something about the times in which we live, and we want to see what the Bible says about the signs which point to the approaching end of the age.

### 1. PHYSICAL SIGNS

We refer to signs that will occur in the physical universe. The disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" And Jesus (in Matthew 24:7) talked about famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. There have always been famines, but the worst famines in history have occurred in the Twentieth Century. Twenty million people starved to death in Russia during the years that followed World War 2. And then there are countries of Asia and parts of Africa where the Sahara is advancing southward that have a real dearth of food. The

problem of food supplies is a major concern of about ninety percent of the nations of earth. The population of the earth is rapidly increasing and as a result scientists are fearing a time of mass starvation. And then too, pestilences are on the increase. My grandfather (who was a farmer) never bothered to spray his potatoes and beans and the trees in his orchard. There were no massive pestilences like there are today. Many farmers in our day say that as soon as they spray for one pest (and think they've got that one conquered), behold another bug appears and they have to start all over. Jesus said that earthquakes will be multiplied and intensified as we approach the time of the end. There was an average of ten earthquakes each year in the time of Christ. That number was increased to five hundred each year during the Seventeenth Century. Today the Geodetic Survey says there must be at least one billion earthquakes each year. They state further that the earth is in a continuous quiver. The instruments scientists use to record earth tremors are called seismographs. The seismograph is a device that has a scale ranging from zero to ten and is used to measure the intensity of an earthquake. The 1965 earthquake in Alaska was the most severe quake ever recorded. It measured 8.6 on a scale that only goes up to 10. There have always been earthquakes, but there has been a remarkable increase not only in number but also in intensity and this is another indication that we are approaching the end time.

## 2. NATIONAL SIGNS

There are signs among the nations that point to the soon coming of our Lord. One of the national signs is the indication that nations are preparing to march on Israel. The 38th chapter of Ezekiel tells about a military invasion of the land of Israel by a great army which comes from the north. The Bible says, "In the latter years, thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel" (Ezekiel 38:8). Ezekiel 18:15 of the same chapter says, "And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts." The country that lies north of Palestine will come upon the land of Israel in the last days to carry away plunder. Russia's attempt to control the Middle East is evidence that this prophecy is coming closer to a fulfillment in our day. Another sign related to the nations is that world leaders are distressed and perplexed. Jesus says, "And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25). Jesus said that as we approach the time of His coming again, nations are going to be engulfed in problems for which they can see no way out. A noted evangelist recently said, "It has been my privilege during the past few years to sit down with some of the world's top leaders to discuss world conditions. Few of them are hopeful; most of them are at their wits end; none of them are optimistic." The world today is seething and boiling with misunderstanding. Racial tensions, and bitterness and unrest, unruly demonstrations, and an increasing brutality in warfare are sending a shudder through the hearts of men and women all over the world. From Cuba to Korea, from Lebanon to Angola, from South Africa to Latin America -- no matter where one turns -- there is disturbance and unrest. There is "upon the earth, distress of nations, with perplexity." A noted historian, who once thought that the world is moving toward a paradise, said in one of his last books: "This world is at the end of its tether; the end of everything we call life is close at hand." The mental attitude of the world today reminds us of the words of Jesus. when He said, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

## 3. JEWISH SIGNS

When God called Abraham many years ago, He said that He would raise up a great nation from his offspring and God promised the land of Palestine to be their inheritance. God later told the whole nation of Israel that if they obeyed Him, He would bless them in their land; if they disobeyed God, He would bring chastening and expel them from the land. A careful reading of Deuteronomy 28:1-6, Deuteronomy 28:15, Deuteronomy 28:63-64 will verify the statement above. We know the history of Israel. The Jewish nation disobeyed God, and as a result the people were carried away captive into foreign nations. Down through the centuries, they were scattered from one end of the earth to the other and dispersed among the nations, just as God had said they would be. But the Bible not only predicted that Israel would be scattered; it also says that Israel will be regathered again into her ancient home-land (Deuteronomy 30:1, Deuteronomy 30:3, Deuteronomy 30:5). For twenty-five centuries the Jews were without a kingdom and scattered among the nations but they never lost their identity, and on May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation again. That is indeed a miracle. Where are the Hittites and the Hivites and the Jebusites and the Girgashites? These were thriving nations in the Middle East too. How many of you have a neighbor who is a Philistine? These and other former kingdoms have been absorbed by the nations of the world and have lost their identity but not so with the Jews! Skeptics and unbelievers said the Jews would never return again to Palestine. They said it would be impossible to weld together into one nation a people estranged from each other for so many centuries (and speaking so many different languages), but today Israel is officially reestablished in her ancient homeland. The return of the Jews to Palestine, and the rebuilding of the nation of Israel has happened exactly as it was prophesied to happen. This fact alone should be enough to convince any unbeliever of the power of God and of the accuracy of the Bible,

#### 4. MORAL SIGNS

Jesus said that moral conditions on the earth (just before He returns) would be like the days of Noah. And the days of Noah were days of great wickedness and moral corruption. Genesis 6:5 says, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." That is what it was like in the days of Noah. Luke records too that conditions before the coming of Christ will be as it was "in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:28-30). The people of Sodom were exceedingly wicked. The Apostle Peter says that Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds and with their filthy conversation (2 Peter 2:6-8), Isn't that a picture of conditions that exist today? Our society is saturated with "unlawful deeds" and "filthy conversation." If you spend some time around the average group of factory workers today, or the average group of truck drivers, or the average group of school teachers you'll wonder if some people ever have a decent thought in their heads! Moral standards in America have gone down more in the past decade than in the entire previous hundred years. Our day is characterized by drunkenness and loose living. Most people have sold out to amusements, gambling, and sports. There is more carnality and more crime and more lying and more adultery and more easy divorce and more desecration of the Lord's Day than at any other time since the creation of Adam -- with the possible exception of the days just before the Flood in Noah's time. Literature and entertainment are filled with illicit sex, nakedness, lust, violence, crime, drinking, filth, obscenity, etc. until one is almost sickened by the thought of it. The moral standards of many in our society are about like those of an alley cat. One company is distributing grandson dolls with male sex organs for the children to play with. Groups of married

couples gather, mingle, and exchange partners (called "swinging") and engage in sexual orgies of an almost unbelievable nature. Homosexuals are loudly appealing for "gay rights." It is quite evident that Sodom lives again in the wickedness of our own social structure and these are all indications that the coming of our Lord is moving closer and closer.

## 5. RELIGIOUS SIGNS

The Scriptures state that certain signs of our Lord's coming will appear even within the professing church. One of the sad notes of prophecy is that as the age draws to a close, much of the church, instead of becoming better, will grow worse, and ultimately end in apostasy. The Bible says, "Let no man deceive you, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). And again we read, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1). Departure from the faith is evident today on every side. There are those in the professing church who laugh at the verbal inspiration of the Bible, ridicule the vicarious blood atonement of Jesus Christ, poke fun at the miracles, and lay aside some of the ordinances clearly taught in the New Testament. It is true that records for church building have been broken, and in many places church membership rolls are fairly large but the vast majority of church members are indifferent to spiritual truth and unconcerned about the souls of lost persons. Many in our churches know more about Hollywood than they know about Heaven, and they know much more about sports than about the Spirit. Jesus says that as we approach the time of the end, the love of many "shall wax cold." One of the joyous signs in the religious realm is the fact that the Gospel is being proclaimed to all nations (Matthew 24:14). The enormous outreach of radio broadcasting during the past three decades, the use of airplanes to help those serving in remote mission stations, and the wide distribution of printed literature is all part of the effort to share the Gospel with earth's tribes and nations. The Wycliffe translators are working hard at the great task of publishing the Scriptures in the languages of the various cultures on every continent. When the disciples asked the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age?" -- Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

## 6. TRAVEL SIGNS

The prophet Daniel says that in the time of the end "many shall run to and fro" (Daniel 12:4). There is going to be lots of travel. When George Washington traveled from Philadelphia to New York for his inauguration, it took nearly two weeks of difficult travel. Today the same trip takes only a relatively few minutes. Isaac Newton was one of the most brilliant men that ever lived. He discovered the laws of gravitation; he divided light into its seven component parts; he invented the calculus. But Newton had a strong faith in God, believing the Bible to be true. He said (way back in the 1600's) concerning the passage in Daniel 12: "Personally I believe these words concern the end of time. Men will travel from country to country. There may be some means of travel invented which will enable people to go much more quickly than now." Newton went on to say that he believed that someone might invent some means of locomotion which would enable men to travel at the astonishing rate of fifteen or twenty miles per hour. The people said, "He's crazy; look at him; an intelligent man; but he's out of his mind over his religion." The kind of travel that seemed altogether impossible eighty years ago is now a commonplace thing. Transportation eighty years ago was mostly by horse and buggy. Automobiles were a novelty; airplanes were unknown; most

people traveled only a few miles from their homes during an entire lifetime. Today it is altogether different. Trains travel one hundred miles per hour; ships cross the Atlantic in a few days; planes travel across the Atlantic ocean in a few hours; space ships have carried men completely around the earth in less than ninety minutes. One can board a Concorde Jet plane in London at 12:00 noon and arrive at Dulles Airport In Washington D.C. at 11:00 A.M. the same day because the plane travels faster than the earth rotates. Men are running to and fro, and the prophet Daniel was inspired to write that then shall be the time of the end. When Jesus spoke about His coming again, He told a Parable about ten virgins. Five were wise and five were foolish. Five had oil in their lamps and five had none. And while those who had none hurried to buy some, the bridegroom came, "And they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10). These words make it clear that when Jesus returns there will only be two classes of people—the wise who are prepared to go with Him, and the foolish who will be left behind. Today the invitation to receive Jesus Christ is still open, and God in His mercy has withheld judgment, if you have never done it, won't you admit that you have sinned against God and that the penalty for sin is death? Won't you believe that Jesus died as a Substitute to pay the penalty for your sins? Won't you become a disciple of His, and promise to be an obedient and loyal servant to Him? It is true that Jesus will make demands on your life; there are some things you will need to give up; you might lose some old friends. But think what you'll get! Your sins will be forgiven; the peace of God will flood your soul; at the end of the road you'll go out to live with God the Father and God the Son forever. For those who know Christ, the hope of His soon coming should spur righteous living day after day. Our prayer is that the Lord will help each of us to live every day, as if it were our last day before the coming of Jesus.

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#### BIBLE HELPS

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## 205. The Ordinances of the Church

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### THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 205

A number of groups within Christendom (especially those with an Anabaptist and a Pietist heritage) practice some distinctive teachings which are largely neglected by other "Christian" bodies. One of the areas of distinctiveness relates to the ordinances. A New Testament "ordinance" is a commandment which requires more than one Christian to carry out; it is usually a symbol representing some great spiritual principle. The command to bridle the tongue, for example, each of us can obey by himself—but the command to wash one another's feet requires a group of Christians if we are to comply. Thus "feet-washing" is an ordinance and it is symbolic, representing some great spiritual principles. The American flag is a symbol. The stripes represent the original thirteen colonies. The stars represent each state that comprises the union. Each color has its own significance. Yet to trample upon the flag of any nation (or to display it improperly), is to disgrace the nation which it represents. Just so, to trample upon the ordinances of God's house is to make light of God's truth, and to treat carelessly the things which the symbols represent. Surely one of the reasons Jesus gave the symbols and commanded us to practice them, is because He knew the frailty of our memories, and our inability to think in the realm of the abstract. Each ordinance is a tangible token which aids our minds in comprehending deeper spiritual truths.

#### 1. THE FEET-WASHING SERVICE

The Scripture is altogether clear in stating that Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, and that He gave them an example commanding them to do as He had done (John 13:14). The reference in 1 Timothy 5:10 is evidence that the early church kept up the practice which Jesus had earlier instituted. The feet-washing ordinance speaks of humility. The disciples had seen servants washing their master's feet, but for the Creator of the universe to gird himself with a towel and get down on His knees in front of an uneducated fisherman and wash his feet, was unheard of. Our besetting sin is often an undue desire for status, and because each of us is inclined to feel he is above others, we need a service that will bring us on a common level. The feet-washing ordinance speaks of cleansing. John 13:10 says, "He that is washed (bathed) need not save to wash his feet." Two Greek words for "wash" are used in John 13:10. The person who has been washed from his sins in the blood of Christ (as symbolized in water baptism), doesn't need to be saved all over again when his feet become soiled as he walks through life. Our "feet" do become soiled; some of the filth of the world rubs off on every one of us; and thus we need repeated cleansings. The feet-washing service symbolizes the fact that we haven't reached perfection; we still need cleansing from daily defilement. The feet-washing ordinance speaks of service. In a day when social service is being stressed so much, it is a happy thought that at least some believers observe an ordinance which symbolizes "service." When we engage in feet-washing, we are promising to show in daily life what we practice during the ceremony in symbol. We are making a new commitment to help our fellow brother or sister clean up the mud when disaster strikes, nurse a wound when accident comes, and sit by a bedside when sickness invades the body. Our Lord

asks us only to do simple things. He set the example of feet-washing and tells us to do likewise (John 13:15).

## 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The "lovefeast service" (2 Peter 2:13) consists of the ordinances of feet-washing, the fellowship meal, and the communion of the bread and cup. We look now at the fellowship meal. It was from supper (John 13:4) that Jesus arose to wash the disciple's feet. The word "supper" is translated from "deipnon," a Greek word meaning "a simple evening meal." The Corinthian believers had abused the Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20) and made it a time of feasting for some, and a time of hunger for others. But Paul sought to correct the abuses, and the Church continued to observe the "feasts of charity" (Jude 1:12). The Lord's Supper is not the Jewish Passover. The Supper which Jesus instituted was eaten before the time for the Passover. Compare John 18:28 with John 13:1, The Passover was still future; the Supper was all over. True, the meal was called the "Passover" before the disciples engaged in it, but not after the meal was over. Then, after the Supper was over, the disciples knew it had been something different. The manner of preparation and the concluding circumstances also marked a difference between the Supper and the Passover. Compare Exodus 12:22 with Matthew 26:30 and notice that each concluded in a different manner. At the conclusion of the Passover, none was to leave until the next morning, but at the Supper, they sang a hymn and left the same evening. The Supper, like the other ordinances, is symbolic. The Supper is a symbol of brotherhood and peace. Eating together has always been an act of friendliness, and the Lord's Table pictures the doctrine of Christian love. When we sit down at the Lord's Table, we show the world that we are not only one with Christ, but also we are one with one another. The Supper is also typical of the Great Supper at the end of the age. The Scriptures speak of a "marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9), and of Jesus hosting the saved ones (Luke 12:37). The Lord's Supper points forward to that great table in glory when Jesus will gird himself "and make them sit down to eat, and will come forth and serve them." The observance of the evening meal (along with the feet-washing and communion service) was dropped generally by churches during the fourth century A.D., but the early Brethren in Germany revived the practice, and these ordinances are observed today.

## 3. THE COMMUNION SERVICE

The beautiful climax of the Lovefeast service (as the New Testament describes it) is the Communion of the bread and the cup. It is the high point of the Lovefeast service because it symbolizes the central fact of the Gospel. The Communion Service has a New Testament basis. Jesus took a piece of bread and blessed it and broke it, and said, "Take eat, this is my body." Likewise He took the cup, and after giving thanks, He asked the disciples to partake of it (Matthew 26:26-28). Luke's account says all this happened "after supper" (Luke 22:20). The word "communion" itself implies that a union in heart and belief and life must exist among those who engage together in the observance. Each believer is admonished to examine his life carefully before participating (1 Corinthians 11:28). The Communion Service is not "the Lord's Supper." Many speak of the Communion of the bread and cup as "the Lord's Supper," but the Supper is the simple evening meal. The Greek word translated "supper" means "the principal meal taken in the evening" (Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon). A little square of unleavened bread and a sip of grape juice could not be called the evening meal. The bread and the cup are never called "the

Lord's Supper" anywhere in the Scriptures. The Communion Service is also a symbolic ordinance. The piece of broken bread and the sip of the fruit of the vine are observed in remembrance of Christ's broken, bruised body and of His shed blood (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). When we partake of the Communion elements, we are remembering Calvary; we are thinking of how our Lord was nailed to the cross; we are recognizing that He was wounded for our transgressions and that the wrath of God which was poured out on Him should have been heaped upon us! We are saying with the hymn-writer, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." The service of feet-washing, the fellowship supper, and the communion of the bread and cup—were all instituted by the same Lord, at the same time, and with the same authority. Jesus said of them, "If ye know these things (plural, because there are three parts), happy are ye if ye do them." Is it not a serious thing to separate what God has put together?

#### 4. THE ANOINTING SERVICE

James 5:13-16 describes a ministry in behalf of the sick. There are many views regarding the passage. Some choose to ignore the instructions. Some teach that it is a service to be performed for those who are about to die. Others limit the promise to some future age. But the orthodox and clear view is to claim the promise and practice the ordinance for each child of God who is willing to place himself into the hands of the Creator. The anointing service enjoined in James 5 is not a practice to be performed in order to get a crowd, but is a simple ceremony designed for the quiet of the sick room. The elders read the passage in James 5, apply a few drops of olive oil on the head of the one who is sick, and then pray over him—asking God for healing, increased faith, and the forgiveness of sins. The word "sick" in verse 14 is a stronger word than the word "afflicted" in verse 13, and thus speaks of a more serious illness. Common illnesses should be made a matter of prayer, but more serious and chronic illnesses should lead us to call for the anointing by the elders of the church. The anointing with oil symbolizes the fact that the one who is sick is placing the entire situation into the hands of the Lord. He recognizes God's plan, and he is content with the will of God, whatever that will happens to be. J. H. Moore, in the book *Our Saturday Night*, describes the anointing of a younger sister who was seriously ill. He describes the entire service, and then concludes, "She felt perfectly resigned to the will of God; she was back in the Potter's hands, to be molded either for use in God's house upon the earth, or for use in the great house beyond the stars." While God promises special healing when the anointing is practiced, the entire service must be conducted "in the name of the Lord." To do something in "the name of the Lord" means that it must be done within the context of His will. One who is anointed accepts healing in keeping with God's will. The anointing does not set aside the fact that God uses doctors. God might use the doctor in answering the prayers of the elders of the church. The Good Samaritan (in Luke 10) used medication. He bound up the wounds of the injured man and poured on oil, and Jesus commended him for it. God can heal with medication and without it. It seems He does it differently on different occasions.

#### 5. THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

At the time of baptism (Acts 19:5-6), or when a person was being anointed (James 5:14), or when one was being initiated into a church office (1 Timothy 4:14)—the elders in New Testament times placed their hands on the head of the person involved, and offered prayer that he might be a yielded child of God and conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In Acts 8:17, the apostles laid

hands on the new converts, symbolizing the receiving of the Holy Spirit. When the deacons were selected (according to Acts 6), the apostles laid hands on them. When Paul and Barnabas were set aside for missionary service, hands were laid upon them. Acts 13:3 says, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on (Barnabas and Paul), they sent them away." The laying-on of hands is a symbol of restoration of health, reception of the Holy Spirit at baptism, and the conveying of the gifts and rights of a church office. The laying-on of hands symbolizes a fresh coming of the Holy Spirit in new power to help meet a task at hand. Man is utterly dependent upon God. He needs strength from heaven. And so the laying-on of hands is not a mere empty form, but a symbol that aids God's people in depending more completely upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

## 6. ASSEMBLING TOGETHER

A sixth ordinance is that of attending the services of the assembled church. The Bible says that we should be careful not to neglect this duty (Hebrews 10:25). Jesus himself, while here on earth, made regular attendance at the meetings of God's people His custom (Luke 4:16). In Old Testament days, those who loved and feared God "spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written" (Malachi 3:16). Our attitude should be that of the writer in Psalm 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord."

Assembling together, like all the ordinances, has a symbolic meaning. It symbolizes dependence upon God and upon each other. There are a number of benefits that come from attending the services of the assembled Church.

(1) We meet the Lord. In a special sense, where two or three gather, He is in the midst (Matthew 18:20). Thomas did not go to services on the night of the first Easter Sunday, and he missed seeing the Lord (John 20:24-25). (2) We encourage one another. God's people pray together; they strive together; they sing together; they work together. When we see the zeal of our fellow-Christians and share in their trials and rejoice in their joys, it gives us new courage and new devotion for the Lord. (3) We receive instruction. Through preaching and teaching we receive helpful and thoughtful exhortations from the Word. To "teach" means 'to instruct the mind' and to "preach" means "to move the will." The teaching and preaching will help us conform more and more to the likeness of Christ. (4) We let a testimony before others. Staying away from church services is a poor testimony to the sinner. One writer tells about an elderly man who walked to services faithfully every Sunday morning. Neighbors knew he was nearly deaf and that he couldn't hear the sermon. A scoffer asked him one time why he spent his time in church services when he couldn't hear anyway. The old gentleman, with a note of firmness in his voice, said, "I want my neighbors to know which side I'm on." We should attend the appointed services of the church when it rains, when a stranger preaches, when the home preacher preaches, when we feel like going, and when we don't feel like going. Assembling together is a Christian duty.

## 7. THE KISS OF CHARITY

The 'kiss of charity' (or "the holy kiss" as it is sometimes called) is one of the forms of Christian greeting taught in the New Testament. There are three forms for greeting brothers and sisters in Christ. There was greeting by name (Ill John 4), greeting by right hand of fellowship (Galatians 2:9), and greeting with the kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14; Romans 16:16; etc.). The kiss of charity is a

holy kiss. It is to be observed between brethren and brethren and sisters and sisters in Christ. There are appropriate times and places for all three of the forms of Christian greeting mentioned in the New Testament. However, the handshake does not quite convey the fullness of emotion that is demonstrated by the holy kiss. The early church practiced the kiss of love upon meeting and parting, as a part of the love-feast service, when welcoming new members into the church fellowship, and as a general greeting among Christians. The kiss of charity is a symbol of love and affection. When fellow-Christians practice it, they are saying, "I love you; there is no enmity between us." The kiss is also a symbol of fidelity and faithfulness. The husband who plants a kiss on the cheek of his wife as he leaves for work in the morning, says "I'll be true to you." The holy kiss was a common practice among early believers. Augustine said that Christians demonstrated their inward love by the outward kiss. The kiss among fellow believers is a sign that all injuries are forgotten, all wrongs are forgiven, and that believers are indeed one in the Lord. The symbol needs to be observed today. Christianity does not consist merely in observing ordinances (symbols), but nevertheless the symbols we discussed in this message are perpetual reminders of great Christian truths, and so we need to emphasize more than is often done—the meaning of the ordinances which God's Word commands us to observe. People seem to go for symbols in our day—the peace symbol, a cross on a chain around the neck, the wedding band—but our responsibility is to observe the symbols the Lord has chosen. Why should we tamper with them and try to change them?

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BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

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## 206. Five Hindrances to Effective Prayer

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FIVE HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 206

It would be well if each of us kept a record of the time spent in prayer during just one week. It might convince us of how little praying we really do. This is an age in which records are kept anyhow. The farmer records the number of bushels of grain produced per acre; the teacher records the progress of her pupils; the businessman records his inventory of stock. And it might be profitable if we kept a record in the matter of prayer. If we are inclined not to do it, the reason might be related to the fact that we know how embarrassing the record could be. Jesus said to His disciples one time, "Could you not watch with me (in prayer); could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation" (See Mark 14:37). Jesus prayed often, and if He found praying necessary in His life, surely prayer ought to have a significant place in the lives of each one of us! To simply begin the day with a few lines, and to close it with a couple routine words—is not the effectual fervent prayer that should characterize the true believer. Mothers can lift up their concerns to God in prayer while mending clothes and waxing floors and preparing meals. Fathers can meet God in behalf of that boy away in grade school, or the married daughter who is now raising a family of her own, while working with a bale of hay, or laboring at a workbench, or sitting at a desk in the office. The Bible says, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). We must cultivate the habit of being constant in an attitude of prayer. The normal Christian life should be a life of regular, daily answer to prayer. In the model prayer (the "Lord's Prayer") Jesus taught His disciples to pray daily for bread and to expect to get it, and to ask daily for forgiveness and to expect to be forgiven. While answered prayer should be the normal experience, it remains a fact that many times we fail to get the answer to the cry of our hearts. Sometimes there are certain hindrances that cause God to withhold the request we ask.

### 1. ASKING FROM A SELFISH MOTIVE

God says, "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). The first thing that hinders prayer and causes God to withhold what we ask, is a selfish purpose in our praying. If we pray simply for the gratification of self and for the satisfaction of our own pleasures, the Bible says we ask amiss. We may even ask for perfectly legitimate things (things which are according to God's will as revealed in the Scriptures), but if we ask from a selfish motive instead of for the glory of God, He does not promise to give our request. You remember the story that amused us when we were children. It was the story of a wishing cap, and when the possessor wore the cap, he was vested with the power of obtaining immediately whatever he wished for. Men sometimes seem to regard God's promise to answer prayer in a similar fashion. They think God is pledged to satisfy all their selfish desires and that He ought to lavishly give them everything they ask. There was a time, for example, when I prayed for a Rolls-Royce. The motive was quite obvious; I was eager to show off. Surely it is best that God never gave me the chance to sit behind the wheel of such an elaborate automobile. Sometimes folks desire great wealth and pray that God will bless them financially. It may be all right to pray for

success and prosperity in business, but we must be very careful to examine our motives and see that they are proper. God knows the motive of the heart, and He loves us too much to entrust us with riches, when He knows we would spend them on our own pleasures, and thus let them become a detriment to our souls.

Sometimes a Christian wife prays for the conversion of her unsaved husband. This is a proper thing for which to pray, for it is God's will that all men should be saved. But as proper as that prayer is—it is often hindered because the wife who offers it is praying for the conversion of her husband from a purely selfish motive. She says to herself: "Our married life would be so much happier and it would be far more pleasant for me around the house, if my husband were a Christian." All that, of course, is true. No two persons can know the deepest joys of married life, when one is a Christian and the other is not. But for a wife to pray for the conversion of her husband for those reasons alone, is selfish. The real reason for praying for the conversion of one's husband should not be so that things will be more convenient for you—but because you know that without Christ he is lost and without the hope of eternal life. James says that sometimes we do not receive the answers to our prayers because we are too selfish in our praying. We ask and receive not because we ask amiss, that we might consume it on our own pleasures.

## 2. A GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TOWARD THE BIBLE

If our hearts are turned away from the Scriptures, and the Bible fails to be of any interest to us, then our prayers are going to be an abomination. Proverbs 28:9 says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." It is proper for Christian people to read good books, but if those books stand between you and your regular reading of the Bible, it is better not to read the books. After all, how can anyone who is not interested in the Bible; who fails to read it; whose heart is turned away from it; how can he ever please God in prayer? Jesus says, "If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). And John says (in 1 John 5:14), "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The person who doesn't love the Bible, and who isn't eager to read it, and doesn't gladly accept its commands—cannot meet the conditions of these promises, and thus his prayer-life will be hindered. God says we should ask according to His will. And if we want to know God's will, then we must study God's book. Ignorance of the Bible and its basic teachings accounts for many hindered prayers. One Christian says, "I prayed for years that God would sanctify me wholly and root out inbred sin and make me absolutely pure within, but He hasn't heard my cry." But this person prayed without carefully consulting the Scriptures. God has expressed His mind far too clearly (in the Bible) concerning the matter of rooting out inbred sin, to let us be familiar with the Scriptures and at the same time pray a prayer like that. The Apostle John says that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." John—the disciple whom Jesus loved—the one into whose care Jesus entrusted His mother; one who wrote five of the New Testament books; this same Apostle John includes himself, and says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." You see, if the person who prayed the prayer had read the Bible carefully, the prayer would never have been prayed as it was. Every Christian should earnestly seek to familiarize himself with the Scriptures, for 'he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination."

## 3. AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT TOWARD OTHERS

Jesus states plainly that Christians who will not forgive others, will taint themselves when they ask forgiveness. Jesus says in Mark 11:25, "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any." And in Matthew 6:14, we read, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." It is mere folly to expect God to answer our prayers if at the same time we are cherishing wrath and bitterness in our hearts toward others. There are some Christians who would never attend a theater and never belong to a lodge and never play a game of bridge—but who at the same time are guilty of the sin of unforgiveness. It is easy to brood over past differences just enough to keep our wrath warm. If we pray while holding bitterness in our hearts toward others, our prayers are really hypocritical, and God has not promised to hear. We are to completely forgive others. Jesus says we are to forgive "from the heart" (that is, without limit)—because God has so graciously forgiven us. And yet in almost every congregation of believers there are persons who refuse to speak to others, and who are so gripped with the sin of holding bitterness in their hearts that they have made shipwreck of their lives. If we want our prayers answered, we must learn to completely forgive. God has never promised to answer the prayer of one who harbors an unforgiving spirit.

#### 4. DISCORD IN THE HOME

Contention and misunderstandings in the home become a hindrance to an effective prayer life. Many times this hindrance is overlooked. Peter (in 1 Peter 1:1-22) speaks about the conduct of husbands and wives, and tells us that an inconsistent life in the home will cause our prayers to be hindered. He says, "Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel—and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). The wife must be subject to her husband or her prayers will be hindered. The husband is to dwell with his wife according to the knowledge that she is the weaker vessel, or his prayers will be hindered. Harmony in the home is tied into receiving the answers to our prayers. When two unite in marriage, God views them as one flesh. He expects them to think together and to plan together and to pray together—and if there is disharmony and a lack of agreement, prayers are going to be interrupted. We should never let the sun go down on a family squabble because it is like a snowball—the farther it rolls, the larger it will grow. Discord in the home, grieves God. If there is a lack of harmony and a lack of agreement in your home, your prayer-life will be hindered. We can make all kinds of pretense about piety. We can be very faithful in attending Sunday services and various church meetings, and participating in Christian work, but remember that God's eye is on our home life! How many a man is there who, if you heard him talk in prayer meeting or in the Sunday School class, you would think he is a perfect saint of God. His words are so winsome and winning and earnest. But in his home he is quite different. He's harsh and domineering and impatient and crude and overbearing. Some men who are angels in public are devils at home—and then they wonder why their prayers are hindered. And some women are as sweet as a summer morning when you meet them at the Lord's house but at home they are peevish and nagging and hard to please the husband is tired when he comes home from work. As husband and wife sit down to the evening meal, she says, "John, did you mail that letter I gave you this morning?" He looks aghast. He puts his hands into his pockets and finds the letter still there. He says, "Darling, I'm sorry, but I forgot to mail it." She says, "Of course you forgot to mail it! You always forget to mail it! You never do what I ask you to do!" And on and on she goes. No wonder

prayers are hindered. True—many homes are burdened with family members who are not Christians—and many times there is a lack of cooperation on the part of the unbeliever. In such cases, the Christian partner must continue to pray, and God does graciously answer. But remember it never helps to nag and constantly criticize the one who is slow to cooperate. Our sweet reasonableness in the midst of tense moments, will have tendencies to win the unbeliever.

## 5. ANY UNCONFESED SIN

A final factor that hinders the answer to prayers is any unconfessed sin. We have pointed out a number of sins thus far which are mentioned in the Bible as hindering the answer to prayer. These include praying with selfish motives, harboring an unforgiving spirit, and allowing discord in the home. There are other reasons why prayers are hindered. These include a lack of faith (failure to believe that God will answer), an unwillingness to help answer the prayer, and a failure to pray with uncovered head for men, and with the veiled head for women. God may do more than He promised, but He never promised to answer the prayers of those who disregard His order in headship. Finally, however, it must be pointed out that any unconfessed sin can block the answer to our prayers. No Christian can ever be successful in prayer if he practices sin in his life—if he knows he is doing wrong and he is riot willing to confess his transgression. The Bible says, "If I iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalms 18:1)

True – all of us have sinned. But if we hold to a sin, and love it, and make an alibi for it, and excuse it—then that puts a separation between God and me. It short-circuits the communication system, and I am just wasting my time even trying to pray. If your prayers are not reaching God's throne, search your life for some evil that might be lurking there. Look back into the dark recesses of your heart and mind. It may be some questionable habit; or some petty jealousy; or carelessness; or lustful passion. It may be the love of money, or some shameful secret sin in your life. Perhaps only you and God know about it. If you love a sin, and if in your heart you are excusing it—it is going to hinder your prayers and stop heaven and shut the ears of God so that He will not hear. The solution is to get it confessed and forsaken, and to restore fellowship with God. Prayer is a communication system almost like a telephone between us and God. An older friend in Christ and to me one time: "Brother Martin, do you know what God's telephone number is?" I said, "No, I can't say that I do." She said, "It is Jeremiah 33:3." God says (as recorded in that passage of Scripture), "Call on me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." That is a beautiful promise—yet often we behave as if the lines were busy or as if the phone were out of order. A Christian night attendant in a city drugstore tells of his experience with prayer. The store was open all night to fill emergency prescriptions. The attendant slept on a couch at the rear of the store, and one who wanted service during the night rang a buzzer at the front door. The attendant was just about sleeping one dark, rainy, dismal night—when he was aroused by the buzzer. When he answered the door, it was a little boy, who said, "Please mister, get this medicine as soon as you can; my mommy is awful sick." Sleepily and hurriedly he filled the prescription and the boy was off. After the boy had gone, the pharmacist put away the bottles and recorded the prescription -- only to notice to his horror that he had given the boy a deadly poison, instead of the medicine he had intended to give. The pharmacist did not know which way the boy had gone; it was raining and dark outside; he looked in the phone book, but there was no name to match his record. And then he did as we often sing—"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer"— he went back to his cot

and on his knees asked God to overrule this tragic mistake for His own glory. He then lay down again. Soon the night attendant was aroused by the buzzer again. It was the same little boy. He was crying fiercely. He said, "I was running down the street to get this medicine home as soon as I could, and I slipped and fell and broke the bottle. Will you please fill it again?" You see—God overruled this tragic mistake in answer to the prayer of a humble Christian. Prayer is the Christian's source of strength and joy. It is a vital link between the soul and God. It is a major source of spiritual power. Don't neglect it. And if after checking carefully, examining my life with regard to the hindrances pointed out in this message— there is still silence when I pray—I need to accept God's silence in the belief that He is using it to discipline me and to help me grow. If you are unsaved—you have no promise that God will answer your prayers. God may do more than He promised, and as a result He has sometimes answered the prayers of unbelievers. But the only prayer you can pray with the certainty that God will answer, is the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Will you acknowledge your hopeless and helpless condition today, and call on God to save you while you still have the opportunity?

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## 208. Improving the Marriage Relationship

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IMPROVING THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP by Samuel M. Cassel A Bible Helps Booklet No. 208

It has been evident in recent years that marriage relationships are deteriorating in our society. Satan is trying to destroy the home, but we praise God for every effort toward its preservation. God's blessing is upon the husband-wife relationship. Proverbs 18:22 says, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord." Not only does marriage and the husband-wife relationship have a blessing from the Lord, but also in God's Word we are given guidelines by which we can maintain the husband-wife relationship as God intended it to be. Marriage was meant to be a blessed relationship. And so we ask the question—is your husband-wife relationship a blessed relationship, or is it a strained ordeal?

### 1. WHAT THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE LIKE

In Ephesians 5 we observe that the husband-wife relationship is compared to that of Christ and the Church. In other words, our model indicates that the husband-wife relationship is one that lasts forever, a kinship that grows sweeter as the years go by, a relationship that provides an example of peace and joy, a relationship that will weather the storms and trials of life, and one against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail. Hopefully we can say that by the grace of God we have found our relationship in the home to be that way. Even children can quickly sense whether mother and father really love each other and whether there is the warmth of love in their home, or whether there is a distance and a coldness between the parents. You may remember the story about the home that was preparing for a wedding. Big sister was getting married and little sister was all eyes and ears to know what was going on and what this was all about. One day she heard them talking about the marriage vows. She said, "What's that all about?" Mother answered, "Well, that is when big sister and her boyfriend will promise to love and always be kind to each other as long as they live." Little sister thought a moment, and said, "Well then, you mean that you and daddy aren't always married." It is quite clear that our children know what kind of relationship we really have. I read about a husband whose job required that the family move frequently. While he was temporarily assigned work in one particular area, his family lived in a small hotel room. One day the little girl (for want of a bigger place to play) was playing "doll-house" down in the lobby. One kind lady passed through the hallway, and tried to be helpful and sympathetic. She said to the little girl, "It's a pity that you don't have a home of your own." The little girl responded, "Oh, we do have a home; we just don't have a house to put it in." Can you say your relationship is such that you have a home even if your house is less than adequate? If father and mother are happy together, that contentment is conveyed to the children. Judge Gilliam says, "The lack of affection between father and mother is the greatest source of delinquency that I know. Is your relationship what you would like it to be? Does it bother you when you see another couple that seems to really be happy?"

### 2. WAYS TO IMPROVE THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

All sincere married partners want to improve their marriage. No couples should ever be satisfied where they are. In school, we learned a little motto which goes like this: "Good, better, best! Never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best!" One couple whose marriage was just about on the rocks determined that they were going to improve their marriage by God's help. The husband describes what they did: "We got together and took a pencil and paper and each wrote down the things he did not like about the other. We had a long list. When done, we exchanged the papers, and we found it was difficult to face each other's list. We walked together to a point where we burned the papers and watched them go up in flames. Then we came back and sat down and started making a list of things we liked about each other. This was difficult too, but when the lists were completed, we exchanged the papers and looked at them. Later we framed them and hung them in our bedroom, so that each morning when we arise we can see what our partner likes, and concentrate on doing those positive things. By God's grace, it has transformed our marriage." If your marriage is not what you would like it to be, and you really seriously mean business—by God's grace, it can be improved. However you must be willing to work at it.

(a) Avoid comparing your marriage with other marriages

It is a tragic mistake to look at the marriage relationship of another couple and to wish that your relationship would be like theirs. According to 2 Corinthians 10:12, we should not be among the number who compare ourselves among ourselves, because such people are not wise. Our human nature tends to see the good points (the "plus" points) in others who are more distant from us, and the bad points (the "minus" points) in those who are closer to us. If we keep looking at the minus points, we will have a different outlook in life. Remember that the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence, but keep in mind too that the closer you are to the circumstances, the easier it is to see the faults. A magazine article pointed out what it called "an ideal marriage" between a state governor and his wife. Yet it was only a matter of a few years until their marriage was on the rocks. From a distance the marriage looked successful, but it must not have been quite as great as the writer thought. We need to stop looking around and stop comparing our relationship with that of another husband and wife. We must realize that couples are different. God did not intend that all of us should conduct our homes in the same way, and that we should all like the same things—or He would have made us all over the same carbon copy. Some couples like to be on the go almost all the time, almost every night of the week. Then there are other couples whose nature it is to stay home much of the time. In some homes, the wife is reserved and the husband is outgoing; in others, the wife can not sew and the husband is not a businessman. We must accept the fact that God has made us all different, and then we must concentrate on just being ourselves in the light of Ephesians 5:21 which says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Most of the time we overlook that verse and think only upon the following verses which tell us that husbands should "love" and wives should "submit." But actually, Ephesians 5:22-23 gives the further instructions once we have accepted the point of Ephesians 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." In other words, we should not look at other people, but submit ourselves to each other and work out the marriage relationship which God has ordained for us.

(b) Build an attitude of trust toward your partner

Do you as married partners really trust each other? Can you (the husband) say to your wife: "Am I really worthy of your trust? Do you feel that you will be my 'one and only' forever?" Do you as a husband (or as a wife) enjoy being with your partner more than with anyone else? You will want to be together as much as possible. People today speak very lightly about trust and the high ideal of a solid marriage relationship. Even secular counselors tell us they are finding out that the kind of loose living which is common today simply is not working. It doesn't work because until one is really committed to another person for life, he cannot actually give himself wholeheartedly to that person. Many ask what is wrong with premarital sex and mention that "everybody is doing it," and they argue that no one is going to find out about the relationship anyhow. But you cannot really give yourself physically or emotionally or spiritually until you can trust each other and know that the relationship will last for life. If you are one who thinks that there is not much wrong with premarital sex, it will be difficult for your partner to trust you. If, on the other hand, you count fornication as a wicked sin, your partner can much more readily trust you. If you were loose in your living before your marriage, how can your partner trust you after marriage? When passion wears out, how will your partner know that you will not go out and try some other thrill when you are bored with her? God's Word says we are to confess our faults one to another (James 5:16), and this is good advice for married couples as an aid in building trust. Some might say that "What my partner doesn't know won't hurt him." But we are spiritual beings and not mere physical creatures. We can cover up the past, but there is always the possibility your partner will find it out, and so it is best to confess your misdeeds. This will help build trust and will lead to a happier marriage relationship. When someone says "My partner does not trust me"—one of the first questions I ask is: "What have you done to cause your partner to feel that way?" The partner must not necessarily be blamed. You may be the one to blame if your companion does not trust you. I believe that if we husbands feel our partners do not trust us, then we ought to be a leader and go to the wife and ask what is wrong, and give her the right to tell us why she does not trust us. I also believe that where it says "Husbands love your wives," we have a clear command not only never to commit adultery with someone else, but to love our wives with our body, mind, soul, and spirit. Only then can we have a beautiful marriage relationship. One of the big weaknesses of many husbands is the fact that after marriage, there is a tendency for him to sort of secretly admire someone else. A wife can detect that real quickly. Let each husband abstain from all appearance of evil, and beware of placing ourselves into tempting circumstances—for we are all human, and we can easily fall. I read recently about a couple who were happily married, but another couple with whom they could share closely, became good friends. They were together so much, and in each other's presence so often—it soon came to the place that they were too intimate, and before they realized it, both marriages were wrecked—because the one husband started to admire the other wife more than he did his own wife. Beware of circumstances where you sense you are no longer admiring only your partner, because you will lose your trust, and your marriage could falter.

(c) Diligently try to please your partner

To improve marriage relationships, it is important to try and please your partner. God's Word says that the wife tries to please her husband (1 Corinthians 7:34), and the Christian husband tries to please his wife (1 Corinthians 7:33). Are you really trying to please your married partner, or do you frequently say, "I'll do what I please"? Is your attitude one which says, "If we can't agree, we will each go our own way"? This kind of relationship does not make for a happy marriage bond. The

important question in marriage is not, "How can I have all my needs fulfilled in this marriage—but how much love can I express in meeting the needs of the one I marry?" Love says, "I will give." Immaturity says, "Please me, and I will try to please you." Do you ever do things just to "bug" your partner? Do you ever tease your partner when you know he doesn't like it? There are too many marriages lived out on the "I'll get even" basis. "If you treat me this way, I'll get back in this way." The husband is one hour late for supper, so his wife makes him wait an hour for supper the next night. This kind of action will not work for harmony. One husband might say, "I'm going hunting; I don't care what you say." The wife says she is going shopping and will spend as much money as she wants. This is not the way to please each other as partners. This is the "get even philosophy" and such a marriage is going to be much less than ideal. Instead of living on the "get even" level, try this formula: Try sharing, bearing, working, and changing together. It should be a continuation of courtship days. Husband and wife are different in order to challenge each other, to grow together toward maturity, and not to see who is right or to determine what is right. One of the goals for married partners is to determine how we can best change together for the honor and glory of God.

### 3. FACTORS TO GUARD IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Let me go a little further. It is a sin for married partners to refuse physical relationships for an extended period of time without mutual consent. The Scripture says, "The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise the husband has no power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again that Satan tempt you not in your incontinency" (1 Corinthians 7:4-5). In other words, the wife's body does not belong to her alone, but also to her husband. And in the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone, but also to his wife. We must exercise moderation in the area of physical relationships. It is possible that some couples use what they think is a "holier than thou" approach, and they try to get even with each other (and to get back at the partner) by withholding the sexual privilege. Some marriages are not what they ought to be because people physically are selfish. They want to try to please themselves. They reason this way: "If you don't please me, I'll get even." When a husband by-passes his wife for his physical needs, and has his own private sexual releases, the wife then also turns her physical drive for affection to the love and kisses she receives from the children. It can even lead to affairs with other men. Withholding sexual privilege is not pleasing to God. It is not pleasing to your partner. Your marriage fulfillment will decrease. Married partners also must guard against the danger of not learning to really know each other. Do you know your partner's sorrows, joys, and concerns? Are you aware of what her life goals are? Or don't you talk together about these kinds of things? Sometime ago I was in a home where a wife and husband were members of different church denominations. I asked the husband where his wife attends church services. He mentioned where she normally attended. I asked whether she was a member of that church body. He said he is not sure if she considers herself a member or not. It is really difficult for me to imagine a husband and wife living under the same roof and talking so little about spiritual things. It is a sad fact, but it is true: Very few husbands and wives spend more than a few minutes each week really talking about things that matter. Many fail to have frequent heart-to-heart talks. Husbands and wives should be free to give constructive criticisms to each other, without being considered negative or harsh or critical. The husband should be the leader, but the wife as a

help-meet can be a very wise counselor. God did not make each of us a whole unit. After marriage, each is only a half. It is only when both husband and wife put together their thoughts and concerns that they have a balanced outlook on life. In conclusion, there is no "perfect" marriage. It requires a continual effort. A good marriage relationship requires a day-by-day, week-by-week attempt to keep things in harmony, but it is worth it all. Marriage can be a bit of heaven here upon earth. It is like a garden. You can have a beautiful garden, but you must keep the weeds down. So also in marriage, the devil is looking for marriages in which to sow the fares so that he can wreck the marriage. He hopes to keep it from bearing fruit. By God's grace and help we can keep every weed dug out. The sooner we dig it out, or the sooner we go to a counselor for help, the more quickly we can have that beautiful relationship in Jesus Christ. Because marriage here on earth is never perfect, each marriage needs two little "bears." They are "bear" and "forbear." We are not perfect; we all have weaknesses; we all have idiosyncrasies. A mature Christian does not expect perfection in his mate. To all others, take heed to this illustration: There once was a young wife who after several months of marriage said to her husband, "You know, John, we have been married for a while and I have learned to know you better. I would like to remind you of a few of your faults." He said, "Oh—I know all about my faults. That's the reason I couldn't marry a better woman." Remember that none of us is perfect, but we can be forgiving. To err is human, but to forgive is divine. A good marriage is not one where perfection reigns. A good marriage is a relationship where each partner has taken Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives, and where a healthy understanding, plus the grace of God, can overlook a multitude of unresolvable difficulties.

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## 213. Television and the Christian Home

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### TELEVISION AND THE

CHRISTIAN HOME by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 213 There are significant words in Psalms 101:3. The Psalmist says, "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes."

There are many dangers which threaten the spiritual well-being of believers in these latter times, and perhaps the most serious menace to the Christian life and the Christian home, is the impact of television on its viewers. No one is going to deny that it is a wonderful invention and that some of its programs are educational and instructive, but for the dedicated child of God, the evil effects surely outweigh the seeming advantages.

What is said in this article does not apply to the kinds of closed-circuit TV which are used in some banks, hospitals, and schools for the purposes of efficient communication within the institution. We speak in this message about normal programming as it is presented by the various networks on commercial television. We want to kindly warn those who are tempted to get wrapped up in the snare of television-viewing, that TV can prove a curse if it is brought into your home.

I am increasingly concerned about the impact that television is making on many Christian homes. Of course there is no sin in the instrument itself. There is no sin in the tower on the roof. There is no sin in the table upon which the set stands. The sin lies in seeing the filth, in the tremendous waste of time that occurs, and in the unwholesome attitudes that TV often breeds. Many programs are vulgar and degrading; others are silly and comical and without much real benefit. Occasionally of course there is a bit of useful information—but most of what you see on television is actually a diet of questionable worldliness. It is a blending of violence, comedies, giveaway shows, late movies, news, and sports. Even unsaved people speak of it as "the idiot box" and "the monster in the living room."

It does not take much viewing of programs on television to come to some obvious conclusions about it. A report prepared by the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate says that "crime, violence, brutality, sadism, and eccentric sex on the television screen must be regarded as a major factor contributing to the rising tide of juvenile delinquency all across the land." The Committee found that in just one sixty-minute program, there were thirteen killings—nine by shooting, two by stabbing, one by torture, and one by smothering. This particular show was broadcast early on Christmas evening at a time when ten million children were watching. The Committee reports that other "blood and guts" programs of the same kind can be seen on almost any evening.

One writer described television by saying that "It is almost impossible to watch TV for thirty minutes in our day, without seeing people shot, or punched, or jabbed, or kicked." Teenagers in school tell horrible tales about programs they have seen on television the night before! One disgusted mother wrote the editor of a magazine some time ago and said, "Any honest evaluation of my children's thinking, makes me want to open the window and dump our television set out into

the street for the garbage man to pick up." She says, "If I had the courage to get rid of it, I honestly believe our children would grow up with higher standards of morality." This mother who was not a professing Christian has more common sense than some who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ. At least she admits television is harmful.

There are three simple reasons why I feel compelled to warn against the evils of television.

1. FOR OUR OWN SAKE It is God's desire that each believer should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) It is appalling to sense the ignorance of the Bible evident in the lives of average church members today. We speak not of memorizing twenty-third Psalm, or of repeating the Lord's Prayer, or of knowing John 3:16 but of systematic knowledge about the truths taught in the Scriptures. Spiritual growth is the result of feeding on God's Word, communing with the Lord in prayer, participating in the ordinances of God's house, and engaging in other like activities. If we fritter away time watching TV, there is a tendency to lose our appetite for the Scriptures as well as our desire to pray. I know some people who bought a television set, and later confessed that they either had to get rid of the television or get rid of holiness in their personal lives.

One preacher tells how he bought a low-priced television set simply to watch the news and to get a couple of "good" programs. He says: "Within a few weeks, I could scarcely reach God in prayer; there was no fellowship with Him; no sweetness of His presence. I felt as if God had forsaken me. Six weeks of this was all I could stand; the thing went out, and the blessing of God came back." Jeremiah says, "My eye affecteth my heart" (Lamentations 3:51). We need to be careful about what we see because what we see lets scars on the soul. It affects the heart the inner man.

Television brings a growing indifference toward biblical standards of morality. Things that not too many years ago were shocking, can soon be watched with indifference. Things that would have caused a blush when the set was first purchased can soon be watched without a pang. TV tends to dull the spiritual life. Sin becomes less sinful and "the sweet bye and bye" (the eternal world) becomes less attractive. Television has likely put more believers to sleep than any other influence for evil in our generation. For many years good Christian people have refused to attend night clubs and theaters and wrestling matches. Now these very scenes are brought right into the home and many people have no conscience against it. Many of the shows seen on television are the same shows seen several years before in the movie theater, and in the minds of some, it is all right to bring these things into our homes.

One typical program deals with murder and magnifies gunplay. Another displays nakedness and a wild "love in." Still another deals with a sex relationship between a brother and his own sister in the same same family. More and more programs have one or more bedroom scenes. Some insist that they don't watch those kinds of programs, but that they watch only the good programs. But most of the so-called "good" programs are nothing but a steady flow of this world's foolishness. Even the best programs are usually nothing but mediocre comedies. They are made up of clowning and tricks and fun and excitement and the "fun" morality is no better than the "violent" morality.

Even news programs are often biased. A spokesman before the National Council of the Causes and Prevention of Crime, said, "Far too much emphasis is being given on television programs to the extremists seeking publicity. Television has become an effective weapon to discredit law

enforcement in our country." If there is not enough bad news, the men operating the cameras find ways to manufacture some. They know that people are looking for exciting news, and so they stick the noses of their cameras into every moral garbage pile they can find. They know that the more wretched a news item can become, the more detergent and the more furniture polish it is going to sell!

Religious programs are often debatable in value also. The Gospel is often watered down. The presenters are usually easy-going, confident speakers clad in suede sports coats, and the choral groups adorned with fancy dresses may appeal more to the eye than to the heart.

One advertisement on the side of a city bus said, "Bring the world into your home; tune in to Channel 43." And that's exactly what is being done. The world comes into the home, and then into the heart, and soon there is a shallowness in the spiritual life. The values that "come through" on television are self-centeredness, sensuality, superficiality, and materialism. Rarely are such virtues as kindness, compassion, faith, or meekness extolled. A bit of verse says:

"At first it will shock them, they'll seem in a haze, But soon they'll be hardened, and continue to gaze;

We'll give them some gospel that isn't too strong, And a few sacred songs to string them along.

They'll soon take in the ads, with the latest of fashion, And watch the shows that stir evil passions. The old family altar which once held such charm, Will soon lose its place without much alarm . . . ." The Psalmist says, "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes."

If I believed that television made believers more spiritual and more Christlike, I would urge each Christian family to buy several sets and put them in a couple rooms of the house—but in light of the fact that many programs glamorize vulgarity, sexual misconduct, violence, and disrespect—such a suggestion is unthinkable.

## 2. FOR OUR CHILDREN'S SAKE

If God has blessed you with a family, He wants you to bring up that family in "the nurture and the admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). It is God's will that we should put their salvation above everything else—above their education and recreation and worldly advancement. My wife and I would like to see each one of our six children make it through to Heaven, and thus we deliberately refuse to throw dangers in their pathway.

Most television programs during the hours when children can watch, dramatize violence and foul language and immodesty and silly laughter. Women kill their men for insurance and divorce them for alimony and become interested in other men because of their money. Men stab other men in the back and gag women and tie them to a bedpost and roll cars down over cliffs and attempt murder with a pitchfork. The majority of programs make sin appear attractive and desirable. They desecrate the sacredness of marriage. They put children into a fantasy world of unreality. TV viewing often destroys family relationships, disrupting family meal times, and replacing the family altar with that which is worldly and sinful in direction.

Everyone knows that appeals to the eye make a much more lasting impression than do appeals to the ear. If you think television doesn't make impressions on old and young alike, then you are not

considering seriously the cost of advertising between the hours of 8 P.M. and 11 P.M. each evening on TV. If television influences our buying behavior (and at up to \$100,000.00 per minute, advertisers believe it does), then television also influences our social behavior. And television-taught values can soon undermine clear biblical instruction. Information and values can seep into one's consciousness almost without his knowing it.

Time and time again people commit crimes based on what they saw on television. One of the biographies of John F. Kennedy tells how Lee Harvey Oswald literally went "mad" the night before the alleged murder of Mr. Kennedy. Oswald was watching World War II pictures on television and that is what set him off. In Newcastle, England, some years ago, an eleven-year-old girl was charged and convicted with strangling two small boys just for a thrill. She told a hushed courtroom, at her trial, that she learned to kill by watching TV.

One mother shares this experience. She says, "A week ago we drove by the house where we had lived when our children were smaller." Her six-year-old boy said in a matter-of-fact way (upon seeing the house where they used to live) "When I grow up and get married, I'm going to kill the people who live in that house so I can live in it." When the mother caught her breath (she was shocked) she said, "But John, we don't kill people to get their houses; the proper thing to do is to work and earn more money and buy a house of your own; it is wrong to hurt other people." Johnny said, "That's not the way they do it now on television; they shoot people all the time." The truth is that television does not convey the idea that life is serious and that industry and hard work are virtuous qualities.

One mother told me in her own words how her husband insisted on getting television in their home and sometime later, the girls in their home (angry because of some incident that had happened) actually threw the mother down and stomped on her with their feet. After it was all over they told her they did it like they saw it on television.

Some say, "But we don't allow our children to see everything that appears on television." That may be true. You might be selective and turn off certain undesirable programs, but you are not with your children all the time. They are going to be curious to watch everything that can be seen, and they're going to get away with it sometimes. I have visited more than one home where television had been installed, and the parents told about the church services that could be seen, and the musical concerts, and some of the good programs that are produced but on at least one occasion, when I looked over into the family room, the children were watching a bloody wrestling match where two men were tearing each other to pieces and seeming to want to gouge out each other's eyes. Very frankly, I doubt that television can be controlled. If it is in the home, it is going to be used. An informed man in the field of entertainment says, "Some good parents who understand the influence of television, try to regulate its use. But even the most careful parent soon realizes that complete control of television-viewing is practically impossible to attain." Jesus says in Luke 17:1-2, Woe unto him through whom offenses come; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." If you have television for the accommodation of your family, is it right to expect the preacher to work miracles by calling for him to pray for your children when they go astray?

3. FOR THE LORD'S SAKE The Lord has redeemed us with His own precious blood, and therefore we are not our own, because we have been bought with a price. And God is jealous over our

affections. He is grieved to see the world steal away our hearts. James says, in chapter 4:5, "Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" The Holy Spirit who comes to live in us at the time of conversion, is grieved when we become friendly with the world-system. The Lord says further in Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." What about the programs normally watched on TV? Are any of them ungodly? Are any of them filled with worldly lusts? What about the serials loaded with seduction scenes (a man and woman in bed discussing impotence and frigidity)? Do the majority of TV productions teach sober living? Honest people admit that most television programs are planned by worldly minds and are given over to this world's values. If it is not violence and brutality—it's dancing and jazz music and shameful love scenes, and other worldly attractions. Can you imagine Jesus (the Man of Sorrows), grief-stricken over a lost world, sitting in front of a television set with all its nonsense and wild laughter? Can you picture the Apostle John, who said, "All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father, but of the wild" (1 John 2:16)—can you picture that same Apostle John with his eyes glued on a TV screen?

The following words are taken from a personal letter received from a preacher-friend whose family had had television: 'We've been enjoying a peaceful and wonderful evening together as a family, listening to hymns on records. We consider every hymn a sermon. We have all grown much closer to God since we got rid of our television set a few years ago. We made a great mistake when we thought we could control it, and get only the good programs. There are practically no good programs. We feel that television is one of the devil's major tools, and we have come to despise it. We've asked forgiveness for leading our family astray (for those several years) by this means, and we see evidences of God's healing and pardon' The appeal of this message is a plea to keep our hearts true to Jesus Christ and our homes unspotted from the world.

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BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

P. O. Box 391 Hanover, PA 17331 U.S.A.

## 218. The Power of Modern Idolatry

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### THE POWER OF

MODERN IDOLATRY (1st of the Ten Commandments) by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 218

Nearly 3,500 years ago, God gave the Ten Commandments. The Israelites were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai and Moses had ascended the mountain to receive God's message (Exodus 19:3). The Lord God came down upon the mountain in fire, and then in the midst of thundering and lightning and smoke and an earthquake— He clearly announced what we know as the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are the essence of God's moral law. They are God's rules for life; they are His standards of conduct; they spell out in a very concise way what sin really is. Thus the Ten Commandments are an index by which human beings can discern between what is good and what is evil. Today the Gospel has displaced the Law. We are not under law but under grace. Why then study the Ten Commandments? The Apostle Paul answers the question in Romans 3:31 when he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea we establish the law." Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). The Law is without power to save. It cannot give a right standing with God. But it has a lawful use. It reveals sin and makes sin appear exceedingly sinful. It was given that "every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). As a person looks into these laws (the Ten Commandments), he says, "I am guilty of this and I am guilty of that"—and seeing his guilt—he then says, "I must do something about it." And thus the law becomes a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24) It shows us that we are sinful and that we need the cleansing blood of Jesus. The First Commandment contains a revelation of the being of God. God says, "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3). The First Commandment asserts boldly the reality of God ("I am the Lord"), and that God is a person who is deeply interested in our daily welfare ("I brought you out of the land of Egypt"). In the Bible we have a revelation of who God is. God revealed himself to His people. He says, "I am the Lord thy God." The Hebrew word is "Jehovah," a word that means "eternal" and "self-existent." God says, "I am the supreme, eternal, self-existent God— the giver and sustainer of life." God is the ever acting, eternal I AM—the one who evermore will be, the one who always was, and the one who is now. God is not like human beings who are subject to death. Each generation of human beings appears and then disappears in the past—but God stands beyond the passing of time. He is the eternal I AM. He never ceases to function. Since God is the great eternal, ever-acting I AM, He must become the one object of our worship. Our affection must not be divided between God and someone (or some thing) else. The First Commandment requires that we have a love for God stronger than all other affections. We are to worship no other gods as substitutes for the Lord God Jehovah of the Bible. God must be supreme. He will not permit any rival gods. In other words, the First Commandment is an admonition against idolatry. You shall have no other gods "before" Me (beside Me, in addition to Me). To substitute some person or

some object in the place of God is the essence of idolatry. For some-it is gold; for others— it is fashion; for still others—it is fame, intellect, public opinion, superstition, and a host of other things. To some men, every great power in nature is a god. They see the sun shining and feel its heat, and see it chase the darkness out of the sky every morning, and say, "Surely the sun must be a god." Others make idols of wood and stone fashioned according to the strange imaginations of their unregenerate minds. The god Moloch was an immense fearful looking monster with a huge red mouth. One of the goddesses of the Indians is a huge statue with a necklace of human skulls around her neck. The Greeks had 30,000 gods and goddesses, and then fearing lest they might miss one god, they erected a statue to "the unknown god." In our society idolatry is not so much a matter of making gods of wood and stone. We tend to worship gods of chrome and steel and glass (automobiles, houses, antiques, 31-inch color screens, etc.). Our generation is steeped in idolatry— only it is a respectable idolatry, instead of a heathen idolatry. It is a polished form of idolatry instead of a crude form. The Bible always condemns idolatry. In the Old Testament, Isaiah speaks with laughter about the man who takes a block of wood and with part of it he heats his house; with another part of it he cooks his dinner; and with still another part of the same block of wood he makes a god (Isaiah 44:9-20). In the New Testament we read, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators nor idolaters . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9). The Apostle John says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). Our "idol" is that to which we give our time, our strength, our finances, and our obedience. There are a number of forms of present-day idolatry.

#### 1. ONE CAN MAKE MONEY AND MATERIAL THINGS HIS GOD

A story in one of the McGuffey's Readers tells of a miser who had a secret basement where he had hoarded large sums of silver and gold. He came often to look over the money and to run his bony fingers through the coins—but one day a strong wind blew the door to his secret basement shut. A spring-lock (that could be turned only from the outside) fastened the door. The miser was shut in with his gold and his god. Years later, when the old house was being torn down, some men came across his skeleton stretched out over the silver and gold. He had made money his god and the god had finally destroyed him. One of the most prominent forms of idolatry is preoccupation with material things. Idolatry is not necessarily "having" things, but "preoccupation with" things. Perhaps this material preoccupation is a most common sin at Christmas time. There is not much true worship of Christ in many homes when the Christmas holidays roll around. At no other time of the year does "the love of things" so completely occupy the minds of so many people. Stores become crowded. People go on wild shopping sprees. Merchants say that fully one-fourth of their total sales of watches and sporting goods and music supplies (and a host of other things) are made in the months of November and December. This is just one example of the idolatry that centers around materialism in our generation. Of course, none of us worships a golden calf like Israel did. None of that pagan stuff for us! Forget the calf—but hang on to the gold (or sometimes in our society we call it "that green stuff"). The idol for us can be the automobile that speeds us away from the church services—Or the boat at the lake or the Sunday newspaper or the television set or dozens of other things. Money which is earned honestly and used wisely can bring untold blessing, but when we feel we can buy almost anything we want—we seem to lose something. We lose a sense of gratitude and a sense of dependence upon God. That is why the Lord gave us the principle of stewardship. That is why He says "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

## 2. ONE CAN MAKE HIS FAMILY AND HIS CHILDREN HIS GOD

A few years ago, newspapers across the country carried the heart-breaking story of a 46-year-old man who fatally shot himself in a telephone booth. In his pocket they found a child's crayon drawing. On it was written (in the father's handwriting) "Please let this drawing in my coat pocket; I want it to be buried with me." The drawing was signed in childish print by his little daughter who had perished in a fire that had burned their apartment not too many months before. After her death, the father seemed to have nothing further to live for. He had several plaques erected in memory of the little girl at the school where she had attended. He said, "Maybe in ten or twenty years, someone will see one of these plaques and will wonder who Shirley Lee was, and perhaps they will say, 'Someone must have loved her very dearly.'" Surely we can sympathize with this heart-broken father. Many of us have little girls too. But there is no doubt that he loved his child too much and his God too little. He had made his 9-year-old daughter the center of his existence. He had attached life's meaning and purpose to a flesh-and-blood creature like himself. And every one of us is susceptible to this same kind of idolatry. True—we don't bow down before some repulsive image and worship it, but within each one of us there is a tendency to make something less than God the object of our affections.

## 3. ONE CAN MAKE PLEASURE AND HAVING A GOOD TIME HIS GOD

Paul spoke of those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:4). The American way of life is geared to the idea of pleasure. Maybe it is a sports car or a poker game or a golf course or a corner tavern. Anything that gives a charge; anything that at least temporarily satisfies the cravings for pleasure—these are the things to which many people give themselves. They are convinced that they cannot live without them. Some say, "I'm only going to live once, so I may as well have a good time." The trouble is that pleasures satisfy for only a short time and then the same old empty, hollow feeling comes back. Like the couple who quarreled about riding the merry-go-round— he wanted to ride the vehicle; she didn't. Finally he rode it alone. When it stopped, and he stepped off, she said: "See—you spent the money; you got off where you got on; and you haven't been anywhere!" That's how it is with pleasures. There is of course a place for recreation and leisure, and it is true that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"—but all play and no work can make one an idolater too. Some get enthused about sports and forget everything else. It is not unusual for more than 50,000 people to cram into a stadium and watch a football game on a Sunday afternoon (in just one city). Others get wrapped up in hunting and fishing to the point that more money and time is spent on these ventures than is given to the Lord's work. What is it that claims your affections? What is it to which you have given your time and energies and loyalties?

## 4. ONE CAN MAKE MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION HIS GOD

Superstition is not decreasing in our day of enlightenment and education. Alarmingly enough it is on the increase. Take for example the number 13. Most hotels don't have a thirteenth floor. Major airlines do not have a row of seats on the airplane that is numbered thirteen. Many athletes refuse to wear the number thirteen on their uniforms. Buried somewhere in the spirit of modern man is the old superstition that holds the number thirteen to be a very unlucky number. The dictionary has a name for it—it is called "triskaidecaphobia"—a fear of the number 13. There are many other superstitions that grip human beings today, including strange ideas about four-leaf

clovers, broken mirrors, horseshoes, and even black cats! All of these come under the broad umbrella of superstition and magic. There are thousands of people who cross their fingers, watch their horoscopes, and carry charms in their pockets. Even some astronauts (who supposedly are cool scientific people) carry good-luck charms with them out into space. What is wrong with all this? Underlying the belief in superstition is the suggestion that there are supernatural forces (other than God) at work in one's life. Superstitious beliefs actually imply that God is not in control of all that happens, and thus it is idolatry to hold on to a superstitious belief. Every time we engage in a superstitious action, we dishonor God by denying that He holds the whole world in His hands.

## 5. ONE CAN MAKE SCIENCE AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS HIS GOD

In almost every field of scientific research, tremendous strides have been made within recent years. Science has made some real contributions toward human progress. For example in 1910 an automotive journal advised tourists who planned to make a trip from Chicago to New York by automobile, to prepare adequately, and to take the following equipment:

1.cans of oil 2.plenty of rope 3.a block and tackle 4.a supply of innertubes 5.a coil of copper wire 6.a bottle of kerosene (to remove carbon from cylinders) 7.a varied supply of bolts and nuts 8.a pail for carrying radiator water 9.at least two spark plugs 10.a tire pump 11.a soldering iron 12.a can of grease

Science has made some real contributions in the realm of travel, and likely it is going to accomplish some still greater things in the future. But science has never been able to cope with man's real problem. Science cannot keep men from sinning and from dying. Thus we must not put too much confidence in science and education. As long as people keep on sinning and as long as we keep on dying, science cannot be of permanent help to us. And thus while many people worship man and his accomplishments, the disciple of Jesus Christ must be careful to give credit to God and His greatness. We have mentioned just a few of the present-day gods, each of which can make us an idolater. No list of false gods is ever complete. Men may worship their children, their businesses, their fields; some worship cows, serpents, beetles, and crocodiles. The average worldlyling worships heroes—movie stars, athletes, entertainers, beauty queens, etc. Idolatry has always been a sin that plagued mankind. The forefathers of Abraham worshiped idols. The children of Israel were surrounded by Assyrians and Canaanites and thus were constantly exposed to all kinds of idolatry. In our day millions worship idols of all descriptions—from those who bow down before the sun, moon, and stars—to the more polished forms of idolatry that surround us. Each one of us needs to make an inspection tour of his own life. And we need to throw out any false gods that we may find there. We must ask God for help (like the hymnwriter says): "To break down every idol" and "to cast out every foe." I know that most Bible Helps readers go to church services and say their prayers and give some money to worthwhile causes—but is there something less than God that becomes the center of your affections? The First Commandment says we dare not divide our affections between the true God and some false idol. The First Commandment is still first! "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." If you have come to see the sinfulness and deceitfulness of your heart today; if you realize that apart from the love and mercy of God you can never be saved—then keep in mind that Jesus "tasted death" for every person (Hebrews 2:9); He died for you; He is our only Refuge from the wrath of God; if you have never done it, let Him enter your heart today (Revelation 3:20).

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BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

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## 219. The Bible Doctrine of Nonconformity

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THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF NONCONFORMITY by Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 219 The word "nonconformity" is coined from the words found in Romans 12:2, where we read, "Be not conformed to this world, but by ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." To "conform" means "to be in harmony with" or "to pattern after" and therefore the admonition to be not conformed simply means "do not pattern after" or "do not be in harmony with" this world-system. The child of God is to be separated from the world system. The Bible teaches separation from the world separation from the whole political, commercial, and ecclesiastical system that is trying to make itself happy without God. The average person works for this life only; he prepares for this life only; he lives for this life only. The aims and ambitions of most unsaved people center around the brief time they spend here in this life. The typical citizen desires to acquire some property, to make a name for himself, and to satisfy his physical appetites. A scientist, when asked the question, "Do you believe in a future life beyond the grave?" said, "To tell the truth, I've been so occupied with making myself happy in this life that I have not even had time to think about a future life!" That is the philosophy of the world-system from which the disciple of Jesus Christ is to separate.

The Scriptures are clear on this teaching. The whole tenor of the Bible from beginning to end, indicates that the people of God are to be separate from the pride and vanity and extravagance of this world-system. And we are not only to be separated from the world, but at the same time we are to be dedicated and consecrated and devoted to the service of God. We want to consider the Bible background for the subject of nonconformity, and then we will discuss some of the more practical details. Notice the following Bible passages:

Leviticus 20:24 "I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from other people."

Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

1 John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

James 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." 2 Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." The words in James 4 are very clear. They are God's words. Talk about a worldly Christian; there is no such thing. A person might be worldly, but then he is not a Christian. One may as well talk about a

heavenly devil as to talk about a worldly Christian. "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." The words in 2 Timothy 3:5 are also very clear. Paul could have advised Timothy to be "a good mixer" and "to play ball" with the apostates of his day, but instead, he said, "From such turn away." People today seem to have the idea that we must mingle with and become like the world in order to win them, and yet when a man falls into a deep pit, no one ever dreams of jumping down into the well (alongside him) in order to get him out. Instead, he stays way up at the top, and from there he lets down a ladder of rope and lifts him up.

Each of us believes in God's physical laws of separation. When a quart of milk begins to sour, what do you do? Mix it with a quart of sweet milk so that both will be good? No. You set it aside until it becomes altogether sour. You separate the bad from the good. Or if a man has a sore leg and gangrene sets in, what do the medical experts do? Cut it off. They separate the bad from the good. God has always been a God of separation. He separated light from darkness, good from evil, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the wise from the foolish, and He expects the Christian to be separated from the world system. In addition to all the Bible portions quoted earlier, 1 Corinthians 6:17 serves as a kind of summary statement: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."

We want to note now some practical applications of the Bible doctrine of nonconformity. Worldliness is related to what we say, how we dress, how we spend money, how we drive on the highway, our attitude toward work, our reaction to tragedy and death, etc. It is related to outlook, motives, manner of life, aims, and ideals. However, in this particular message, we want to discuss two much neglected aspects of nonconformity: 1) The Christian and worldly dress. 2) The Christian and worldly amusements.

## 1. THE CHRISTIAN AND WORLDLY DRESS

How should God's people dress? Is there any prescribed way for the Christian to adorn his body? If we approach the New Testament with the idea that we are going to find in it a set of dress regulations with the material and the pattern all described, we are bound for disappointment. It is not there. The Bible lays down great principles on the matter of dress just as it does in many other areas of the Christian life. For example, the Bible does not specifically say that we must stop at a stop sign. Is it wrong not to stop then? And the answer is, "Yes■it is wrong not to stop." It is wrong, not only because we might get caught, but also because there is a principle in the Bible which says that we should obey the state authorities. And they say we shall stop, and therefore in obedience to this divine principle in the Bible, we are to stop. And just so the Word of God does not specifically tell what color clothes to wear, or how long the dress should be, or of what particular material our clothing should be made■but the Bible principle is found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10. The Word of God says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." These are God's words, and if these are the standards for the Christian woman, then surely they should be the standards for the Christian man who is to be the head of the woman.

(a) The wearing of jewelry.

According to the biblical principle just established, the Christian should not wear gold for the sake of decorating his body. And yet there is enough gold in our churches to make a countless number of golden calves. If all the finger rings, ear rings, wedding bands, and other pieces of jewelry displayed on the body ("because everybody does it") were melted together, it would be easy to make many calves like the Israelites made while camped at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Some say, "But can't I keep on wearing jewelry and still be a faithful Christian?" Probably it is best to answer by asking another question; "Can you be a Christian and willfully disobey the Word of God?" Certainly not—and no person who is painted like an Easter egg and decorated like a Christmas tree should ever be brazen enough to call himself Christian.

#### (b) The wearing of modest clothes

According to the principle found in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, dresses that are short, tight-fitting, thin, low-necked, sleeveless, and in any way designed to accentuate the female form—are a disgrace for any Christian woman to wear. Low necks, tight dresses, slit skirts, bare arms, and painted faces may be the order of the day in our society, but God says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel (clothing that properly covers) not with gold, or pearls, or costly array." God doesn't expect our clothes to look like the front cover of the latest fashion magazine. Why must you follow the fashions of the day? Suppose you are peculiar, what of it? It would be a thousand times better to retain your modesty and please God, than to adopt a manner of dress that borders on the immoral. There must be a dividing line between the Christian and the world. The Christian woman wears modest apparel and veils her long hair. The Christian man avoids appearing publicly in shorts; he keeps his shirt on his back; he is careful to see that his whole family guards purity by being modestly attired.

You say, "But no one is going to tell me what kind of clothes to wear." Yet every one of us (consciously or unconsciously) dresses according to someone's pattern. We either get our pattern of dress from the Word of God (as understood by godly men and women), or we get it from the world and worldly-minded people. Whatever fashion decrees, no matter how ridiculous or how immodest it is, that's the goddess that many are worshiping, and this world is dictating what to wear. Never say, "No one is going to tell me what kind of clothes to wear." Someone is telling you—never forget that.

## 2. THE CHRISTIAN AND WORDLY AMUSEMENTS

There is a teaching in many so-called Christian circles today which implies that the Christian life is a jolly affair, and that to follow Jesus is barrels of fun. Many a modern church ought to blow the steeple off its roof and hang up a night-club sign. They have more suppers, parties, and fun-nights—than prayer meetings and Bible studies. The Bible principle on worldly amusements is found in Hebrews 11:24-26. "By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." The Christian faith involves "suffering affliction" and bearing "the reproach of Christ." If you have a popular brand of Christianity, you have the wrong kind! Our Lord talked about the cost of discipleship; too many of us talk about how much fun it is. Within the soul of every person there is an inner longing and a deep quest for peace of mind. The world tries to satisfy this quest which is

common to all men by offering the movies, the dance, television, drugs, smoking, drinking, etc. The child of God does not need the momentary, short-lived satisfaction that this world pretends to offer, for the Bible says of our Lord God, "He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Psalms 107:9).

(a) Hollywood movies

There may be some good Hollywood movies. There is some good food in garbage cans too. The theater page of a local newspaper, however, soon reveals that murder, sex, and the free spending of money are the major themes of Hollywood. The filthier, the dirtier, the more degrading, the most lustful, the more suggestive, the more ungodly a film is the bigger the hit it makes with the American public. It is difficult to imagine a Christian's supporting the filthy, immoral, ungodly pictures which are conceived in the heart of the devil himself. My blood runs cold to even think of a Christian's viewing the hell-soaked immoral stench of Hollywood.

(b) Television

Nearly all the popular movies are later shown on television, and television makes a theater out of your home. The television set is a mechanical device which is neither right nor wrong. It is not wrong because it is new, but some of the filth that is displayed on the screen is definitely wrong. And it is almost impossible to develop controlled viewing habits.

I drove a school bus for a number of years. One evening a little girl about to get off the bus was crying, and declared that she did not want to go home. When asked why she didn't want to go home, she explained: "My parents were watching television last night and one program showed a man crawling out from under a little girl's bed, and killing her. I couldn't sleep all night last night because I thought a man was under my bed and would kill me. I don't want to go home." Friends I'm glad I don't have to stand in those parents' shoes on the Judgment Day. The Bible says it would be better if such parents had a millstone cast around their necks, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea, rather than to offend such a little one.

Television nearly always glorifies impurity as love, pictures murder as entertainment, exalts nakedness and indecency as beauty, shows drinking and gun fights as proper, and assumes that taking God's name in vain is legitimate. It ruins the influence of a Christian, debauches the minds of children, inflames the lust of youth, and hardens the hearts of sinners. And most people admit that the tendency is to slip into more and more careless habits of watching whatever is to be seen.

(c) Dancing

The word "dance" is used many times in the Bible, but only a few times does it compare with the modern dance and then it always condemned. When David danced, he danced alone. He didn't dance all over the streets of Jerusalem in the arms of another man's wife. David leaped and praised God for sheer joy! There was no embracing the opposite sex. He knew nothing of the waltz, the bunny-hug, and the two-step. No person in his right mind will deny that the modern dance with its dim lights and suggestive music is solely for the purpose of getting the sexual thrill that comes from the contact of the bodies of the opposite sex. Anyone who says that youth of both sexes can mingle in close embrace on the dance floor without suffering harm, is a liar, and all of us know that's true. The dance is an incubator which hatches out lust, sin, adultery, fornication,

broken homes, and broken lives.

#### (d) Tobacco

One third of America's smokers are women. The heart of the infant fetus being carried by an expectant mother beats five times faster each minute while the mother is smoking than it does under normal conditions. The University of Virginia says that the nicotine intake of the normal smoker is almost one pound per year. They fed an equivalent amount of nicotine to eight thousand cats, and it killed them all.

Smoking is a dirty, nauseating habit. I would just as soon have another person spit in my tea or hot chocolate or coffee as to have him blow smoke in my face. The smoke goes through the nasal system and the mucous lining of the mouth and throat, and then it is blown into the faces of others. The most tragic result of smoking however, is the effect tobacco has on the smoker's own body. As a Christian, your body is intended to be a temple (a dwelling place) of God, and the Lord says that to defile the temple of God is to ask for destruction (1 Corinthians 3:17).

#### (e) Drugs and drinking

There are many drugs that have been found to be helpful to mankind when used properly. In the hands of trained and skillful doctors, huts, drugs can relieve pain and aid in healing sick bodies. But many in our day have experimented with such things as marijuana, heroin, LSD, and other mind-expanding drugs. These give the temporary feeling of being superior, while at the same time making the drug-user a slave of addiction and tearing him down mentally and physically.

It is no surprise that unsaved people get involved with drugs. Having no faith in God and no respect for God's Word! they are easy prey for the devil. The use of drugs is only one of the tricks Satan uses to enslave people. But because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), we should not allow it to become enslaved by wicked and degrading habits. That rules out habit-forming and mind-expanding drugs for the Christian. It also rules out alcohol as a beverage because that too is addictive. Are you looking for real satisfaction? Turn your life over to Jesus Christ and start living for Him. You will find, as Peter did, ". . . joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8). Dig into your Bible and it will expand your mind. But it will not endanger your mental or physical health. There was a time when I was afraid to live and I was afraid to die. But one day I was invited to accept the peace that Jesus offers. Jesus Christ says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). I accepted and since then, the things of this world have grown strangely dim. There has been a peace in my heart and a joy in my soul such as the things of the world could never supply. Jesus knocks on the door of your heart too. The Bible says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

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## 254. Three Enemies Of The Christian Life

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THREE ENEMIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 254

The Bible teaches that each of us has a number of enemies which will war against us as long as we live. Life here on earth is a battleground. The Christian must be a good soldier. The hymn-writer says, "Sure, I must fight if I would reign; increase my courage Lord. I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by Thy Word." Many who come to Christ are victims of the mistaken notion that salvation marks the end of serious temptation. The fact is that conversion really only marks the beginning of a great spiritual conflict. Before conversion, the devil had full sway in our lives. Satan had things going his way and he did not have to put up a fight. But when we stepped out on the Lord's side, conflict became a major issue. Thus we read in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art called." The Christian life is indeed a warfare. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12 that "we wrestle" against the powers of darkness. It is a tragic distortion of truth when sometimes church leaders and evangelists imply that becoming a Christian leads to a life of ease—and that it is simple and smooth. They imply that to come out on the Lord's side cures everything—one dose and there's no more trouble! And then there are certain brands of preachers who say that to go on fighting and struggling is a sign that one has never had a real experience with the Lord. But notice that in Ephesians 6 the battle is a warfare which you and I have to wage. The grammatical construction of Ephesians 6:10 says, "You be strong," and in Ephesians 6:11, "You put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand." The teaching which says that if you have been trying to fight the battle, you must stop doing so; hand it over to the Lord and all will be well; that kind of teaching is not found in Ephesians 6, nor is it found anywhere in the Bible. You must fight! You must keep on fighting! God's people are pilgrims and strangers here on earth. We are runners in a race; we are sheep in a sheepfold; we are branches of a vine. But also, the Bible says that we are soldiers engaged in a battle against spiritual enemies. The Christian faces three bitter enemies—the world, the flesh, and the devil. All three enemies exert their powerful influence in order to bring us down to defeat.

### 1. THE OUTER ENEMY—THE WORLD

The Scriptures instruct us to "love not the world" (1 John 2:15) and they remind us that to be a friend of the world is to be an "enemy of God" (James 4:4). The "world" is that whole value-system which dominates society, and is contrary to the ways of God. The term "the world" is used in several ways in the Bible. It sometimes speaks of the created world—the rugged mountains, the surging ocean waves, and the beauty of a sunset. Yet these are not in themselves a threat to our spiritual welfare, and thus the created world is not our spiritual enemy. The word "world" is sometimes used to speak of the world of people who make up our society. But God loves the people of the world, and we are exhorted to follow His example. The "world" (which we are not to love) is the man-centered way of life which ignores God, and operates by selfish principles and lives by ungodly standards. The philosophy of the world says that the only important thing is "this life." The principles of the world are force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure. The "world"

(kosmos) is a system of values that comprises a way of life which is exciting and colorful and seductive and sweet and wonderful—and as a result, we are constantly in danger of getting wrapped up in it, and in danger of giving spiritual values second place. The Scripture (1 John 2:16-17) breaks worldliness into three component parts. Worldliness includes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The "lust of the flesh" (sensualism) is a craving for anything that gratifies the senses. There is of course a legitimate satisfaction of bodily needs, but when we glut our senses, it becomes animal-like self-indulgence. When we allow the appetite for food to become excessive; when we permit the exercise of sexual relationships to become illicit—all this is sinful and worldly. The "lust of the eyes" (materialism) is a covetous itching to own what we see. It is the selfish desire that rises when we see things which we really don't need but want. It is the longing to possess, the desire to get, the eagerness to acquire. The "lust of the eyes" is dreaming about that new "something" which we someday hope to get. One writer says it is the undue desire to get things we don't need, and buy them with money we don't have, in order to impress people we don't like. The "pride of life" (egotism) is the desire to enhance one's own prestige and to push ourselves up. It is the hankering to inflate our own reputations. It is an attempt to get the spotlight shining on ourselves. The "pride of life" is putting on an air of "being somebody"—a vain display of who we are—perhaps by the way we talk, or how we dress, or how much money we spend on a wedding, etc. These have been various kinds of worldliness—sensualism, materialism, and egotism. Worldliness is not only dancing and card playing and sharp dressing. It includes those things—but worldliness is the desire to glut our physical appetites (lust of the flesh); the longing to possess more and more material things (lust of the eyes); and the hankering to inflate our own reputations (pride of life). The world exerts its influence on all of us. It would like to dominate our personalities and mold our thoughts. How do we deal with this powerful enemy? The hymnwriter asks a searching question: "Is this vile world a friend to grace, to help us on to God?" And the answer is obviously, "No." Our citizenship is in another world. We are guided by another Spirit. We cannot go arm-in-arm with those who despise the standards of the Bible. How then do we deal with this enemy? There are several responses. a) We must continuously refuse to be guided by the world's standards of right and wrong. The majority of people swim with the tide, and do as others do. We must disassociate ourselves from the value-system of the world, and its preoccupation with pleasure and wealth and power. We must refuse to swim with the tide and follow the crowd. b) We must avoid close, intimate relationships with worldly people. Acquaintance is one thing, but intimate friendship is quite another. To cultivate intimacy with worldly people is dangerous to the soul. Children and youth need to be especially careful about the kinds of friends they choose. c) We must clearly confess Christ on all proper occasions. We must not be ashamed to let others know where we stand. This does not mean that we should blow a trumpet before us, but we must stand firmly for what is right, habitually ready to let the children of this world see that we are guided by principles higher than those that govern society about us. The attitude of God's people should be: "Take the world, but give me Jesus; all earth's joys are but in name; but His love abides forever, through eternal years the same."

## 2. THE INNER FOE—THE FLESH

The "flesh" is our human nature with its natural tendency to sin. The "flesh" is sometimes used in the Bible to speak of "meat." Sometimes it refers to the fabric that covers our bony skeletons (the

skin and tissues and blood of the human body). But here the word "flesh" refers to our fallen self-centered nature (sometimes called "the old man" or "the Adamic nature"). The Bible tells us that we are born with a heart that is inclined to sin, and that this bent to do wrong will be with us through life. A Christian has two natures—the new life which he received when he accepted Christ, and the old sinful nature called "the flesh." The new nature is controlled by the Holy Spirit; the old nature is characterized by sinful desires. When the sinless new nature is placed alongside the depraved old nature with which we were born, there is conflict. Galatians 5:17 describes it very vividly. The "flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other"—and then specific sins of immorality and false worship and hostility are named. Even our most lofty actions are sometimes tainted by selfishness and pride and thus are expressions of the flesh. It is possible to pray in order to impress others with our spirituality. It is possible to give money in order to be applauded for our stewardship. It is possible to witness in order to be praised for our evangelistic zeal. Such activities (if performed out of selfish motives) are of the flesh, and are not pleasing to God. The flesh has a bent toward rejecting authority; it tends to be lazy and slothful; it is quick to develop vengeful thoughts; it is slanted toward the worship of self (our abilities, our strength, our cleverness, our ideas, our good looks). These are fleshly appetites that need to be controlled with the help of the Spirit of God. The flesh nature, in fact, can drag us down into the worst kinds of activities. Animals live by instincts, and the flesh tends to do what our natural instincts would crave. Our English language picks up these ideas. In many English-speaking cultures, a woman who quietly slips around maligning others, is called "catty." A grouchy man is called "an old bear." A shrewd businessman is said to be "foxy." A cowardly person is called a "chicken." No matter how refined we might be, the "flesh" with all its primitive qualities can crop up any time, and almost without thinking, we can find ourselves acting like a mule or a fox or a chicken. The "flesh" also manifests itself in more refined forms. The new man (the new nature in us) knows we should study God's Word, but the old man (the flesh) tries to keep us too busy to do that. The new man knows we should be a peacemaker, but the old man thrives on controversy. The new man knows we should be patient with people and witness to them, but the old nature doesn't care. How do we deal with the inner enemy—the "flesh"? In Romans 7, the Apostle Paul saw himself indwelt by two laws: One delights in the law of God; the other delights to bring him into spiritual defeat. The fact that Paul says, "I delight in the law of God," shows that he is speaking of the period after his conversion, because an unconverted person does not "delight in the law of God" (Romans 7:22). Paul explains in Romans 8, however, that none of us needs to be a constant victim of the power of indwelling sin: a) We must learn to say "No" to the desires of our fallen nature. We read in 1 Peter 2:11, "Abstain from the lusts of the flesh which war against the soul." b) We must continually reckon ourselves dead to sin. And so every time the "flesh" rears its ugly head, we must say (Romans 6:11), "I died to sin; I am not going to let it have power over me." c) We must "walk in the Spirit" and in this way, Galatians 5:16 says we will not "fulfill the lusts of the flesh." To "walk in the Spirit" means that we must deliberately allow the Holy Spirit to rule us. We must consciously submit to His wishes. And we must carefully comply with His will as it is revealed in the Bible.

### 3. THE STUBBORN ADVERSARY—SATAN

Every believing Christian is subjected to the influences of the world from without (the prevailing secular culture). Also, we are subjected to the persuasions of the flesh from within (our twisted

fallen nature). But beyond both these powers, is the devil, seeking to hold us in captivity. Satan is the commander of a large host of demons who are opposed to God, and who are dedicated to the task of defeating those who have accepted the Lord's salvation. The Bible describes him as a deceiver, a liar, a murderer, an accuser, a tempter, a prince, and an evil one. He beguiles and seduces and opposes and deceives and sows tares and hinders and tempts and blasphemes. He is personal; he is intelligent; he is destructive. He has his own synagogue (Revelation 2:9). He has his own gospel (Galatians 1:6). He has his own ministers (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). He has his own doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1). He even has his own communion service (1 Corinthians 10:21). Satan will do all he can to hinder our Christian lives. He is constantly battling for the soul of the sinner as well as for the life of the saint. Satan's attacks do not always come in open and easily observed forms. They are usually subtle and crafty. He is not a monster that carries a pitchfork. He often comes as an angel of light. It would be much more simple to identify and defeat the devil if he would come to us honestly and say, "Good morning sir, I am the devil, and I want to get you involved in something that will bring misery and wretchedness, and in the end will dishonor your Saviour." It would be easy then to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan"—but he doesn't come in such an open way. Satan uses the allurements of the world and the appeal of the flesh (the first two enemies) to try and get us to do what God forbids. One of his techniques is to bring discouragement. He wants us to become downhearted and to lose confidence. He works hard to bring depression and despondency into our lives. At some point along life's pathway, the devil will do his best to implant in your mind the thought that you have been a complete failure. Another scheme Satan uses is to deny truth. He tries to break down the sacredness of marriage, the sanctity of human life, and the absoluteness of moral standards. The devil also seeks to instill complacency. He will keep us from concentration in prayer. He will distract us from the careful study of the Word. He will seek to make us cowards when it comes to witnessing. Furthermore, the design of the devil is to use deceit. He influences teachers of religion to present a mixture of truth and error—so that people become confused, and mixed up, and uncertain. How do we deal with the devil? For one thing, we must take a determined stand against him. James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Then too, we must put on the full set of armor provided for battle. Ephesians 6:14-18 describes the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. And finally, we must persevere in the fight against principalities and powers. Ephesians 6:18 says we should watch "with all perseverance." Some of you have read about the two frogs that fell into a farmer's bucket of cream. They tried over and over again to get out by climbing up the sides of the bucket, but each time they slipped back into the bucket. Finally, one frog said, "We'll never get anywhere doing this; I give up." (He went down into the bucket of cream and drowned). The other frog saw the consequences of giving up, so he decided to keep on trying. Even if he didn't succeed, he would at least go down trying! And so over and over again he tried to climb out with his front legs, and kept kicking away with his back legs. Suddenly he felt something solid! All his kicking had turned some of the cream into a lump of butter—and so he hopped on top of it, and leaped out of the pail. That's persistence! That's sticking to a task! That's not giving up! And that's what Ephesians 6:18 says we must do in the Christian life . . . "Watching . . . with all perseverance and supplication." These then are the three enemies of the Christian life—the world, the flesh, and the devil. We must determine to renounce each of these enemies if we want to please the Lord. We can overcome the world by separating from it. We must refuse to be guided by the world's standards of right and wrong. We can

overcome the flesh by denying it. We must learn to say "No" to the desires of our fallen nature. We can overcome the devil by resisting him. We must take a determined stand against Satan and not give him a foothold in life.

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## 255. Proper Discipline in the Church

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PROPER DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 255

Suppose a member of your local church is living in a state of sexual immorality, or a teacher of one of the Bible study groups is insisting on promoting some kind of heresy in the class—and all this is common knowledge on the part of the members. What should the church do? Should the church say, "Well, we don't want to offend anyone and drive people away; surely it can't be right for us to mind the business of our members and become involved in judging their moral actions"? Or should the local church assume responsibility for maintaining a disciplined membership?

A careful study of Scripture indicates that the church not only has the obligation to proclaim the Word of God, but it also has the responsibility of restricting membership to those whose lives indicate that they are earnestly seeking to obey the Word. The Bible speaks much about the duty of the church to maintain discipline within the Body: Jesus said to His disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18) and that instruction was given in the setting of excommunicating those who refuse "to hear the church." In the Book of Revelation, our Lord commended the church at Ephesus because the congregation there did not tolerate in its midst those who were sinful and apostate: "I know thy works . . . and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not" (Revelation 2:2). In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul speaks about the discipline of one who has been immoral, and says, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:13). It is our responsibility to keep the house of God clean. The neglect of church discipline is not a virtue; it is a vice. A church which fails to discipline its members is committing an act of disobedience, not an act of compassion. Some think it is an act of compassion and of love not to confront a sinning member, but just to let things go. But remember that real agape love is a love that is faithful enough not to give license to sin, nor to let people build false hopes of salvation just because they are members of a church. Thus, in this study, we want to notice the types of discipline, the grounds for discipline, and the dangers of discipline.

### 1. THE TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

There are basically three types of discipline—preventative, formative, and corrective. Preventative discipline is the kind of discipline that takes place before a person becomes a member of the church. The early church did not allow just anyone to become a member of the fellowship. He had to give evidence of penitence and of willing obedience to Christ before he was received. When a person sought membership in the church, his family life was examined to see that he was living in moral purity; his daily occupation was checked out to see that it was acceptable (he was not allowed to keep on working at certain jobs). William Barclay says there was a long list of trades and activities which had to be abandoned before a person was even accepted as a candidate for baptism. (A person was not accepted as a member of the church if he was an actor, a military commander, a sculptor who made heathen idols, a magician, etc.) The church maintained strict

standards that applied upon entering the fellowship■and this was a kind of preventative discipline. Not every "Tom, Dick, and Harry" could easily and quickly get into the church.

Formative discipline speaks of the aspect of discipline which means "to train" or "to instruct." The church is a school where Christians are to be taught in a systematic way the "all things" which our Lord commanded us. The early church baptized members soon after their decision to accept Christ, but systematic teaching was an essential part in receiving new members. After baptism, the new convert had to undergo a three-year instruction period. It is interesting to note that the New Testament ranks "teachers" along with "apostles" and "prophets" (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28). The teacher of God's Word was a valuable person in the early church, and surely churches today should provide many opportunities for carefully teaching its members. The church should be a training center which helps to mold and build up an understanding of basic Bible doctrines. We need in-depth instruction classes (not shallow discussion periods) to nurture God's people. That is part of formative discipline.

Corrective discipline speaks of the kind of discipline directed toward an individual member who openly commits a specific offense. In the early church, those who practiced adultery, and astrology, and used drugs, and those who obtained an abortion■were punished quickly■but attempts were made to do it fairly. The elders cautioned and pleaded and admonished■but if there was no penitence on the part of the offending member■he was excommunicated from the fellowship by the congregation. (1 Corinthians 5:4-5, and the plural "you" in 1 Corinthians 5:12 indicates that the disciplinary action should be decided by the assembled congregation, and not by an individual). Most of what is stated in the paragraphs which follow is related to this kind of corrective discipline.

## 2. THE GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE

Discipline is not to be administered for every infraction or every transgression. None of us can see into the heart of another, and therefore there are certain realms in which it is impossible to discern between the wheat and the tares. But in cases where open and commonly known sin is practiced, the church must take disciplinary action. God alone can judge the inner man- What is inwardly evil, God will judge; what is outwardly evil, the church should judge (1 Corinthians 5:12). And then, God says, concerning the man who was living immorally with his stepmother: "Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:13). Since not every transgression can be disciplined, we want to look at what some grounds for discipline are.

(a) An irreconcilable spirit toward another Christian.

Matthew 18, beginning at verse 15, deals with offenses between brethren. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." And if that does not bring results, take someone along. And if reconciliation still has not come, tell it to the church.

The problem in Matthew 18 is not so much the offense itself, as the irreconcilable spirit sometimes manifested when conflicts arise. My guess is that all of us at some time or other have offended another person in the church. But if someone has been offended■and we are approached about the matter■and refuse to be joined together with the injured brother (using the channels described in Matthew 18)■the church must take action. One who takes an irreconcilable spirit toward

another Christian needs to be disciplined by the church.

(b)Offensive, shocking, and immoral conduct When a member of the congregation openly commits an immoral act, it disgraces the church, and the church suffers a loss of influence in the community. If the one who sins openly, repents publicly, the church should of course graciously and quickly forgive. But if the erring member (after being tactfully confronted) does not confess his fault■expulsion from the local fellowship is the only alternative. The man described in 1 Corinthians 5 was clearly living in sin. His immoral conduct was common knowledge. it was not a mere matter of suspicion and gossip. There was abundant evidence that he was living in an illicit arrangement. He refused to repent or to ask for forgiveness. He was recklessly living on in sin. In such cases, the church is duty-bound to take strict action. The instructions in 1 Corinthians 5:5 say in essence: "Cast this man from the fellowship of the church into the realm of Satan, for the destruction of his lower nature, so that perchance his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." Discipline was to be carried out, not merely to punish, but to awaken; to bring him to his 'senses; to make him see the enormity of his offense.

Some stress that the great theme of our Lord is love, and not condemnation. But remember that true love is so faithful to God that it refuses to give license to sin■and thus the need to discipline those who continue in offensive, open, immoral conduct.

(c)A contentious and a defiant spirit. In Romans 16:17 we are instructed to "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." The church is a body where each member is to live in harmony with the others, and if there are divisive brethren and sisters in the midst of a congregation■those who try to divide the church into separate camps■the church must deal with such persons.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 we are told to "Withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly," and in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 of the same chapter, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him that he may be ashamed." The phrase 'have no company with'■does not mean that we are to refuse to say "Hello," or that we should "spit in his eyes"■but Paul is saying, "Don't mix freely with those who ignore and disobey the Word of God."

Most of the problems with "a defiant spirit" are related to the local congregation and its standards for membership. There are always some who want to be a member of the congregation but do not want to conform to the expectations for its members. The local church does have the right to adopt rules which will help its members conform to the principles taught in the Word of God, and each member of that congregation is obligated to obey. For example: The principle that sisters should be veiled as a sign of submission to man and a sign of authority before God is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. But the Scriptures nowhere tell exactly what kind of veiling to wear. Most Brethren sisters through the years have worn a white gauze veiling. Some groups wear strings on the veiling. The Canadian Mennonites expect sisters to wear a black cloth veiling. Some of the Assemblies of Norway and in Germany practice the wearing of a blue bandanna type of covering for the sisters. Any of these forms (when consistently practiced) can become a recognized sign of authority (1 Corinthians 11:10). The local congregation may spell out which style will meet its needs best, and each member should promise to conform when received into fellowship. The Scriptures everywhere teach obedience to the proper authorities. For example, we are to obey God (Ephesians 5:1), to obey church leaders (Hebrews 13:17), to obey parents (Colossians 3:20),

and to obey magistrates (Titus 3:1). Some say that the church has no right to set up restrictions and guidelines and requirements for its members, unless the matter is spelled out in clear black and white on the pages of the Scriptures. But listen: If we are to obey church overseers only in things expressly mentioned in the Bible then by the same reasoning to obey parents means to obey only in things expressly mentioned in the Bible, and to obey magistrates means to obey only in things that are expressly mentioned in Scripture. In other words, a parent could not tell a child to hang up his clothes, and a magistrate could not command a citizen to stop at a stop sign because these things are not expressly mentioned in the Bible! Yet all of us agree that parents have authority to make rules for their children (even in things not precisely mentioned in the Bible). And we agree that magistrates have authority to make rules for their citizens (even in things not expressly mentioned in the Bible). Just so, the church has the divine authority to establish regulations which are in keeping with Bible principles even though they are not expressly mentioned in the Scriptures. It would be strange indeed if every other social group—the family, the nation, etc.—had the right to set up rules and regulations for its own welfare and only the church could not do so! If dissatisfied members display a divisive, non-cooperative, and defiant spirit toward the church (and its expectations for members), these are proper grounds for corrective discipline.

(d) One who advocates and teaches heresies. The Bible says, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9). Later, in the same epistle, God says through the Apostle Paul, concerning those who failed to teach the blood atonement: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you" (Galatians 5:12). Also, God's word to Titus was, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject" (Titus 3:10). Not every teaching that differs from one's own particular point of view, is heretical, of course. There are a variety of beliefs about the number of dispensations, the use of different translations of the Bible, the need for a local congregation to operate a Christian day school, etc. These are not basic, fundamental teachings which change the essence of the Christian faith. There is a difference between holding a certain point of view about debatable matters, and being fanatically dedicated to teaching error. But when a person is zealously dedicated to teaching error, he must be disfellowshipped from the church. When Elder John Hamme (from North Carolina), in 1794, was teaching universalism (the belief that all persons in the end will be saved), he was eventually excommunicated from the church. See page 333, Durnbaugh, *The Brethren in Colonial America*. If a man is wrong about the basic fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, and is unwilling to be instructed differently, then the wheels of discipline ought to be set in motion.

### 3. THE DANGERS OF DISCIPLINE

Each congregation needs to be a disciplined body. How can a group from any church go out and testify effectively to the redeeming grace of God, and seek to win others to Christ, if there are glaring inconsistencies among the members of the church? Church discipline is necessary. Attempting to keep the church pure and clean is proper— But there are several dangers connected with the practice of discipline.

(a) The danger of going to excesses.

Church discipline has sometimes been abused. In the early history of the state of Virginia, members of some Protestant churches were whipped and put to jail for breaking the church's

rules.. In all our exercise of discipline■we must let love abound and patience prevail and tactfulness dominate our actions. Church discipline must be carried out with tender hearts and with weeping eyes■ and always administered with the hope that the person disciplined will later see his error, and come back into the fold. The intent of all proper church discipline is that temporal punishment might lead to eternal good. In 2 Corinthians 2:6-9 we have good evidence that the man who was disfellowshipped in 1 Corinthians 5, repented of his sin and was restored back into fellowship.

(b)The danger of no discipline at all. In many churches, members can openly cheat and lie and commit all kinds of immorality■and nothing is said about it. The secular world is not impressed by a church whose members are no different from the society around them. So long as the church tolerates sin in the midst and fails to keep the body clean, she will never attract the world to Christ. And then too■if we fail to discipline■we do an injustice to the sinning brother or sister. The erring person may become hardened in his sin, and perish eternally■because he thinks that as long as he is a member of the church, he is okay. Thus, the congregation which maintains a firm but fair discipline, is going to be the local church where God is most effectively at work.

Some will say, "The church is trying to force certain things on me.' Such persons need to be reminded that no one is forced into the church in the first place. All of us voluntarily came into the church We received instructions at the time of baptism. We promised to work with the local congregation. Anyone who says (when discipline is exercised) that the church is trying to force things on him, has acted irresponsibly when he united with the church.

Some people seem to think that church discipline causes nothing but trouble. But that is true only if it is carried out with the wrong attitude. Loving discipline which is tactfully carried out in the church tends to unite the church family; it strengthens the authority of the Word of God; it honors Christ; it challenges the church to new levels of spiritual growth; and it strengthens the testimony of the church to outsiders. Dean Kelley in his book, "Why Conservative Churches Are Growing," says that many groups have high and admirable standards, but when it comes to enforcing them, they lack the will to do so. He says, "It is not necessary to be cruel or harsh about such enforcement, nor to condemn the offender as abhorrent." The offender has simply failed to meet the qualifications determined by the local group, and is therefore no longer a member. Kelley concludes, "It is as simple as that; but it must not be glossed over." This article has not answered all the questions one can ask about church discipline. There are some tough, thorny cases that don't seem to fit into any category, and we simply have to pray for special wisdom from God to deal with the situation. It is our hope, however, that the message here has helped to clarify some of the major aspects related to discipline in the church.

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## 260. The Fallacies of Reincarnation

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THE FALLACIES OF REINCARNATION By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 260

Recent statistics indicate that 23% of the people in the United States of America believe in the concept of reincarnation. Many people today are asking, "What is reincarnation all about?"--and, "Can it be justified or refuted by a careful study of the Bible?" In this issue of Bible Helps we want to look closely at reincarnation. One of the fads that is sweeping the land today is called "The New Age Movement." The New Age Movement is the name given to those who believe that humanity is poised between two ages— an age of ignorance (in the past) and a new age of enlightenment (in the future). One of the chief doctrines of the New Age Movement is that each human being must become strongly aware that he is god. God is not "out there" somewhere. God does not occupy a throne in heaven. God is within every human being. The key phrase of the New Age Movement is "unlimited potential." The major teaching is that "you can be whatever you want to be." People from many backgrounds share the feeling that humanity is at a crossroads, and that the human condition has come to a desperate state. But instead of despair, the New Agers claim that we are on the brink of changes which will transform our society, our behavior, and our very natures. The "buzz words" of the Movement are "global village," "networking," channeling," and holistic." The appeal is to the upper and middle classes of society. The Movement is hard to define. It is a combination of pantheism, Hinduism, and sorcery. It calls for the unity of all religions and the cooperation of all governments. It is a strong force behind the modern peace movements and some of the ecumenical endeavors. One leader of the Movement claims to be the embodiment of a 35,000-year-old man named "Ramtha," who speaks through her as a channel, with the message that man is god, man can achieve whatever he wants, and man can create whatever he needs. New Agers believe in reincarnation, that is, that they previously (before this life) existed in other forms—and that after this life they will exist in yet another more sophisticated form. One movie star thinks he was once a martyr eaten by a lion. Another star is sure she was a prostitute who was later beheaded. Still another thinks he was a monkey in Guatamala in his previous life. The philosophy is this: If we reach our potential as gods, and if we all stick together (harmonic convergence) we can bring about a new age of peace and harmony on the earth. We want to concentrate in this present study however, not so much on the New Age Movement itself, but rather we intend to take a look at one of its chief pillars of faith—the doctrine of reincarnation.

### 1. THE MEANING OF THE TERM REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is the belief that when the body dies, the soul is reborn and passes into another body. The soul may be reborn either as an animal or an insect (taught by reincarnationists in India, Southeast Asia, etc.), or the soul may be reborn as a human being in a higher or lower social standing (as taught by the ancient Hindus and by the newer cults). The process of reincarnation continues (that is, the cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths continues) until the soul has reached a state of perfection and merges back with its source—the all-encompassing god. In each case, the nature of the next reincarnation depends upon the "karma" accumulated by the soul in its previous

incarnation. The word "karma" is closely connected to the idea of reincarnation. The Law of Karma says that every living thing has been given a task (a mission or a function) in life. The task that each person has is his "karma." If a person fulfills his karma properly, he can be reborn to life in a more sophisticated form. If he deals poorly with his karma, the next stage will be in some degraded form. Thus, a woman who does a good job with her task in life can be reborn as a person with great wealth and with greater abilities. But a soldier who does a poor job of being a soldier may be reborn as a homeless peasant. If a person lives a good life, the soul will be born into a higher state (perhaps as a king or a princess). If he leads a bad life, the soul will be born into a lower state (perhaps even into the body of a worm). A leader of the Church Triumphant cult claims that he previously existed as the prophet Samuel, as Joseph the husband of Mary, and as Christopher Columbus. The law of karma states that every action of a person (no matter how small the act) influences how the soul will be reborn in the next reincarnation. The ultimate goal is to deliver the soul from the endless cycle of births and deaths and rebirths. When this happens, the individual achieves liberation and enters a state of fullness and completion. This is called "moksha" or "salvation." Reincarnation is the belief that when the body dies, the soul is reborn, and passes into another body. The teaching about reincarnation denies the reality of death and rules out the possibility of God's judgment (in man's thinking). No judgment follows death. Instead, there is a transition to another (hopefully higher) incarnation. Life begins again, in another body, in another setting.

## 2. ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT REINCARNATION

Those who advocate the teaching about reincarnation have some basic arguments which are given to try and justify the validity of the doctrine. a) They say, "Reincarnation is a fact because it answers the problem of evil and explains why people are born with physical defects. It explains why some are born into wealth or poverty and why there are differences of IQ and personality characteristics. People suffer in this life for the evil they did in past lives, or, they are blessed because of their good performance in a past life." Why is it that some people are "brighter" than others? Why do some people find it much easier to learn facts than others do? How can we explain the fact that one of our good friends is a person who has been "stone deaf" since the day of birth? The Bible does not give clear answers to these questions, but in the Book of Job we learn that God is sovereign and does what He does because He is who He is—and we are simply to trust Him—because He will always do what is for our welfare. If the reincarnationist's law of karma is right, then we should not interfere with nature's handling of suffering. We should not seek to alleviate suffering, for if we do, then the one who suffers will suffer even more in the next life. He is suffering now because of evil deeds or poor performance in the past life, and we should not interfere with that suffering so that his body in the next reincarnation will be on a much higher level. This is why proper medical care for expectant mothers and handicapped people has never been highly developed in countries that embrace the reincarnation teaching on a wide scale. b) Another argument: "Reincarnation must be true, because many people have remembered (through various means) experiences from their past lives." Most of us have the capacity for "intuitive recall." We have a kind of natural ability to recall events from the past. Did you ever imagine that you had certain experiences before? You see, a certain street in a new community for the first time—and you feel certain that you saw that same street before—yet you had never been in the community before. You meet a person you had never met before, and you are almost

certain that you saw that individual before! You eat a meal prepared in a home where you had never been, and you sense that you may have sat at that very same table before! I have. I have seen places, for example, that I was sure I had seen before, yet I had never been near the vicinity previously. We must remember that many places look alike and some people look alike. Much of what was just described in the previous paragraph is the result of imagination at work. And then too we may have seen pictures of people or places, and later met the persons and visited the places, and our minds associate the persons and places with what we had earlier seen in photographs. Reincarnationists insist that such sensations (meeting people, eating meals, seeing places—experiences we are sure we had before)—such sensations, they say, indicate that the individual actually met that person or visited that place—in a past life. In light of our intuitive recall and our vivid imaginations, such conclusions need not be true at all. The argument that reincarnation must be true because some people remember experiences from past lives, has a very shallow base. c) Some advocates say, "Reincarnation is taught in the Bible. Was not John the Baptist a reincarnation of Elijah the prophet, as indicated in Matthew 11:13-14? Jesus said John the Baptist was Elijah." Matthew 11:13-14 says, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." "Elias" is the Greek version of the name "Elijah." In its setting, Jesus in Matthew 11 was praising John the Baptist as a man of God, and said in essence, "This is Elijah who was to come." And in Matthew 17:11-13, Jesus said that Elijah "truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." The explanation for the statements in Matthew 11:13-14 and in Matthew 17:11-13 are found in Luke 1:17, where the angel of the Lord said to Zacharias (the father of John the Baptist): "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." The angel was saying to the father of John the Baptist, that when John grows up, he shall preach repentance and rebuke idolatrous kings just like Elijah did. He was not Elijah, but he ministered "in the spirit and power of Elijah." For example, just as Elijah rebuked King Ahab (1 Kings 21:17-24), so John the Baptist rebuked King Herod (Matthew 14:3-10). John the Baptist was not the ancient prophet Elijah, now inhabiting a new body in this next stage of reincarnation. John the Baptist was a man of God who preached and called people to repentance "in the spirit and power" of Elijah. In fact, Elijah never died, but was translated into heaven without ever tasting death (2 Kings 2:11). Elijah showed himself alive (and undoubtedly in another person's body) on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:30-33). The Levites flatly asked John the Baptist, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And John answered, "I am not." See John 1:21.

### 3. BIBLICAL TEACHING AGAINST REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is the belief that when the body dies, the soul is reborn, and passes into another body. The arguments used to support the teaching about reincarnation are shallow and illogical. In contrast to the arguments made by the reincarnationists to justify their beliefs, the Bible is filled with passages which deal a fatal blow to the whole concept of reincarnation. Note carefully the following Bible passages which may be used to refute the doctrine of reincarnation. 2 Corinthians 5:8: "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The Apostle Paul says that to leave the present body is to be instantly in the presence of

Jesus—not floating around in the realms of the spirit-world, waiting in line for another body to inhabit after this life is over. Acts 7:59: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." While being stoned to death, Stephen beheld Christ waiting for him in glory. This was at the moment of his death. There was no instruction about completing his karma by struggling through further lives. Hebrews 9:27: "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Death is very real, and those who die outside of faith in Jesus Christ, will face the judgment of God. Php 1:21-23: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." The Apostle Paul again speaks positively of death, viewing it as "gain" and longing to be immediately "with Christ." Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Solomon spoke as he was moved by the Spirit of God, and in wisdom he declared that the destination of the human spirit is not another body, but an appearance before God to be judged. 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Every true Christian expects to be like Christ in the resurrection. There is absolutely no hint that any person will ever go through a series of reincarnations. Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." We look forward at death to be joined with Christ and to reign with Him. We will not be living again on earth in a body inhabited one time by another being. John 9:1-3: "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The disciples thought that in the past either the parents or the son had committed some grievous sin, and that the blindness was given as suffering for that sin. Jesus flatly stated that the boy's blindness since birth was in no way associated with either his past conduct nor with the conduct of his parents. God allowed the handicap for the distinct purpose of getting glory for Himself. Reincarnation produces pride among the rich and healthy, and shame among the poor and sickly. It is a convenient tool of the rich upper classes to say that the rich deserve the "good life" and the poor deserve their suffering. It leads to human misery on a massive scale. The Gospel of Jesus Christ makes it clear that Jesus paid the full debt of our sin, and thus cycles of rebirths are unnecessary. When Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He uttered a far reaching truth. "Finished" was the common word (in earlier times) that was stamped on a bill-of-sale when that bill was paid in full. Jesus "paid in full" all that we owed to satisfy divine justice. Thus salvation is now declared a free gift given to all who believe in Christ (Romans 6:23). Christ on the Cross purged us from all our sins. There is no need for anyone to purge himself by his own suffering in life after life after life!! The next time you have the opportunity to speak to a person who believes in reincarnation, tell him that a person does not have to chant and work and dance to please God, but that God loves us and knows that we could never do enough to pay the debt which our sins incurred. That is why God took the initiative and sent Christ to die for us. One who has received Him does not need to hold a cringing fear of death. I pray that God will have mercy on the multitudes who have embraced the concepts of reincarnation, and that each individual who knows Christ will have a new appreciation for his spiritual heritage—the abiding presence of the Lord Jesus, the sure word of prophecy as we have it in the Bible, the truth about heaven and hell, and the assurance that the blood of Christ

"cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

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## 273. The Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

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THE TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 273

Belief in the trinity is one of the distinctive characteristics of the historic Christian faith. The doctrine is a central truth of Biblical revelation. A rejection of belief in the one God who manifests himself in three distinct personalities—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—strikes at the very core of our faith. The obvious teaching of Scripture (as we shall see in this article in BIBLE HELPS) is that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—yet there is only one God. The word "Trinity" may be defined as follows: In the nature of the one God, there are three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each fully God, co-equal and co-eternal. Some doctrines in Scripture cannot be explained adequately by any human being, but they must be accepted by faith simply because God has spoken. We must remember that God is infinitely greater than man, and thus there is much about Him which our searching cannot reveal.

We use and benefit from many things which we cannot completely understand. We cannot understand the radio and television and electricity and computers, and other scientific inventions. We cannot understand how sodium and chlorine (two very deadly poisons) are combined together to make table salt (which is non-poisonous and which is really essential to life). We cannot understand how hydrogen (which is a flammable gas), and oxygen (which supports combustion), can be combined together to make water—and water is used to put out fires! So it is with the concept of the Trinity. However, even though the truth about the Trinity is beyond our reason, it is not contrary to reason. We must not let our inability to understand the truth, cause us to doubt it. The doctrine of the Trinity is not based on superstition nor speculation. It is based upon sound Biblical evidence. The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, but the truth about the Trinity is scattered all across its pages. The Bible positively teaches that God is a trinity in unity. Let us look now at some of the evidences as found within the pages of God's revelation.

### 1. FOREGLEAMS OF THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Although the mystery of the Trinity is not fully explained at any one place in the Scriptures, there is a gradual unfolding of the concept as we read through God's Book. Gleams of the trinitarian truth are evident already on the first pages of the Bible. The Scripture speaks much about the oneness of God. In Deuteronomy 6:4 we read that "The Lord our God is one Lord." In John 17:3, Jesus addresses God the Father, and calls Him "the only true God." In 1 Corinthians 8:5-6, we are told that there are many that are called gods, but to us there is but one God. Yet the Old Testament already gives plenty of evidence that God is a plural being. a) There is the use of "Elohim." The opening sentence of the Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The word translated "God" is the plural "Elohim." The word translated "created" is a singular verb. A plural subject and a singular predicate is an awkward construction. It is like saying (in English), "They is here." Yet the Bible writer uses the plural subject with a singular verb. b) There are plural pronouns. Over and over again, the pronouns "us" and "our" are used when

God speaks. At the time of creation, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26). After the fall of Adam, we read, "Behold, man is become as one of us" (Genesis 3:22). At the call of Isaiah, the question was asked, "Who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8). If God is absolutely one, and not a trinity, then He would ask the question, "Who will go for me?" c) We notice some selected Old Testament passages. In Isaiah 6:3, there is a threefold ascription of praise to God. The text says, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." There is one "holy" for each person of the Godhead. Also in Isaiah 61:1, we read a convincing statement about the Trinity. The Bible says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." The pronoun "me" refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1 at the time when He read from the Scriptures in His home town of Nazareth, and then He said that the Isaiah passage was fulfilled in Him (Luke 4:18-21). And so Isaiah 61:1 speaks of the Spirit, the Lord God, and Jesus Christ. d) The fourth hint at the Trinity (in the Old Testament) is related to the meaning of the word "one." There are two words for "one" in the languages of the Bible. The first word for "one" means "one in an absolute sense." An example is found in Genesis 2:21, where we read that the Creator "took one of his ribs" and made the woman. There was one (and only one) rib that was taken from Adam's side. But in Genesis 2:24, another word for "one" is used. This second word for "one" means "one in a collective sense." Genesis 2:24 says, "and they twain shall be one flesh." The word "one" is a compound unity; there are two persons in a marriage, yet the two persons are a single unit. It is always the latter (compound unity) word that is used in the Bible when speaking of God as "one" God. Thus God is a compound Being, and yet He is a single unit.

2. UNFOLDING THE TRINITARIAN TRUTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT The truth about the Trinity is suggested by the writers of the Old Testament, but it is revealed with greater distinctness and emphasis by our Lord Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament This is consistent with God's pattern of progress in divine revelation. a) The accounts of Christ's birth and His baptism imply the truth of the Trinity. In Luke 1:35-37, already at our Lord's birth, we have a clear testimony of the association of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Verse 37 says, "with God nothing shall be impossible." Verse 35 says, 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'" Verse 35 also says, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." Also in Matthew 3:13-17, at our Lord's baptism, we are told how the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at the very same moment that the Father's benediction came from heaven. And so, at Jesus' birth and at His baptism, we see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working in unity. b) The baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19-20 (the Great Commission) is another step in the unfolding revelation about God. The Commission is a command to make disciples of all nations, and to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The sentence speaks of the threeness of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and also of the oneness of God (the name of each person of the Godhead). We notice too that each Person of the Trinity is co-equal. It would be the worst form of blasphemy, for example, to say, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of Paul." Paul is only a human being; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each persons of the Godhead. Each of the three persons of the Godhead is co-equal. c) We learn more about the Trinity in the New Testament Epistles. The Epistles are filled with the trinitarian concept of God. Time and time again God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit appear as the joint objects of all religious adoration. It will be helpful to look up the following Bible references:

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (Spiritual gifts are administered by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit).

Ephesians 2:13-18 (Prayer is related to all three persons of the Holy Trinity).

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 (Thanksgiving is expressed for the salvation which is accomplished through the Trinity).

Titus 3:4-6 (Salvation again is attributed to each person of the Trinity).

2 Corinthians 13:14 (The benediction is given as an ascription of praise to each person of the Trinity).

Other New Testament writers affirm the Trinity. Notice the words found in Hebrews 2:3-4, Hebrews 6:4-6, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 John 5:4-6, and Revelation 1:4-5. d) Another evidence for the validity of the Trinity lies in the fact that each person of the Trinity is called "God." The Father is God. Romans 1:7 says, "Grace unto you, and peace, from God the Father." The Son is God. Hebrews 1:8 says, "But unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne O God is forever and ever." The Holy Spirit is God. Acts 5:3-4 tells how Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and then concludes with rebuke, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The last chapter of the Bible pictures each person of the Trinity united in the glorious task of redemption. In Revelation 22:18, we see the Father warning. In Revelation 22:16, we see the Son witnessing. In Revelation 22:17, we see the Spirit wooing. And so, in the New Testament, we have many clear evidences of the reality of the Trinity.

### 3. MUTUAL ASSOCIATIONS AMONG PERSONS OF THE TRINITY

Time and time again in the Bible, the Father and Son and Spirit are said to have the same attributes, to do the same work, and they are assigned the same functions.

It is true that each person of the Godhead has a distinct task in God's plan for the human family: God the Father cares for us and loves us with an everlasting love. God the Son redeems us from the penalty of sin by His substitutionary sacrifice. God the Holy Spirit regenerates us and then lives in our bodies. Each person of the Trinity has a distinct focus of operation, yet each is found to act together in perfect unison with the other persons of the Godhead. a) Some mutual attributes are ascribed to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Look first at the attribute (characteristic) of eternity: The Father ■ "even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalms 90:2). The Son ■ "but thou, Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall . . . come forth (one) that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from . . . everlasting" (Micah 5:2). The Holy Spirit ■ "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God . . ." (Hebrews 9:14).

Using this same approach, one can find other attributes assigned to all three persons of the Trinity. The following Scriptures are listed in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit order:

Self existence: Exodus 3:14-15; John 8:58; Genesis 1:2.

Omniscience: Romans 11:33-34; Matthew 9:4; 1 Corinthians 2:11.

Omnipresence: Psalms 139:1-10; Matthew 28:20; Psalms 139:7.

Omnipotence: Psalms 62:11; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Romans 15:19.

Holiness: Revelation 15:4; Acts 3:14; Ephesians 4:30.

Goodness: Romans 2:4; Ephesians 5:25; Nehemiah 9:20.

b)Some mutual works are accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In other words, all three persons of the Trinity are said to be involved in a number of accomplishments. Look first at the promise of presence for ministry: The Father■"not that we are sufficient of ourselves . . . but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). The Son■"and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me" (1 Timothy 1:12). The Holy Spirit■"take heed therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

Using the same approach, one can find other accomplishments which are attributed to all three persons of the Trinity. The following Scriptures are listed in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit order.

Creation: Psalms 102:25; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:2.

Inspiration of the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:21.

Birth of Christ: Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 10:5; Luke 1:35.

Salvation of believers: John 1:13; John 1:12; John 3:5-8.

Death of Christ: Romans 8:32; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:14.

Resurrection of Christ: Acts 2:24; John 2:19; 1 Peter 3:18. c)Some mutual functions are explained in the Bible by relating them to all three persons of the Trinity. For example, we are born of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: The Father■"whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9). The Son■"abide in him (Jesus) . . . for ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:28-29). The Holy Spirit■"except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Using the same approach, one can find other experiences which are related to the activity of each of the persons of the Trinity. We are taught by the Father (John 6:45), by the Son (Matthew 7:29), and by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). We are to know the power of the Father (Ephesians 1:19), of the Son (1 Corinthians 5:4-5), and of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). We are sent by the Father (Romans 10:15), by the Son (John 20:21), and by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4). We are sanctified by the Father (1 Thessalonians 5:23), by the Son (Hebrews 13:12), and by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). d) Some mutual relationships exist between the believer and each person of the Trinity. For example each Christian is "in" each person of the Trinity: The Father■"whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God" (1 John 4:15-16). The Son■"who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

The Holy Spirit -"if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). The Scriptures also reveal that each person of the Trinity "dwells in" the person who is committed to the Gospel of Christ: The Father■"one God and Father of all, who is above all . . . and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6). The Son■"that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17). The Holy Spirit■"know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you . . . and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Surely, in light of all the above attributes, and accomplishments, and close relationships- every true Christian can say, "I am going to appreciate God the Father, and magnify Jesus Christ the Son, and adore God the Holy Spirit.

It would be impossible (without the tri-unity of ( God to understand the great central text of the Bible■John 3:16. It says, "For God (the Father) so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (Jesus), that whosoever believeth in him (through the conviction of the Holy Spirit), should not perish, but have everlasting life." Christianity is from beginning to end, a trinitarian faith. If we deny the Trinity, then Jesus is just another man■and like other men from the past■is a sinner in need of salvation. If we deny the Trinity, then the Holy Spirit is just another name for the energy of God. But every true Christian accepts the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, and sings with enthusiasm the words of the old hymn:

"Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD AL mighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;

Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty God in three Persons Blessed Trinity

In this article, we have only touched the the surface. We have not thoroughly explained the doctrine We accept the teaching even though we cannot fully explain it. God is not just one person, but He is three persons in one Being.

Augustine was walking along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea one day, absorbed in deep contemplation, when he came across a lad who was digging a trench in the sand. The little fellow was carrying water from the edge of the Sea and was pouring it into the trench which he had dug. Augustine asked the lad what he was intending to do, to which the boy replied that he wanted to empty the Sea into the trench! Augustine said to himself, "Why■I'm trying to do the same thing as this child. I'm trying to put the infinity of God within the limits of my own small mind." Certainly none of us wants to worship and serve a God who is so small that we can completely comprehend him with our finite minds.

Remember that man himself is a trinity■composed of spirit, soul, and body. Also, every person is attacked by a trinity■the world around us, the flesh within us, and the devil all about us. Furthermore, human sin can be summarized as a trinity■the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The greatest truth of all is that every person can be saved for eternity by the heavenly Trinity■God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit Titus 3:4-6 says in essence that the love of God appeared, and saved us because of what Jesus Christ our Saviour did, and gave us the joy of having the Holy Spirit then dwell within us.

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## 296. Death and the Life Hereafter

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### DEATH AND THE LIFE

HEREAFTER By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 296

The Russian author Ivan Turgenev describes a lonely village graveyard in a remote part of the north. Among the many neglected grave-sites in the cemetery, there was one that seemed to be untouched by human hands. Only the birds occasionally alighted on the ground. An old iron railing surrounded one particular grave. Two small fir trees were planted at each end of the burial plot. In this grave was buried the body of the brilliant son of a country doctor. Turgenev says that often, from a small nearby village, two feeble older people (the boy's parents), came to visit the grave. They would kneel down at the railing and gaze intently at the stone under which their son's body lay—and there, Turgenev says, they yearned and wept. Scenes like this have occurred all over the world, on all six inhabited continents, and in every generation. These incidents tell of a longing in the hearts of human beings for life beyond the present scene here on earth. When a loved one crosses the border of death, and our hearts and homes are left vacant and lonely, many questions cry out for an answer; Where has our loved one gone? What is he or she doing now? Can those who have died—see us? Are consciousness and memory retained after physical death? Many years ago Job asked one of the most profound questions ever to engage the human mind. Job asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). That is, when a person dies physically, does he still live? If life here on earth is cut off, is that person still alive? Is life after all something more than the present experience of it? Or is the present experience of it all that there is? We all know that life is brief. It only seems like yesterday that I was a boy roaming the fields of our home community with the carefree abandon of childhood. It seems only a short time ago that I sat on my mother's lap and listened to her sing the words of the hymn, "Oh how deep are the riches of grace." Life is like a flower that fades, like grass that withers, and like a shadow that quickly passes. The question comes to all of us: "After life here on earth is over, is that the end of it?" Is my personality, my spirit, and my intelligence destroyed, or do these qualities continue on after physical death? We want to look at the answers to some of these questions as we consider several factors related to the whole concept of immortality.

#### 1. THE CERTAINTY OF LIFE TO COME

We can say with a great deal of confidence that the present span of human life here on earth does not comprise our whole existence. Unlike the beasts of the field that perish, human beings do have an existence after death. The Bible teaches that there is life after death. The patriarchs, the psalmist, the prophets, and the apostles all pointed to the future life. Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. The Apostle Paul writes of a "building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). Even those who reject Christ, and choose to live their lives apart from Him, will experience survival in another world. It is something I would like to explain away, but after studying the Bible for more than forty years, I must conclude that judgment and destruction and everlasting punishment await those who die unsaved. There is

survival in the next world—existence for the just and for the unjust. Eternal life for believers will last forever; the torment of the lost will have the same duration. If a man die, shall he live again? Is he still alive? What happens after death? The materialist says, "Nothing happens." All there is to man is skin and bones and flesh and blood. Where do we go at death? The materialist says that we go nowhere. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust—that is the end of us. The scientist says, "We cannot tell." One scientist says, "Whether we go into life (at the time of death), or into a land of darkness never to return — the scientist cannot tell. Science is organized knowledge, and our scientific knowledge is only accurate about things which we can see." The scientist doesn't know the answer to the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" When Jesus speaks about the life to come, He speaks with certainty. He does not say, "We can't tell" or "We go nowhere." When Jesus was about to be separated from His disciples by death, He said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). I believe in immortality simply because Jesus said that humans continue to live in the world to come. Jesus Christ is our authority. He was with the Father from all eternity. He knows all there is to know about life after death. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life . . . whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). At another place He says the wicked shall go into "everlasting punishment" and the righteous into "life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). And again, Jesus says, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). None of us has ever experienced life beyond the grave, but many of us have a very dear Friend who has experienced life beyond death. His name is Jesus. We simply believe what He has told us.

## 2. UNIVERSAL BELIEF IN THE LIFE TO COME

Every tribe and nation on earth holds to a belief in immortality. There never has been a tribe discovered anywhere, (even among the most primitive people) that did not have a belief in immortality. Men and women everywhere believe in some kind of continuous conscious existence of the soul after death. God impressed this belief into the very natures of Adam and Eve, and all the centuries of sin and wickedness and darkness have not been able to erase it completely from mankind's inner being. The Egyptians who lived along the Nile River placed a boat in the burial chambers of their dead, to help them navigate safely on the great eternal voyage. In the Egyptian Museum today one can see the boats and the grain and the chariots that were buried in the tombs of Egyptian kings. The Greeks placed a silver coin in the mouth of the corpse, to pay the fare across the mystic river. The Native Americans placed a bow and arrow and a small pony in the graves of their departed, so that they might have these resources when they reached what was sometimes called "The Happy Hunting Ground." In parts of Alaska and Greenland, when an Eskimo chief dies, he is provided with a dog to act as a guide in the afterworld. The missionary Mary Slessor came to West Africa many years ago and found that when a tribal chief died, his wives and slaves were put to death too, and buried with him, because they believed that the chief was still alive and that he needed his wives and slaves in the place to which he had gone. The Native Americans, the tribes in Africa, and the occupants of Alaska had no Bible. They never heard of Jesus Christ. No Gospel preacher had ever come their way, and yet every group of people believed in life after death. Even people who lived in dense jungles and were cut off from

all outside contact, have had a universal belief that after death there is life again. And thus the very idea of immortality lies deep-rooted in every human breast, and therefore is an unanswerable argument in favor of the reality of immortality. Just like the mysterious inner voice that calls many of the birds away from the winter and the cold and frost and snow, to a summer climate south of us, so men and women have been endowed with instincts that call them to a fuller life—into a climate which is much more fair than the atmosphere of this world with all its troubles and trials. The idea of immortality is not merely some pleasant human invention; it is a God-given inner compulsion that nothing has ever been able to erase from the inner senses of human beings.

### 3. ERRONEOUS VIEWS ABOUT THE LIFE TO COME

In our day, human curiosity about life after death has brought on a new era of "research" in the area of death and dying. Doctors who specialize in the area of death and dying have conducted experiments with persons whose breathing stopped, but who were later resuscitated. One famous death-and-dying researcher says, "After years of counseling with the dying, I have come to the conclusion that life indeed continues after death." But her view is a distorted view. Her interviews with people who had near-death experiences indicate that often people who were near death had a great sense of peace, or heard pleasant kinds of music, or told about sensations of moving out of their bodies and floating toward the ceiling— looking down on themselves as doctors worked over their bodies on the operating table. They conclude that there is no accountability and no punishment for wrongdoing, but that all people (regardless of belief and behavior) will "make it" after death. Another recent fad related to dying, is the freezing of bodies at the time of death, hoping that at some future time scientists will discover a cure for the disease that brought on the death. The hope is that then the body can be thawed out and restored to life. One of the national news magazines recently gave an update of information on this procedure. It tells about the American Cryonics Society which already has bodies frozen at three storage centers in the United States. The cost for freezing, and possible thawing at some future date, runs as high as \$125,000.00 per body. The latest rage to grip the minds of multitudes concerning life after death, is the belief in reincarnation. Many believe that before this present life, they existed in another form, and that after this life they will again appear in yet another form. One movie star thinks she was a prostitute who was later beheaded. Another actor thinks he was once a monkey in Guatemala during his previous life. Satan has always tried to counterfeit God's truth, and all three of the erroneous concepts which have just been mentioned briefly, are satanic substitutes for the real truth about death. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Those who die out of Christ will suffer torment forever. By way of contrast, those who have lived for Jesus will be ushered into the presence of God to live with Him throughout the eternal ages.

### 4. THE NATURE OF THE LIFE TO COME

For God's children, the best is yet to be! One of the news magazines (more than thirty years ago) carried an article entitled "Look What's Ahead." The writer described life here on earth twenty years hence. He predicted a 30-hour work-week, a 3-hour trip from New York to Paris by jet plane, a radio designed to fit into the palm of one's hand, and a ribbon of highway stretched across the United States from New York to Los Angeles without a single stoplight. These are marvelous achievements of science and engineering— and many of the predictions have already

materialized—but all these pale into the background when compared with the wonders which God has prepared for His people in the world to come. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John pictures Heaven as having trees and fountains and fruits; robes and palms and music; crowns and precious stones; light and friendship and love—and the presence of God the Father and God the Son. Some of these terms may be symbolic, but one thing sure, Heaven will be a perfect place made supremely attractive by the presence of Jesus our Saviour. It is interesting to note too that most of the descriptions of Heaven (in the Bible) tell us not so much what is there, as what is not there. Heaven is described, for example, as a place where there is no more curse (Revelation 22:3). We live in the midst of a world of sinful people. Something happened in the Garden of Eden that blighted the entire human race. There was disobedience and a curse came upon the human family. As a result, there has been wickedness and sin; there have been broken homes, hungry children, and neglected old people. But in Heaven the curse will be removed. Sin will be gone. In Heaven there won't be any drunkards, or locks, or wars, or bloodshed, or prisons. Wickedness will be banished. Heaven is described also as a place where there is no more pain (Revelation 21:4). There will be no need for aspirin tablets, or cold pills, and Band Aids, and crutches, and heating pads, and Vitamin-C tablets. Aches and pains and sore throats and other forms of distress will be gone forever. The words "heart disease" and "bone cancer" and "brain tumors" will not be in the vocabulary of Heaven. There won't be any crippled people. Every person will be healthy and well and strong. Heaven is described as a place where there is no more night (Revelation 22:5). Night is often a symbol of danger and sorrow and weariness. Most crimes are committed during the night-time hours. Those who are sick often have the highest fevers at night. In ancient times, the enemy usually made an attack during the night. But over in Heaven there won't be any night because God himself will be there, and His radiant glory will light the City at all times. There won't be any need for sleep because the element of toil will be eliminated. It is not that there won't be anything to do in Heaven. There will be lots of activity. Some will be engaged in worship; some will have authority over "ten cities;" others will sit on thrones; some will judge angels. Heaven will involve labor and excitement and adventure—but the elements of frustration and boredom and toil will be gone. Heaven is described further as a place where there is no more death (Revelation 21:4). As soon as a child is born he begins the pilgrimage toward the grave. In the circle of every family—a mother, or a wife, or a husband, or a son, or a friend—has been taken by death. Every home has its vacant chair. But in Heaven, death will be swallowed up in victory. Death will be a thing of the past. Human vocabulary is simply not capable of adequately describing what God has prepared for those who love Him. The Queen of Sheba had heard of the fame and riches of Solomon, and she was skeptical, but after she had actually seen it all—she had to confess, "Behold, the half was not told me" (1 Kings 10:7). Such will be our confession when we see the King in His beauty, and when we behold the splendor of the heavenly City.

## 5. PREPARATION FOR THE LIFE TO COME

How would you want to spend your time if you knew that tomorrow would be your last day on earth? Death does not end it all. There is more to come, and thus we need to prepare in this life so that when we come to the moment of death, we will have nothing to do but to die. Someone said to John Wesley one time, "Mr. Wesley, if you knew that you would die at 12 o'clock tomorrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?" Mr. Wesley said, "I would spend it just as I intend to spend it; I would preach tonight at Gloucester, and again tomorrow evening. Then I would go to

my friend's house after the service, as he expects me. I would converse and pray with the family, retire to my room about 10 o'clock, commend my life into the hands of my heavenly Father, lie down to sleep, and wake up in glory." Surely many of us could repeat the words of the Bible, where we read, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Numbers 23:10). But one who expects to die the death of the righteous is going to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and is going to renounce Satan with all his pernicious ways, and is going to covenant with God (in Christian baptism) to be a faithful servant of His until death. There are just two ways to die: We can die like a Christian or we can die like a sinner; we can die in Christ or we can die out of Christ; we can die in peace or we can die in torment. It would be a tragedy for any reader of this pamphlet to come to the end of life without Christ, and discover that there will never be another chance. It is that very fact that makes dying so bitter for many folks. My prayer is that not one reader will be among those who are unprepared for death.

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## 310. Bible Hints on Child Training

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BIBLE HINTS ON CHILD TRAINING By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 310

All of us have come in contact with children at some time or another, and we know that a child is a most valuable possession. If a group of people are out in a wooded area exploring its beauty, and a child strays from the party of people and gets lost, immediately they spread out over the hillside and search every spot hoping to find the child. The beauty of the woods doesn't seem so impressive any more. All attention now is focused on the search for a blue-eyed little girl—maybe less than two years old, and perhaps weighing less than thirty pounds. But even though she is young, and still only very small—she is much more precious than all the vast bulk of mountain that was being admired only a few minutes before. The little girl is a human being. She can love and laugh and cry. She can sing and speak and pray. The mountain can't do those things. The child is a living soul, and therefore is a very precious possession. Good homes don't just happen. They are the result of some careful planning and thought and discipline and prayer. It doesn't matter whether our house is a cabin on a hill, a cottage by the roadside, a farmhouse in the middle of an open field, or a mansion on the boulevard—it can either be a bit of heaven on earth or a bit of hell within four walls. It all depends on how faithfully we discharge our obligations. The Christian home is intended to be far more than a boarding house with a lunch counter. It is to be more than a place to eat, sleep, and grumble, and take a bath a couple times a week. It is more than a filling station for the day and a parking place for the night. Your home is intended to become headquarters for the spiritual training of your children. There are at least three elements involved in the training of children, and the first of these is the need for diligent teaching.

### 1. DILIGENT TEACHING

The families of Israel were commanded to teach the Word of God daily in their homes. The Bible says, "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). This teaching is not to be an occasional or a sporadic thing. It is something to which we must give constant attention. There are many concepts related to diligent teaching. a) Start very early.

Half of all growth in human intelligence takes place between the ages of one and four. During these early years, habits are formed and basic rules of life are learned. If you can't make a five-year-old pick up his toys, you probably will not be able to control him when he is fifteen. There is a critical period during the first five or six years of a child's life, when he can be taught proper attitudes, and if you miss the opportunity of those years, his openness to receiving instruction will likely never return. While there may be hope for a straying teenager through much persistence and prayer, it is much better to instill proper values into children at an early age. b) Teach with love.

The instruction of the Bible is, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:21). This is an admonition against constantly nagging. Parents must

discipline children, but parents must guard against nagging at children continually, lest they be made to feel they can't ever do anything right. The duty of the parent is not only to discipline, but also to bring encouragement. It is helpful to praise the child for a task well done whenever you can. Commend your daughter by saying, "You did a good job cleaning your room this morning." Or, say to your school-age son, "Your handwriting on that language paper was really well done." Most of us will bend over backwards to please someone who praises our efforts; we feel defeated in the presence of those who are frequently critical of us. Another way to show children that we love them is to spend time with them. Don't merely do things for your children; do things with them. One father said, after spending an evening playing softball with his children and with a few of the neighbor children (his muscles were aching and his back was sore), "I would sooner have a backache tonight than a heartache later on." That man was a wise father. Thousands of children get everything they want except their parents' time and attention. Don't pity the child who doesn't have a new bicycle, or whose parents cannot afford an encyclopedia. Rather, pity the child whose parents don't take time for a family picnic, or a walk in the woods, or a day at the zoo. Parents should have a regular play-time and a story-time with their children. Cultivate the art of spending time with your family.

#### C) Teach a knowledge of the Bible.

Training in the home is constantly taking place. Informally, everything we say, and how we say it; everything we do; everything we leave undone—all these things are teaching our children. Formally, one of the ways to teach our children in a planned and structured way, is to conduct brief regular daily family worship periods. Some of the most cherished memories of my childhood are the memories of those times when my parents would call us children together, and my father would get his Bible and read from its pages, and then we would kneel together for a brief period of prayer. This little worship period only lasted five or six minutes, but it was diligently observed every day. In too many homes, the things of the Lord are almost completely ignored during the week, even though the family may faithfully attend church services every Sunday. Parents must take time in the home to memorize Scriptures together, and to read good books to the children—and in this way plant a knowledge of the Bible (and of other wholesome literature) in the minds of children. We found that memorizing Scriptures was made easier by choosing verses that begin with consecutive letters of the alphabet. For example, for the letter "a" one can use Proverbs 15:1 ("A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger"), and for the letter "b" you can choose to memorize Ephesians 4:32, ("Be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"), etc. Write the verses on a large piece of cardboard and go over the verses while gathered around the table for the evening meal. Place them on small 3x5 cards and let each child have his own collection of memorized Bible verses. Small children like to collect stones and bugs and leaves; why not encourage them to have their own collection of memorized Bible verses? d) Teach children immediate obedience.

Obedience is the cornerstone of a child's future character. When you ask that something be done, there should be no questioning, no disputing, no answering back, no delays. When you give a command, let your children plainly see that it is going to be done—and if it is not done there will be immediate punishment. When mother and dad say something, that is the way it is going to be. Or, do your children know that you will repeat the command several times more if they don't respond? It is just as easy to teach a very young child to obey the first time as it is to get him to obey when

told the ninth time—but you have to punish immediately, every time, if a child disobeys. Some years ago one mother told her pastor this story, and all the while she seemed amused about the whole thing. She said, "Preacher, I have a six-year-old son, and you know, a funny thing happened the other day. He was out in the yard playing. I had his lunch ready; I had it nice and warm; and then I went out and called him and told him to come on in and eat his lunch." "But," she said, "He never paid a bit of attention to me. I had to heat his lunch all over again. I warmed it a second time, and I called him again. I had to warm his lunch three times before he finally came in to eat." The preacher said, "Lady, it doesn't take long to diagnose your case; you warmed the wrong thing. If you had warmed the right thing it would not have taken long for that boy and his lunch to get together." One of the reasons why children should not be rotated from one baby-sitter to another, is because there is usually no consistency with the discipline. Mothers of small children should be at home and constantly be on the alert to see that the child obeys immediately. e) Teach children habits of work.

Every child needs a planned routine of play and rest and work. They need jobs that are suited according to their ages and abilities. Girls should be taught household duties and there are plenty of chores that boys can do. From an early age, children can be taught to "make their own beds," and sweep up crumbs after a meal. There is nothing that challenges a young person more than to be given a responsibility. Assigned duties teaches children that they are expected to take a job and to do it well. To fail to teach our children the necessity of working, and to fail to assign them appropriate duties, is cruelty and not affection. Teach your children to work and let them know that money is not something that can be had for nothing. Training children then involves diligent teaching. Begin early, do it with love, teach obedience, teach the Bible, teach habits of work.

## 2. GOOD EXAMPLE

Another element involved in the proper training of children is good example. Instruction and teaching will not profit much unless it is backed up by the good example of our own lives. Titus 2:7 says that we should in all things show ourselves "a pattern of good works." A "pattern" is a model or guide for making things. We must live so that we can without embarrassment ask our children to follow in the same path. If a parent consistently drives an automobile over the speed limit, it is going to be hard to teach a child to respect the authorities of the government. Parents who divorce and remarry are going to have a hard time persuading a child "not to break his word." A man who takes God's name in vain is going to have a difficult time convincing his son not to swear. Parents are going to have to live it if they expect their children to live it. Our children see our ways and they observe our behavior, and what they see has a much stronger affect on their minds than what they are told. They know whether or not we are phonies. They are better observers of human behavior than we think they are. If you pray often you will soon find your child imitating your prayers. If you attend church services on a regular basis, and without always being critical of the church, you can expect your children to follow in attending church. If you gossip, your children will likely gossip too. When your child grows up, he is going to be pretty much like you. Children are great imitators. That is why English children have an English accent, and Scottish children have a Scottish accent, and in the United States, southern children have a southern accent. Children learn from listening to their mothers and dads, and they try to imitate them. Most children would like to be the man or the woman their father and mother are.

There are little eyes upon you, And they're watching night and day;

There are little ears that quickly Take in every word you say.

You're the little fellow's idol, You're the wisest of the wise; In his little mind—about you No suspicions ever rise.

You are setting an example, Every day, in all that you do, To the little boy who is waiting To grow up and become like you.

The task of training children involves not only teaching and instruction, but also the setting of a good example.

### 3. CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE

A third element of training children involves consistent discipline. Teaching and example are not enough. There must be punishment for wrongdoing. The child is born with a sinful nature. Every child is prone to evil and almost constantly stands in need of teaching and correction. There is no one method of punishment that is always the best method. The natures of children are so different that what might be a punishment for one, turns out to be no punishment at all for another. But we must certainly disagree with the modern notion that no child ought ever be spanked. Some parents use bodily correction far too often, and far too viciously—but a good spanking not done in heated anger is still the best way to clear up a bitter attitude on the part of a rebellious child. The Bible advocates firm discipline, and certainly the instruction is proper in Proverbs 19:18, when it says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope (while he is small), and let not thy soul spare for his crying." And we are instructed further in Proverbs 13:24 with the words, "He that spares the rod hates his son, but he that loves him chastens him betimes (often)." A child who learns respect for authority in the home will more quickly learn to respect the authority of God, and will more likely have proper respect for the authority of the state. One teacher, teaching in a midwestern town, had two brilliant but unruly young fellows in her school classroom. The one was the son of a coal miner; the other, the son of a local politician. She took as much as she could from the unruly pair of boys, but one day she gave them both a good paddling. She says, "The coal miner father sent me a note the next day saying that I had done a good thing." She continues, "The other boy boasted that his dad would see to it that I didn't come back again the next year." The teacher had taught in the school system for twelve years, but the next year her contract was not renewed. She says, to make a long story short, "The coal miner's son later became a Senator in his home state; the politician's son (at the time of her writing) was serving a life-term in a federal penitentiary." The Bible says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). A child should not be given a spanking for everything. For example, if Walter is acting silly in the kitchen and he breaks an expensive dish, or he lets his dad's best saw out in the rain this is often childish irresponsibility and it should be handled as such. Children don't act and think like adults. Children at different age levels have differing characteristics. The Apostle Paul says, "When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child" (1 Corinthians 13:11). There are childish ways of thinking, speaking, and reasoning—and parents must recognize this. Depending on his age and maturity, perhaps Walter should be made to pay for the loss, but a spanking should be reserved for these times when the child defiantly says, "No I won't" or "You keep quiet" or when he deliberately does something that he has been clearly told not to do. If you

have spanked in heated anger, or if you acted far too quickly, the best thing to do is to go to the child and apologize. Children will respect the authority of parents who are willing to admit that they have made mistakes. There are several facts about using the paddle that need to be said. 1) God has an ideal place prepared for spanking children. If they are spanked on the bottom, then is not much danger of permanent damage. For example , it is a real mistake to slap a child around the head. 2) It is a mistake to punish a child if he does not know why he is being punished, or if he has not been warned in advance that certain actions will cause him to be spanked. 3) Never threaten a child with a spanking unless you mean it and fully intend to give him that spanking if he goes ahead and disobeys. (Children will usually test you out; they want to trust you; but if you make threats and then don't carry them out, they are confused.) And please remember that Biblical spanking is not the same as social child abuse. Biblical spanking is done with firmness, but always with careful moderation. The parent who disciplines a child the Biblical way will never injure or cause permanent damage to the child. Some parents say that their children are so stubborn that it just doesn't do any good to spank them. . I dot 't believe it I don't in believe there is a boy or girl anywhere that cannot be influenced by a good sound spanking—if the parents begin early enough, it tiny are reasonable with their demands, and if mother and dad stand together and agree that the punishment should be given. If you never punish your children you are doing them a grievous wrong. Good, firm, consistent discipline in your home will help your child repent sooner, behave better, live happier, and perhaps be delivered from Hell forever When a little child pits his small hand into yours—it might be smeared with chocolate ice cream; it might be grimy from petting a dog; the finger might be wrapped with a band aid. But the most important thing about those little hands is that they are the hands of the future. Those hands will someday either hold a Bible or else a deadly weapon. Those hands will either lead in church singing or spin a gambling wheel. Those hands will either dress a wound as a nurse in a hospital, or tremble because they are controlled by an alcoholic mind. Thinking of a little child in these terms should challenge Christian parents to be as completely dedicated as possible to the task of training their children for God's glory. No sincere father or mother can look upon a child with all of his potential for sin and for going astray, and not tremble at the great responsibility. There is a little prayer that should express the sincere desire of every true parent's heart. It says, "Oh God, great Father, Lord and King, our children unto Thee we bring; guide their feet in holy ways; shine on them through darkest days. Uphold them until life be past, and bring them safely into Heaven at last." If you are a younger person who has read this article, and you have never without reservation turned over your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. and have never set out to live by the standards of God's Word—you need to be reminded that the greatest thing in life that any young person can do is to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. Give your heart to Jesus, while you are tender in years, before the winter of life sets in and your heart becomes cold and unproductive. Don't go out into life alone. Take Jesus Christ with you. You will need Him as you face the trials of life.

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## 318. The Christian and Halloween

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The Christian and Halloween By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 318

Christmas has become a "winter holiday" and Easter is more and more being called the "spring break." Halloween, however, is increasingly becoming the number one annual festival in some parts of the world. And in our day, many well-meaning church people are looking at Halloween as just another harmless activity. Every year as the final days of October creep upon us, many Christians are caught up in the observance of a man-made tradition known as Halloween. (Many of these same people vehemently oppose traditions observed by the church even if they are clearly based on biblical principles.) Multitudes of parents in our churches enter into the Halloween season with a serious sense of obligation, and seem to think that they must have their families participate in an observance of the special day—lest they become earmarked as odd or different. In recent years, there have been Halloween parades and Halloween parties. Judges award prizes for the ugliest faces and the most bizarre outfits. Costume shops do 25% of their business at Halloween. Innocent fun, ugly pranks, and horrible screams are all part of the Halloween celebrations. Ghosts and skeletons decorate everything from discount store windows to public school bulletin boards. Of all the worldly holidays that are celebrated by our society, Halloween is the most openly anti-christ. There is no question about its satanic origin. The Druids, a pagan priestly cult group among the ancient Celts in northern Europe, celebrated October 31 as a holiday long before the Christian era. They engaged in lots of merry-making activities to herald the "Festival of Samhain." The World Book Encyclopedia says that "the Festival of Samhain is probably the source of the present-day Halloween celebration." The Druids believed that Samhain was the Lord of Death who gathered all condemned souls together, and commanded each to enter the body of an assigned animal for the coming year. First, however, they were granted one night of general amnesty to scatter and pillage the world at will. Halloween has, for many, been considered an evening of harmless fun, but sincere Christians are more and more beginning to question its history, nature, and influence. The renewed interest in Satanism and witchcraft in our day, and their association with Halloween, has caused some Christians to wonder whether they should participate in it at all. Yet many churches see no harm in it and participate fully with costume parties, Halloween decorations, and trick-or-treat activities. What is wrong with Halloween? Is anything right about it? What should be the attitude of a conscientious Christian toward it? Is Halloween a harmless observance, or is it a dangerous practice?

### 1. HALLOWEEN IS ROOTED IN PAGANISM AND THE OCCULT

The origin of Halloween goes back more than two thousand years to a time before the days of Christ, to the practice of the ancient Druids in the area which later became known as Britain, France, and Germany. The celebration honored their god Samhain (lord of the dead). The ancient Celtic sorcerers considered November 1 as being the day of death because it was the end of autumn and the beginning of winter for them. The celebration marked the beginning of the season of cold and darkness and decay. The time of falling leaves seemed to be the proper time to

celebrate death, which is what Halloween was to them—a celebration of death—honoring the god of the dead. The Druids believed that on the evening before November 1, the spirits of the dead returned to their former homes to visit the living. If the living did not provide food for the evil spirits, all kinds of terrible things would happen to those living in the community. Much of the symbolism and terror associated with Halloween is related to the fact that most people fear death. One movie actor said some time ago, "My hair stands on end when I get awake in the middle of the night and think that some day I must die." The thing that frightens people more than anything else is death. Yet the Christian believes the message of the Bible which says that Jesus came into the world for a number of reasons and one of those reasons was to "destroy him that had the lie, the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). The devil promotes sin and rebellion, and these things lead to death but the Bible (in Hebrews 2:14-15) assures us that when Jesus died on the Cross, He delivered us from the bondage and fear of death. When people today dress up as the dead, and knock on doors, and say "Trick or treat," they are following the tradition of the ancient Druids. (Before Christianity was introduced to the countries of northern Europe, the celebration of death was not called "Halloween." It was a celebration honoring the pagan god of the dead, but over the years it was observed by church folks as the eve before an especially hallowed day. The church had instituted a holy evening called "All Hallows Eve," designated as such to honor the saints of church history. Most historians believe that October 31 was eventually designated as the date for "All Saints Eve" in order to counteract the pagan influences of the celebration of death which was observed by the pagan people of the various European communities.) Today Halloween is largely a secular holiday which becomes an excuse to get dressed up in silly uniforms, and to have spooky parties. True followers of witchcraft however, still preserve the early pagan beliefs and consider Halloween a sacred time to invoke the help of Satan in performing their dark trade. A visit to Salem, Massachusetts on Halloween night will confirm the seriousness with which witches and leaders of the occult take the holiday. Each year several dozen events are planned for the expected crowd of many thousands of visitors who come to the city during the Halloween season. And so, even though Halloween has become prominent in America only during the last several generations, its origins are ancient, and its associations with witchcraft and sorcery are very real.

## 2. HALLOWEEN GLORIFIES SATAN AND WITCHCRAFT

Halloween is filled with darkness and paganism, and it is saturated with the influences of Satan. Satan is a very real person. Jesus used personal pronouns when referring to Satan (John 8:44). To accomplish his purposes, Satan uses many "devices" (2 Corinthians 2:11). He has his own synagogue (Revelation 2:9); his own gospel (Galatians 1:6-9); his own ministers (2 Corinthians 11:14-15); his own doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1); and his own communion service (1 Corinthians 10:20-21). Halloween is not just a fun day. For witches and worshipers of Satan, Halloween is serious business. Halloween is a time when Satan makes light of his own operations. He presents himself as a hoodlum—a kind of cartoon character rather than who he is—the real arch-enemy of God. Witchcraft today embraces dozens of unbiblical beliefs and practices, and has many thousands of adherents. The Old Testament and the New Testament both make repeated references to the practice of witchcraft, and God always condemns all such practices. Note the following references: "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:31). "They . . . used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord . . . therefore the Lord was

very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight" (2 Kings 17:17-18). "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). The initiation rites for those involved in witchcraft and the worship of Satan are indeed very gruesome. Two girls described their experience. They had to go to a graveyard in the dead of night, step on and walk across a large wooden cross, and renounce any belief in Christ; and they had to drink the blood of animals that had been skinned alive. Surely these are loathsome anti-Christian activities. Halloween is the chief holiday of Satanists, and those who practice witchcraft. To participate in the celebration of the pagan festival called Halloween, is to give an open invitation to the forces of Satan to gain more influence on our lives. There is a note of caution which we need to consider at this point. While Satan is indeed very real, it is important to remember that we are not to become preoccupied with the study of Satan and demons. Some people seem to think that every negative experience, every illness, and every problem is the work of the devil in our lives. They see a demon "behind every tree." As we observe calamity and suffering in our own lives, and in the lives of those around us, we must keep in mind that we live in a fallen world, and that good behavior is not always rewarded and bad behavior is not always punished. God allowed the good man Job to suffer for no apparent reason. Sin has twisted justice and made our world unpredictable and ugly. God is still in control—even over Satan and his multitude of helpers.

### 3. HALLOWEEN CLEARLY HAS THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL

One of the wholesome principles which God's people are to carefully observe, is expressed in the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

All the symbols of Halloween are evil. Note briefly each of the following symbols:

Jack-o'-lanterns—were originally carved images of demonic beings and thus have been in league with Halloween celebrations. The carved out pumpkin was lighted with a candle to scare off ghosts and witches and goblins and other supernatural forces wandering around on "the night of the dead."

Black cats—have long been associated with witchcraft and miscellaneous superstitions related to sorcery and Satanism. Ancients believed that black cats had once been humans who had changed into animals because of evil deeds which they had committed.

Bats and owls—have been related to Halloween since early times. The pagan Celts believed that bats and owls were able to communicate with the dead.

Skeletons, skulls, and corpses—belong to Halloween because it is really a festival celebrating death.

Trick-or-treating—is nothing less than extortion. The concept of "You either give me a treat, or I'll play a trick on you" is hardly in keeping with the integrity and second-mile honesty which Jesus taught. (Historically, food and drink were often left on outside porches in the hope of appeasing the demonic night creatures who were roaming around seeking shelter. Mischievous children capitalized on this practice, and disguised themselves with a costume and mask to scare off the ghosts—and then they themselves would steal the food set out for the spirits. This is the origin of

the "trick or treat" custom.)

Halloween has been a time dedicated to ghosts and ghouls and goblins and monsters and senseless vandalism. Malicious people have hidden drugs in candy and razor blades in apples. Getting involved in Halloween celebrations cannot be consistent with the New Testament teachings about gentleness and peace and going the second mile. Also, police departments in various parts of the country have warned people to guard their animals on Halloween night, because frequently dogs and cats and other animals are mutilated as a result of the ritualistic slaughter of animals in sacrifice to Satan at Halloween time. Actually, Halloween not only has the appearance of evil; it is clearly associated with the wicked practices of the god of this world. Those who get involved with Halloween celebrations, must remember that what was once the accepted practice of European pagans, has now become the accepted practice of many church members in various parts of the world. Many church-goers despise the vandalism and destructive behavior often associated with Halloween, but they go along with it as a necessary once-a-year evil. What was once modified from the pagan Festival of Samhain to the Christian All Saints Eve—has now been further modified to become a semi-pagan ritual honoring ghosts and goblins and witches. Many youth fellowships sponsor Halloween parties in church recreation halls and award prizes for the most outlandish costumes. They usually have some group singing and a short devotional to make the evening seem more sanctimonious. What's wrong with Halloween? Everything about it is wrong. It does not have one single redeeming virtue. Halloween is a festival which glorifies the devil. Those who go by the name "Christian" should have nothing to do with Halloween celebrations. It is time that we expose Halloween for what it is—a ritual for the occult. We should never make fun of Satan's power. Celebrating Halloween can encourage children to take lightly the forces of darkness (Jude 1:8-10). God's people are not to be conformed to the world. We are not expected to "fit in" with the practices of our society (Romans 12:1-2). How seriously do we take the words of Jesus about being "in" the world, but not "of" it? (See John 17:14-15) . It is proper for children to have good times "Having fun" is not what is wrong with Halloween. Parents and church youth leaders should provide plenty of family and group activities for children and youth. If there must be an activity on October 31, you can plan an evening of Bible study on demons and sorcery and death. October 31 is a good time to study the Reformation period of church history (Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on October 31, 1517). You can spend an evening reading a youth version of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. You can have a Harvest Festival, gathering food and grocery items and delivering them to the poor and to those who may have had a variety of misfortunes. Another alternative, which could be a worthwhile event, is to plan for an "All Saints Eve." The first weeks after a death in the congregation, the bereaved family receives much attention, but a year or two later, many widows scarcely hear their husband's name mentioned. People who were once a major part of a congregation's life are easily forgotten (except by the family of loved ones). Perhaps on an "All Saints Eve" the minister (or an older member of the church) could give some little anecdotes describing the lives of some of the numerous departed saints from the congregation, and point out specific characteristics of that person's life and faith that are worth remembering. It is our prayer that Christians in every land will resolve to stand apart from the crowd, and dare to stand alone for the truth like the young man Daniel did when he was carried into the land of Babylon many years ago (Daniel 1:8-20) | Let us decide to no longer participate in a pagan holiday which commemorates the activities of the powers of darkness.

Christians must remember that while Satan and his kingdom are very real, It is a wonderful truth that the devil is under the dominion of our Heavenly Father. Satan is God's enemy, but he is limited by God's power and can do only what he is permitted to do (Job 1:12; Job 2:6; Luke 22:31-32). We should avoid involvement with satanic practices, but most of all, we must focus on worshiping God and seeking day by day to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have never invited Jesus to come into your heart and make you a new creature, why not take that step today? If you believe the message that Jesus died on the Cross and shed His blood as the full payment for your sins, you can face the future with the freedom of a forgiven person. Why don't you make this a real Halloween—a hallowed evening—by doing what will please God most? And the thing that pleases God most is to see human beings accept the atonement which Jesus provided when He died in our stead on the Cross, and then make a firm commitment to live for Him during the rest of your days.

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## 327. The Joys and Sorrows of Growing Older

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The Joys and Sorrows of Growing Older By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 327 The book of Ecclesiastes describes the experiences of Solomon as he was seeking to find satisfaction in earthly things—seeking happiness here on earth ("under the sun"). Solomon was a person who we might say "had everything." He had wisdom, riches, power, honor, God's favor—but he looked back over life when he had become older—and most of life seemed futile to him. The book of Ecclesiastes shows the reader that life here on earth, without God, leads to emptiness and vanity. Meaning in life is not found in money, or pleasure, or work, or knowledge, or popularity. True satisfaction comes from knowing God and doing what pleases Him. In the early chapters of Ecclesiastes Solomon tells some of his personal experiences in seeking what the world had to offer, and then he makes some broad observations. He says that death is unavoidable, life is filled with many injustices, riches are futile, hard work is often not appreciated—and so, once again, he concludes that all is vanity. But in the last chapters of Ecclesiastes we are cautioned to remember our Creator in the early years of life, for a life lived without God produces a bitter and lonely older person.

### 1. LIFE IS A GIFT: ENJOY IT (Ecclesiastes 11:7-10)

What a joy it is to anticipate each new day and to accept it as a fresh gift from God. In Ecclesiastes 11:8-9, Solomon especially instructs young persons to take advantage of the bright days of youth as the time for enjoyment, before the problems of old age begin to reveal themselves (problems which are pictured as "days of darkness"). The words of Ecclesiastes 11:9 ("and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes"), are not intended as an encouragement to go on a youthful fling and satisfy the sinful desires of the body. Rather, the writer is reminding young persons to enjoy some of the delightful experiences of life in the days of youth ("let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth"), for aging will come, and there will be difficulties associated with old age. Solomon says—while you are young—work hard, take care of your mind and body, and avoid destructive sins of the flesh (such as lying, stealing, and sexual immorality). The evils of "the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 11:10) are things for which "God will bring thee into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 11:9). Solomon is not a dreary pessimist. He encourages us to rejoice in each new day, but also to remember that eternity is far longer than a person's life span. In essence, he says, "Make the most of your younger years; enjoy the days of sunshine and happiness; those years will go by quickly, and you will never see them again." We should enjoy life, but that does not exempt us from the need to obey God's commands (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

### 2. LIFE IS AN AGING PROCESS: ACCEPT IT (Ecclesiastes 12:1-8)

After verse 1 of Ecclesiastes 12, Solomon moves from the subject of youth to the subject of old age and death. The words of Ecclesiastes 12:1 ("Remember now thy Creator") mean more than just "Think about God." To "remember" our Creator means to keep Him constantly in mind, to trust in Him, and to seek to live each new day for Him. "Remembering our Creator" means to be thankful to Him for all His gifts and promises—and to call on Him in the time of need.

Younger people should not get the idea that they can forget about God until they are older. That day may never come. People who have lived much of their lives without God do not easily find Him in the eleventh hour. For every "thief on the cross" who is saved near the end of life (Luke 23:39-43), there are hundreds of people who wait too long, and then pass through the dark door of death in the same way they lived their lives—unprepared to meet God.

Beginning at Ecclesiastes 12:2, Solomon paints a poetic picture of the arrival of old age. In Ecclesiastes 12:2, he uses the figure of a gathering storm (a dark, overcast, cloudy day). In Ecclesiastes 12:2-4, he uses the figure of an old house. And in Ecclesiastes 12:5, he uses the figure of an aged man. Each aspect of the poetic-word-pictures represents a feature of old age. In Ecclesiastes 12:2 Solomon mentions that the sun, moon, and stars "grow (lark)" "The word "while" is better translated "before." We need to think about God and eternal destinies before the sun, moon, and stars grow dark. This is a picture of the sadness of growing old. Friends and loved ones die. Loneliness and sickness often set in. Even the best of God's saints sometimes sense a sadness when growing old. Many older persons long for the day they can leave the dark valley of life on earth.

After painting the background (a dismal, cloudy day), we are given a more detailed description of "the house" (Ecclesiastes 12:3)—that is, the tent in which we live—the physical body. (Some of the details in this section of Ecclesiastes 12 might be open to more than one interpretation, but it is quite clear that Solomon speaks here of the older person's body.) The "keepers of the house" (Ecclesiastes 12:3) represent the arms and hands. The arms and hands are guardians of the body. In youth, they are quick and strong in protecting the body. In old age, they tremble with weakness. The "strong men" (Ecclesiastes 12:3) represent the legs (the strongest muscles of the body). As youthful strength gives way to old age, the legs begin to stoop (to "bow themselves"). The legs are bent with age. The "grinders cease because they are few" (Ecclesiastes 12:3) are a picture of the teeth. The older person often loses some of his teeth, and chewing food becomes a more difficult task. The words, "those that look out of the windows be darkened" (Ecclesiastes 12:3), refer to the eyes. In old age, eyesight weakens, and our ability to see grows more dim. One older preacher says, "I am finding it more and more difficult to preach at night because I have more trouble seeing my notes." The "doors to the street" (Ecclesiastes 12:4) represent the ears. In old age, hearing begins to fail, and common sounds from the outside (like the grinding of grain) can no longer clearly be heard.

Solomon goes on to say (Ecclesiastes 12:4) that older people "rise up at the voice of the bird" ■ but it is not because they hear the birds; it is because they simply cannot sleep. The words "daughters of music brought low" are a reminder that the voice of the aging person often begins to quaver and weaken.

All of these signs of growing weakness and feebleness lead to fears of various kinds. Older people are often afraid of heights (Ecclesiastes 12:5) and they fear going out on the street (going "in the way") because they are afraid of falling or tripping over some unseen object. The blossoms of "the almond tree" (Ecclesiastes 12:5) are pink, but they turn white when they are ready to fall. The least weight becomes too heavy (even the weight of a "grasshopper"). And one's sexual libido often begins to wane ("desire shall fail"). There are, of course, other desires which often fail with advancing age—including the urge to learn and sometimes even the will to live. And then, as far as

this life is concerned, the end comes. Ecclesiastes 12:5 concludes by saying that each of us will leave his time-worn house (the present earthly tent/body), and move on to his eternal home. The words of the Bible are these: "man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets" (Ecclesiastes 12:5). There is a kind of sadness in those words. It is usually hard to leave the place where we have lived for a long, long time. In Ecclesiastes 12:6, Solomon uses various figures of speech to picture death—the cutting of a silver cord, the breaking of a golden bowl, the shattering of a clay pitcher, and the breaking of a wheel. The silver and the gold picture the preciousness of life. Imagine a golden lamp shade hanging by a silver cord; when the cord is cut, the shade crashes to the floor and breaks. The broken pitcher and the broken wheel picture the usefulness of life coming to an end. A rope running over a wheel (a kind of pulley) made it easier to draw water—and when the pulley breaks, the clay pitcher drops. The lesson in Ecclesiastes 12:6 is that we are to remember God before the silver cord is severed, and before the golden bowl is broken. We are to remember God before the pitcher is shattered at the spring and the wheel is broken at the well. In Ecclesiastes 12:7, Solomon says that the body goes back to dust, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. The spirit leaves the body at death (James 2:26; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). The body begins to decay and eventually it turns to dust. These words show that the Old Testament saints had some clear concepts about life after death, even though it was only at the first coming of our Lord Jesus that life and immortality were brought into further light (2 Timothy 1:10). In Ecclesiastes 12:8, for the last time in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon says, "Vanity of vanities . . . all is vanity." Those words mean that life under the sun (life here on earth without God) is meaningless and vanity.

3. LIFE IS A SCHOOL: LEARN FROM IT (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14) In the book of Ecclesiastes, we learn that certain paths in life lead to emptiness, but this profound book also helps us to discover true purpose in life. Following the wise counsel found here can spare us from the emptiness that results from living life apart from following God's laws. Throughout the book, Solomon speaks about the emptiness of life under the sun, and about the fullness of life under God. In the first part of chapter 12, Solomon uses beautiful poetic language to describe our brief life on earth before we go to our eternal home. Now, beginning at Ecclesiastes 12:9, Solomon concludes his message by reminding us of some lessons we need to learn.

Solomon uses the third-person "he" and speaks of himself as "the preacher." He had used the term already in the very first verse of the book.

Lesson number one: In Ecclesiastes 12:9, Solomon says it is one thing to be wise; it is another thing to "teach" that wisdom to people. Teaching is not a task for a lazy person.

Lesson number two: In Ecclesiastes 12:10, he talks about the struggle to find "acceptable words" when trying to teach people.

Lesson number three: In Ecclesiastes 12:11, he says that God's Word (given by "the one shepherd") pricks our consciences "like goads." Goads are sharp sticks used for driving oxen.

Lesson number four: In Ecclesiastes 12:12, Solomon warns the student not to go beyond what God has written in His Word. (There are many books, and much study can be a weariness to the flesh. Solomon in essence says, "Don't let man's books rob you of God's wisdom.") In my judgment, reading most novels is a waste of time. John Blanchard used to say, "A novel is at best

a well-told lie." The philosophies and ideas of men become a weariness to the flesh. God's Word, by way of contrast, prepares the heart for the world to come. In the final two verses of Ecclesiastes, Solomon tells us how to live life to its fullest—even in the midst of the vanity all around us.

Lesson number five: In Ecclesiastes 12:13 we are told to "Fear God and keep his commandments." We are to live our lives with a sense of reverence for God. Fear carries with it an element of trust. For example, Psalms 40:3 says, "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Fear also carries with it a desire to keep God's commandments. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." If we have reverence for God, and if we fear God, we will set out to follow Him and to genuinely seek to live by His Word.

Lesson number six: In Ecclesiastes 12:14 we are told to be aware of a future judgment. The text says, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." People may seem to get away with sin, but the Bible assures us that sins will eventually be exposed and judged righteously. God is a holy God, and He will bring every work into judgment. This can be a time of joy and approval, or it can be a time of severe judgment God will judge every work ■ whether it be good or bad.

Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, the writer has demonstrated that life can be lived in only two ways—with God, or without Him. The time that we have to live in this life is short. Soon the silver cord will be severed. Soon our spirits will return to God who gave them. The years rush by quickly. We are now beginning the third millennium since the first coming of Christ. Many of our friends have gone on to the eternal world -- and just so every one of us will all too quickly exchange time for eternity.

Six times in the book of Ecclesiastes we are told to enjoy life while we can. (At no time does the Bible tell us to enjoy sin; instead there will be judgment for sin.) After age thirty, statistics show that human hormone levels drop, the immune system begins to lose its punch, the muscles shrink, the joints stiffen, and the skin begins to sag. The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us that aging comes slowly but surely, and that material things don't satisfy—whether they are things to see, things to eat, things to hear, or things to do. There must be more to life than just the tangible toys that we tend to crave and use here on earth. The book of Ecclesiastes is really a picture of our human cry for a Saviour. Jesus is the answer to the deepest need of the human heart. He is the Bread of Life. (Solomon does not say those words, but the New Testament does.) Poor I was, and sought for riches, Something that would satisfy. But the things I gathered round me Only mocked by soul's sad cry.

Hallelujah! I have found Him Whom my soul so long has craved.

Jesus satisfies my longings;

Through His blood I now am saved. When Solomon became king as a younger man, he asked God for wisdom (2 Chronicles 1:7-10), and he became the wisest man on earth (1 Kings 4:29-31) Solomon studied the literature that was available, taught many others, and wrote a multitude of proverbs. Leaders from other parts of the world came to Jerusalem to learn from him. But with all of his practical insights on life, Solomon failed to pay heed to his own advice, and his life began a downward spiral. Near the end of his life, Solomon looked back with a spirit of penitence and

reviewed the experiences of his Journey. We are given many of his observations in the book of Ecclesiastes. The tone of Ecclesiastes 12:3-8 (with its poetic description of advancing age) seems negative and pessimistic, but we must remember that this is only one small part of Solomon's remarks on life's experiences. The entire book of Ecclesiastes is devoted to practical wisdom, giving instructions about how to accomplish things in life, and how to stay out of trouble. The book too is loaded with spiritual wisdom, providing help about how to know eternal values. Solomon's many remarks in the book about the emptiness of life are intended to lead us to seek true happiness in God alone. Solomon is not trying to destroy hope, but to direct our hopes to the only One who can truly fulfill them.

Ecclesiastes 12 starts out with the words, "Remember now thy Creator." We are to remember Him in the days of youth. We are to remember Him before old age comes. We are to remember Him before we are called to meet God. John Wesley used to say, "I am one of God's creatures, passing through life like an arrow through the air. I came from God and will soon return to God. A few months or years hence, I will no longer be seen here. I will enter an unchangeable eternity. I want to know only one thing—the way to Heaven." The invitation to every reader who has not yet trusted the Lord for salvation is to commit your soul to the safe-keeping of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will then know the joy of a heart which is at peace with God. Most certainly you do not want to be lost. Surely you want to go straight and do right. This article comes to remind every reader that Jesus loves you, Jesus shed his blood for you; Jesus wants to forgive you and deliver you from the grip of sinful habits. Won't you come to Him? Believe in Him? Turn your life over to His control? Why not sing:

"I've wandered far away from God Now I'm coming home;  
The paths of sin too long I've trod, Lord,  
I'm coming home."

You have the awesome power within to open the door of your heart to Jesus, or to lock the door of your heart against Him. Little children sometimes sing the chorus: "One door and only one, and yet its sides are two. Outside, and inside—on which side are you?" Your answer to that question will determine your eternal destiny.

All human beings will have to stand before God and be judged for what they did in this life. We will not be able to blame others as an excuse for failing to live properly. The Bible says in Romans 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." In that great day we will want to be on God's side, and through Jesus Christ we can be at peace with Him (Romans 5:1-2).

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BIBLE HELPS Amos Lehigh, Editor

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## 332. Instructions Concerning Sound Doctrine

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Instructions Concerning Sound Doctrine Studies in 1 Timothy 1 By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 332 (The studies in the book of 1 Timothy are based on a verse-by-verse application of the Bible truth found in the epistle. To profit from this lesson the reader should have a Bible open to the first chapter of First Timothy.)

The letters to Timothy and Titus are often called "pastoral epistles" because they deal with matters affecting pastors and their congregations. The Apostle Paul's purpose in writing was to admonish, instruct, and give direction to God's people, and especially to those in leadership positions in the church. Timothy was an overseer in the church at Ephesus, a city of 300,000 inhabitants located on the west coast of Turkey. It was the city where the temple of Diana was located. Diana (the Greek name was "Artemis") was the goddess of fertility, a black, ugly, repulsive figure covered with a multitude of breasts. In Greek mythology, Artemis was the daughter of Zeus, the chief of gods. The temple at Ephesus was a huge structure supported by 127 columns each sixty feet high. It was in Ephesus that the silversmiths (who made souvenirs of the temple) were upset with Paul (Acts 19:27). Paul had founded a church at Ephesus. The theme of Timothy is set forth clearly in chapter 1 Timothy 3:14-15, which says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The letter to Timothy is a kind of guidebook with instructions about how to conduct a local church. The letter opens with a salutation and greeting. 1 Timothy 1:1 names the writer; 1 Timothy 1:2 names the receiver of the letter. Paul was an "apostle." The word "apostle" had a two-fold use. It was used as the official name for "the Twelve" who ministered with Jesus, and were so named by Him (Luke 6:13). The word "apostle" also was sometimes an unofficial way of describing one who had been sent on a special mission (for example, Barnabas, in Acts 14:14). We notice that Paul had not chosen the ministry as a career. God had chosen Paul. He was an apostle "by the command of God," not by his own design. The last phrase of 1 Timothy 1:1 speaks of "the Lord Jesus Christ who is our hope." Some think that money is our hope for a better future. Others look to armed power and military preparation as our hope for a more peaceful world. Some believe in science, culture, and improved education. But the Bible says that Jesus is coming back, and when He returns, wrongs will be righted, a kingdom of peace will be established, and righteousness will finally prevail on earth. Thus, Jesus is our hope. 1 Timothy 1:2 introduces the receiver of the letter. Timothy first appears in Acts 16:1, during Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. He was so devoted to Christ, that local church leaders recommended him to Paul (Acts 16:1-3), and Paul chose to have Timothy accompany him on his journeys. Timothy's mother (Eunice) and his grandmother (Lois) had likely been reached by the Gospel message during Paul's First Missionary Journey a few years earlier. The words, "grace, mercy, and peace" convey Paul's good wishes for Timothy's well-being. Grace, mercy, and peace are the triple blessings of the Christian life, just as faith, hope, and charity are the triple fruits of Christian character.

## 1. The Charge to Proclaim the Pure Gospel (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

False teachers abounded in New Testament times, and in the early part of the letter to Timothy, Paul urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus—to teach the Word of God and to warn believers against accepting false doctrines. The word "besought" (1 Timothy 1:3) is a strong word which could well be translated "begged." Ephesus was a large and wicked city marked by the worship of pagan idols, and Timothy apparently wanted to leave Ephesus. Paul was pressed to say, "Stay where you are." (There are many occasions in life when it is far easier to move on, than it is to remain in a difficult situation. And there are times when it is proper to go to another area, but Satan is good at disguising a situation so that it appears to be the will of God that we move on. Many times we must learn to persevere where we are.) Timothy was to charge church leaders "that they teach no other doctrine." The word "other" means "new" or "novel." Nothing is more valuable for a believer than to do a careful study of sound doctrine—seeking a clear, systematic understanding of the great themes of the Bible. It is frightening to hear people say that what we need is not more doctrine, but more experience and practice. Such a philosophy may sound reasonable, but it fails to take into account the fact that what a person believes (his doctrines) determines to a large degree how he behaves (his practice). Beliefs determine behavior. Many today are living in a kind of fog regarding Christian doctrines. They see nothing clearly; they are not sure they have any kind of set beliefs; they seem content to be honorary members of all schools of thought. No wonder many churches today are becoming places for entertainment, rather than for the enrichment that comes from hearing sound doctrine. The words "fables" and "endless genealogies" (1 Timothy 1:4) speak of the legends and stories that were made up about Old Testament characters and were passed along from generation to generation. But this kind of teaching, centering around fascinating legends, was "ministering questions" rather than providing godly edification for the church (1 Timothy 1:4). The passage is telling us to ignore those who go off on tangents and want to discuss fanciful ideas—like "How many angels can stand on the head of a pin?" Such ideas tend to stir up arguments rather than help people understand wholesome doctrine. Yet in almost every local church there are a few persons who get a kind of carnal pleasure out of engaging in hairsplitting discussions. This can be a tremendous waste of time and a violation of the true goal of good teaching. The word "commandment" (1 Timothy 1:5) is the noun-form of the word "charge" found back in 1 Timothy 1:3. The "charge" was to "teach" no novel doctrines. The goal of good teaching is "charity" (love) that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5). True teaching will lead to a sincere faith, in contrast to the strife and confusion produced by the endless discussions of 1 Timothy 1:4. Sometimes in lesson discussions, the class gets detoured from the clear lines of thought presented in the Scriptures, and this often becomes "vain jangling" (1 Timothy 1:6)—a wilderness of words and nothing that edifies. To spend lots of time on trivial matters is a gross distortion of God's intent for the Bible teacher. 1 Timothy 1:7 says that some of the "would be" teachers just didn't know what they were talking about—and so they turned to the "fables" and "genealogies" (of 1 Timothy 1:4), and ended up with the "vain jangling" (1 Timothy 1:6). John Bunyan used to say, "Some like the meat; others love to pick the bones." 1 Timothy 1:8-11 remind us that the Law has a place, although a limited one. The Law of Moses was not meant to give people a list of commands for every occasion, but was intended to show human beings their sin, and bring us to God. It was given to convince us of the enormous guilt that is ours because of our sins, and the certainty of punishment for those sins. The "lawful" (or "legitimate") use of the Old Testament Law is to expose, restrain, and convict us of sin. It cannot save lost

sinner, but it can reveal their need for a Saviour. The Law is like a mirror. It shows our face to be dirty, but it cannot remove the dirt. Thus the Law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24), that we might be justified by faith in Him, and cleansed from our iniquities. 1 Timothy 1:9 reminds us that the Christian's relationship with Christ enables us to live above the Law, and so the Law has little relevance for law-abiding people. The proper use of the Law is to apply it to sinners, to show them their sin and to bring them to the place where they are utterly crushed by the load of their sins. And then (1 Timothy 1:9-10) we are given a catalog of more than a dozen sins which are characteristic of the world in which we live. The "lawless, disobedient, ungodly, unholy, and profane" are those who have no desire to conform to the mind of God, who have no respect for God's name or God's day—and deliberately violate God's laws to satisfy their own passions. The "manslayers" (1 Timothy 1:9) is a reference to murder and to those who have no respect for the sanctity of human life. The word refers to the abortionist as well as to one who takes the life of a fellow human being by sheer violence. The "whoremongers" (1 Timothy 1:10) are those given to all kinds of sexual immorality. The phrase "defile themselves with mankind" is a reference to sodomy and every kind of homosexual practice—a sin which is everywhere condemned in holy Scripture. The word "menstealers" refers to slave traders and kidnappers. "Liars" are those who intentionally deceive. "Perjured persons" are those who are untruthful, even when under a civil oath. "Any other thing" refers to those sins that are not named in this list, but are nevertheless violations of the law of God. The Law was given to bring sinners to the point where they feel utterly crushed under the load of their sin, so that they will be open to the need for "the glorious gospel" (1 Timothy 1:11). The Gospel is the way of redemption for sinners through faith in Jesus Christ, which God has committed to the preacher as a sacred trust (1 Timothy 1:11). Thus, instead of getting hung up on trivial anecdotes about early Jewish ancestors, Timothy is to present the Gospel clearly, so that the goal of 1 Timothy 1:5 will become a reality.

## 2. Thanksgiving for the True Grace of God (1 Timothy 1:12-17)

The charge in 1 Timothy is to proclaim the pure Gospel. Now we are reminded about God's mercy and grace, especially illustrated by the Apostle Paul's own experience of salvation. Paul tells a little bit here about his own past life and his present ministry. Paul was deeply grateful to the Lord that God had reached down and saved him, and assigned him the responsibility of ministering the Word (1 Timothy 1:12). In Paul's life, we see something of the wonder of God's grace and of His saving power. Before Paul was converted, he took delight in carrying out violent and outrageous acts against the believers. Paul was a man of violence who enjoyed inflicting pain upon others. When Paul recounted his conversion experience, he explained that he persecuted even with murder in his heart (Acts 22:4; Acts 26:10-11). Paul referred to these events, not to glory in his sinful past, but to magnify the grace of God. Paul's plea of ignorance (1 Timothy 1:13) is not an excuse for his guilt, but it is one of the reasons why God extended mercy to him. Paul loved to speak about the grace of God (1 Timothy 1:14). Grace is the sheer, undeserved, unmerited, unearned, incredible kindness of God. Grace is getting from God what we do not deserve. Paul was a person who hated Jesus Christ, and was seeking to stamp out His church—yet God lovingly reached down from heaven and opened Paul's eyes to see the truth—and the Lord graciously provided forgiveness. Each of us can echo the words of the hymn which says: "I know not why God's wondrous grace, to me, He hath made known; nor why—unworthy—Christ in love, redeemed me for His own." Yet, so it is. Christ has made our redemption possible. Jesus came

into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). The words "of whom I am chief" need not be taken in the absolute sense. It is not that Paul was absolutely the most wicked person who ever lived, but his heart was black and he had fallen very low. And if God stooped to save the worst of sinners, surely he will save any sinner who meets the conditions of salvation. Just as Paul had been the chief of sinners, now he would be the chief display of God's untiring grace (1 Timothy 1:16). Paul's salvation was a demonstration of God's mercy toward a sinful man—an example of the lengths to which God will go to save a person. Thus, there is hope for everyone. (This passage is important to show to the person who fears that he is too wicked to be saved, or who feels that his condition is beyond hope.) When Paul thinks of the love and grace of God which had reached down to save him, his heart burst forth into a doxology of praise (1 Timothy 1:17). Our God is the "King eternal" (King of the ages); He is "immortal" (living on without end); He is "invisible" (a great spirit invisible to the human eye but very real to the human heart).

### 3. The Commission Given to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Timothy is, in the closing verses of chapter 1, reminded that the ministry is not a trifling matter, but is an order from the divine Commander in Chief. Certain predictions were in some way granted to Paul—concerning Timothy—before his call to the ministry. Apparently Paul sensed that here was a man God could use (1 Timothy 1:18). Paul gives Timothy a series of three charges (1 Timothy 1:18-19). a) Fight a good warfare Timothy was to fight a good fight. We are to run, fight, strive, wrestle, and press on. Life is not a playground; it is a battleground. The Christian worker must be a good soldier. b) Safeguard the faith The reference here (1 Timothy 1:19) is not to one's own personal trust in God, but to the body of truth (the Christian doctrines) which the false teachers at Ephesus had cast aside. c) Maintain a good conscience A "good" conscience is one that has not been betrayed by compromise. The "conscience" is the faculty within which demands that we do the right and shun the wrong. With our wills, we accept a certain standard—a basis for making decisions—and the conscience will remind us when we fail to keep that standard. A good conscience is one which has not compromised the standard one has chosen to live by. The standard for Christian conduct is found in the New Testament. In the latter part of 1 Timothy 1:19, we read about some who put away a good conscience. They laid aside correct doctrinal beliefs and reverent behavior—and as a result, made shipwreck of their lives. One who alters his position on biblical truth, and tolerates things which he knows are wrong—will eventually experience spiritual shipwreck. Hymenaeus and Alexander are cited as examples of shipwrecked believers (1 Timothy 1:20). They weakened people's faith by teaching that the resurrection was past already. The Apostle Paul led in their excommunication from the church as he had also done in the case of the fornicator in 1 Corinthians 5:3-5. The clause, "whom I have delivered unto Satan" indicates that the two men named were placed into the realm of Satan (the world). They were excommunicated from the fellowship of the local church. There are at least four reasons for initiating discipline in the church. 1. An irreconcilable spirit toward another Christian (Matthew 18:15-18). 2. Offensive, shocking, ongoing immoral conduct (1 Corinthians 5:5). 3. A contentious and ongoing defiant spirit (Romans 16:17). 4. One who advocates and teaches heresies (Galatians 1:9). The purpose of such discipline is not to punish but to awaken. It is true that discipline has sometimes been abused and motivated by wrong motives, but this is no reason for doing away with all discipline (as is happening in many local churches). Our duty as Christians is not only to evangelize and recruit good soldiers for Jesus Christ, but also to give dishonorable discharges to those who are

persistently unfaithful to Christ. Discipline is necessary to preserve the purity of Christ's church. One missionary said many years ago, "It is more fitting that the kingdom of heaven be clean than crowded." Paul's letter to Timothy was not merely a piece of correspondence from one close friend to another. It is really a set of divine instructions for the church. The epistle deals with the need for fighting the good fight of faith, behaving properly in the fellowship of God's people, learning to pray with proper motives, receiving teaching about the appearance and activities of women, discovering the qualifications for elders and deacons, learning how to care for widows in the church, and receiving instructions about the use of money. The message in this book is for all of us. The "you" in 1 Timothy 6:21 is plural (in the Greek text). The wish is for God's grace to be upon all believers.

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## 361. Teaching Children the Wonders of GOD

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Teaching Children the Wonders of God Lessons from Psalm 78:1-8 By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 361

Psalms 78 is a review of God's marvelous works in His dealings with Israel. Throughout this long chapter of 72 verses, there are a number of contrasts between God's mighty works, and Israel's unfaithfulness and disobedience. The first eight verses of the chapter declare the psalmist's purpose. His goal is to encourage God's people to teach each new generation the lessons from history—lessons from the past. Then, from verse 9 on through verse 72, the psalmist talks about Israel's history, and tells about the blessings of God and the disloyalty of the people. In Psalms 78:9-20 the writer reviews God's miracles in Egypt: the crossing of the Red Sea, the cloud that led the Israelites through the Wilderness, and the giving of water to survive. In Psalms 78:21-39 he records God's anger at the people because of their unbelief—but he also tells about God's provision of manna, and His providing meat by sending flocks of quails to supply food for the people. The last verses of the chapter describe how the people in the wilderness forgot God's power that was displayed in each of the plagues in Egypt. They seemed to forget that God turned the waters of the Nile into blood, and dried up the Jordan River to allow their entrance into the Promised Land in the days of Joshua. The message in this lesson covers Psalms 78:1-8. Things of the past are to be recounted to our children, so that the upcoming generation will have confidence in God, and will not forget God's commandments. When we talk about educating children, the usual advice is to look toward the future. People will say, "Let bygones be bygones; the past is water over the dam; it's time to get a new and fresh start; we're living in a new age; don't look back." Even Jesus says that he who puts his hand to the plow should not look back; that is, he should persevere and seek to be faithful to God. But Psalm 78, oddly enough, is preoccupied with the past. It is our duty to bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). One important part of that responsibility is to recite for the next generation some of the wonders which God performed in the past on behalf of His people. There are two major sections in our lesson: Learning from the past (Psalms 78:1-3), and Teaching for the future (Psalms 78:4-8).

### 1. LEARNING FROM THE PAST (Psalms 78:1-3)

As the Psalm opens, God is issuing a call to learn from history. History is really "His story"—a recital of God's works among the human family. The review of God's marvelous works over the years is designed to impress upon the minds of the young the important truth that obedience to God leads to great blessing, and disobedience always leads to disaster. The text says: "Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us" (Psalms 78:1-3). In verse 1, the people are called upon to "give ear to my law"—that is, give obedient attention to God's teaching and instructions. The word "parable" in verse 2 means "to place one incident alongside something else so that we might learn by comparison." In this case,

the past history of Israel is placed alongside the present, so that those living today might not repeat the sins of the past. The lessons from Israel's slavery in Egypt, and the Red Sea experience, and the provision of manna in the Wilderness—along with the complaining and dissatisfaction of the people—taught some important concepts. For example: God is all powerful and intervenes for His people; many who were unbelieving and rebellious died in the wilderness; God is angry with those who are ungrateful and forget about His mighty works in their behalf. These are lessons that all of us need to learn. The lessons from Israel's past are examples intended to help us avoid repeating their errors (1 Corinthians 10:11 says so). And the key to remembering is to study the Bible on a regular basis, so that the lessons found there will remind us how God wants us to live. The phrase "dark sayings of old" (verse 2), speaks of things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Jesus quoted this concept in Matthew 13 when He declared that truth was to be concealed from the unbelieving masses, and was to be revealed only to those who would accept it. Verse 3 plainly says that what we have learned from our fathers is what (in verse 4) we are to pass along to our children. We are not told to teach new and updated ideas. Instead, we are to teach that "which we have heard and known," and that which "our fathers have told us." I get weary of all the talk about being relevant and teaching lots of newfangled ideas. Of course changes take place over the years, and we must relate truth to current situations—but the Scriptures are relevant to every age. It's interesting to note (in 2 Timothy 1:5) that Paul commends Timothy for the fact that his faith was the same as his grandmother's! Paul rejoiced when he remembered the sincere faith "which dwelled first in thy grandmother, Lois, and thy mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded that [is] in thee also." Timothy was a man of deep Christian conviction. He didn't mind being accused of having an old-time religion. He was glad to sing, "It was good for our fathers, it was good for our mothers, and it's good enough for me." The Bible message is the same now as it was centuries ago. And the basic human problem is the same. The theme of the Bible is redemption—the message telling how a sinful human being can become reconciled to a holy God. Our settings today are different from those of many years ago, but the sinful human heart is still the same. A man can hate his wife while traveling 600 miles per hour just as much as he did in the days of Abraham, when people traveled by walking at 3 miles per hour. So it is our duty to learn from the past, and we should seek to avoid the errors that former generations have made.

## 2. TEACHING FOR THE FUTURE (Psalms 78:4-8)

The psalmist appeals in this section to all of God's people urging us to diligently teach our children the truth about God, as revealed in all His dealings with humanity in the past. Psalms 78:4-8 says: "We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them . . . [that they may] arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God." The things that we are to pass along (verse 4), should include "the praises" (i.e., the glorious deeds) of the Lord. We are to teach lessons about His strength and might, and tell about the "wonderful works that He has done." Parents and grandparents are to teach children

lessons about who God is, what He has done, and how the people responded to Him. God has appointed a law in Israel, and ordered that His laws are to be faithfully transmitted to our children. The Ten Commandments are sometimes called a "testimony" (a declaration of truth from our Creator)—and we have a duty to teach those laws to our children (verse 5). We should want to teach God's laws because they are the means by which our children may come to put their trust and hope in God (verse 7a). In Deuteronomy 6, immediately after the second listing of the Ten Commandments, Moses wrote: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). A little later, in the same chapter, God says in essence: "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What do the testimonies and statutes and judgments mean which the Lord has commanded you?' Then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and showed us signs and wonders upon Egypt, and upon Pharaoh, and He brought us out from thence, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers'" (Deuteronomy 6:20-23 paraphrased). The teaching is not to be an occasional or sporadic thing. We are to talk about "the wonders of God" when we sit at the supper table, when we travel by car, when bedtime comes, during the morning family worship time—when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Grandparents too have wonderful opportunities to contribute to the teaching task. When your grandchildren beg for stories about their parents, their uncles and aunts, their grandparents and great-grandparents—make use of every opportunity to pass along accounts of God's faithfulness in the midst of the ups and downs of life. Sharing Christian beliefs, and explaining their meaning to children, is one of the primary ways to keep the faith alive. Of all the attitudes which parents sometimes adopt, the worst attitude by far is to say, "I'm not going to force religion on my children; I'm going to let them make up their own minds when they are old enough." During the impressionable years of childhood, the world will try and force its views upon their minds, and sometimes secular and unbelieving teachers will mold their tender hearts with philosophies that are foreign to the Christian faith. Parents, make it a point to tell your children how you came to believe in God. Tell them what you believe and why you believe it. Explain to them the meaning of the foundational doctrines and principal themes of God's Word. Illustrate the benefits of trust and obedience for them. Remind them of the results of rebellion and sin. Fanny Crosby wrote the words, "Tell me the story of Jesus; write on my heart every word." That should be the goal of every parent. Verse 6 states the purpose of Christian education. We are to teach God's laws to "the generation to come"—and that generation is to teach God's laws to their children—in order that God's truth will be handed down diligently from generation to generation. Verse 7 states the goals for such teaching. One goal is "that they might set their hope in God." Teaching truth about the marvelous works of God in the past reveals the living God as One who keeps His covenant, and redeems His people. Another goal is "that they might. . . not forget the works of God." A child's mind is never so fascinated as when he hears the works of the Lord as recorded in Scripture. Children are gripped by the story of Daniel in the den of lions, the story of David when he slew Goliath, and the story of Moses placed in a basket by the Nile River. Many, in later years, will remember the works of God and claim His promises for their own circumstances. Yet another goal for teaching children is "that they might. . . keep God's commandments." It was the psalmist who said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Sin is a hard

taskmaster. The wages of sin is death. The path of sin leads to hardship and disaster. Verse 8 says that teaching children some lessons from history can help them overcome stubbornness and rebellion, so that they will not follow the path of their forefathers. The Israelites in Old Testament times were thoroughly rebellious, as the remaining portion of this long historical psalm shows. The thrust of Psalm 78 is the call to teach children the wonders of God. We must uphold the Scriptures as God's truth, and declare to the next generation that the words of the Bible are not mere stories from mythology. Truth which our fathers held will become truth that I hold. Truth that I hold will become truth which my children hold. It is not truth that I hold just because my father held it; rather, it is truth I hold because it is true; it is truth based on the clear teachings of God's Word. Here are some hints for teaching children: 1) Start very early. Some have proposed that half of all growth in human intelligence takes place by the time a child reaches the age of five. During those early years, habits are formed and basic rules of life are learned. There is a critical period during the first years of a child's life when he can be taught proper attitudes, and if we miss the opportunity of those years, his openness to receiving instruction will likely never return in the same way. 2) Teach with love. One of the best ways to show children that they are loved is to spend time with them. Pity the child whose parents don't have time for a family picnic, or a walk in the woods, or a day at the zoo. Parents should have a regular story time and play time with their children. 3) Teach knowledge of the Bible. One of the best ways to teach a child in a structured way is to conduct brief, regular daily family worship periods. Take the Bible (or for small children, a good Bible story book), and each day read a portion from its pages, followed by a time of family prayers. 4) Teach immediate obedience. When you ask that something be done, there should be no delays. Let your children plainly see that it is going to be done; and if it is not done, there will be immediate appropriate punishment. Unquestioning obedience is the cornerstone of a child's future character. I was born in 1930. Here in the United States of America, there was a general acceptance of Judeo-Christian values. People worked hard. Stores were closed on Sundays. There was a spirit of Friendliness among most neighbors. Public schools were places where learning occurred. Today, however, there is a growing generation that is ignorant of what the Bible teaches, and intolerant of the country's rich spiritual past. The 78th Psalm reminds us that "teaching" means not only pointing the way to live in the present, but also the importance of remembering the past. And we must keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of people who become believers in Christ, make that decision early in life.

83 % of all decisions for Christ are made before age 20.

92% of decisions for Christ are made by the age of 25.

Only one out of a thousand becomes a child of God after age 30.

Therefore it is urgent that the gospel message must be proclaimed by parents and grandparents during the early years. Reminders about the greatness of God need to be drilled into the minds of children at an early age. From the very early years, our children must be taught a morality grounded in the character of God, and supported by the principles displayed in the life of Jesus. Many in our day are not doing a good job of teaching moral principles. As a result, many youth seek to avoid hard work, laugh at scrupulous honesty, and have no conscience against stealing from employers. Whole congregations can quickly turn away from the Lord if they are not diligently instructed week after week. In the days of Joshua, many Israelites affirmed his

statement. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). That entire generation remained loyal to God as long as Joshua lived (Joshua 24:31), but the situation reversed itself in the succeeding generation. Judges 21:25 says that everyone did what was right in his own eyes. The public schools concentrate on the 3 R's reading, writing, and arithmetic, and rightly so. But Christian parents (godly people) must focus on the R's also —repentance, regeneration, and righteousness! To younger persons, I would recommend that if your Christian grandparents have never written down some of their memories and spiritual experiences from earlier years, that you prepare a number of questions for them, and interview them, jotting down their answers; and then write those stories in a journal for your children to read. Religious instruction is a key tool that godly parents have at their disposal to help pass on the torch of faith to their children. If parents are diligent in telling the accounts of God's saving acts, and explaining His commands, and emphasizing the mercy He showed to a floundering people, they will most likely see their children turn their hearts to God.

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## 378. The Truth about Heaven and Hell

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The Truth about Heaven and Hell By Harold S. Martin A Bible Helps Booklet No. 378

One time there was a preacher preaching the doctrine of universalism in a small village church in one of the New England states. He maintained that there is no Hell, no punishment after death, and that all human beings will be universally saved. He said that "Hell" is the cruel invention of the human imagination, and that it is contrary to the principle of the love of God. When he had finished his address, he informed the people of the small church that he could preach for them again within a few weeks. One of the men on the church board said: "If your doctrine is true (if it's true that there is no Hell and we're all going to Heaven anyhow), we don't need you." And he said, "If your doctrine is false (if there is a Hell, when you say there isn't any), we don't want you"—and he was not invited back to preach at that church. It is the purpose of this message to tell the truth about Heaven and Hell—the truth as given in the Holy Scriptures. In Luke 16 we find Jesus describing the death of two men. The one died and was carried by the angels into the presence of God. When a child of God dies, there is a Heavenly escort of angels waiting to carry that soul in triumph into the Father's house (Luke 16:22a). And then Jesus says, "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:22b, Luke 16:23a). The account in Luke 16 is a record of two men who lived and walked on earth as we are doing today, and when they died, they found themselves in eternity, on the one hand, in a place of torment, and on the other hand, in a place of comfort by the side of Abraham. There are two places for the departed dead. The Bible says it over and over again. There is the broad way that leads to destruction, and the narrow way that leads to life. There are the tares cast into fire to be burned, and the wheat gathered into barns. There is the unprofitable servant who is cast into outer darkness, and the faithful servant who enters the joys of his lord.

### 1. The Truth about Heaven

Heaven will be the future dwelling place of God's people it will be the eternal presence of everything that can make the believer happy, and the eternal absence of everything that can cause sorrow. There is much that we don't know about Heaven—its location, its geography, its temperature—but there are some things we do know. a) Heaven will be a perfect place. Heaven is a real place, as real and as material and as literal as the cities of Detroit and Chicago and London. Heaven is not merely some "blissful state of being;" it is not a cloudy, hazy mixture of nothing; it is a prepared place for a prepared people. It is true that many sneer at Heaven and say that it's only a land of make-believe; some scoff at Heaven and say it's merely "pie in the sky;" still others say that the only Heaven which humans will experience is the Heaven on earth that they are able to achieve. But Jesus set the record straight, when he said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you; if it were not so I would have told you" (John 14:2). Jesus says that Heaven is a real place, and His Word should be good enough for every one of us. But not only is Heaven a real place: Heaven is a perfect place. It is perfect in the sense that nothing will ever come to mar its beauty. Revelation 21:27 says in essence, "And nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who

practices abomination or falsehood." There will never be a cloud in Heaven; there won't be any tears to choke back; there won't be any good-byes in Heaven. In fact, nothing will ever mar the splendor of that glorious land. There is a place called Heaven. There is a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God -- and Christians can triumphantly sing, "There is a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar; for the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there." Heaven is a real place with real people and a real Savior and a real God! It is being prepared by a peerless Contractor, the Carpenter of Nazareth—even Christ Himself. Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). b) Heaven will be a habitation with God. Revelation 21:3 says, "I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men. . . and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The greatest thing about Heaven will not be the rewards, the crowns, the white robes, the walls of jasper, or the streets of gold. The greatest joy about Heaven will be our eternal fellowship with God the Father, and with Jesus our Savior forever. It will be an added joy to be with our friends and saved loved ones who have gone on before. The question is sometimes asked, "Will we know our loved ones in Heaven?" The obvious answer is this: "If we know them in this life, where we have only a partial and incomplete knowledge, surely we will know them in Heaven, where our knowledge will be perfect and complete." Most of us have taken a loved one out to "the silent city of the dead." Perhaps it was a father who departed from this life, or a mother who slipped on to the eternal world, or a child that was laid away in infancy, or a daughter who fell in the prime of young womanhood, or a husband or wife who was so dearly loved. In 2 Samuel 12:15 we begin reading about David's sick child. The Bible says that for seven days and seven nights David fasted and wept and prayed that God would spare his child, but finally he received notice that the child was dead. Two little eyelids had been gently closed: Two little hands were folded over the silent bosom; one little heart was forever still. The child was dead. When David received notice that the child had died, he wiped the tears from his eyes, ate food, and found comfort in these words: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). David found comfort in the words, "I shall go to him." because he looked forward to seeing the child in Heaven. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul speaks about those who have died in former generations (when he mentions the second coming of Christ). He says "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Those words speak of reunion. We shall be caught up together with them -- that is, with those who had previously died. c) Heaven will be a haven of rest. We are told in Hebrews 4:9 that "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Heaven is a place of rest from labor. There will be work to do in Heaven. The Bible says that His servants shall serve Him. Heaven will not be a great big holiday! We'll not sit down and do nothing. There'll be work to do. Jesus speaks about "ruling cities" and "judging angels." But the element of toil will be gone. We learn in Revelation 14:13 that those who die in the Lord will "rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." We are told also that Heaven will be a place of rest from suffering. Revelation 21:4 says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Anyone who is familiar with suffering and physical affliction in this life, and has walked up and down the corridors of our hospitals—and has seen the tremendous pain and anguish that human beings are sometimes called upon to pass through, must marvel exceedingly at the extent of this glorious promise. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor shall there

be any more pain. Tears, pain, sorrow, and crying will be former things!

## 2. The Truth about Hell

In our day many people consider Hell a mere joke. Charlie Chaplin has often been praised as one of the world's greatest comedians. He died a number of years ago at age 88. One of his typical jokes was this: He said, "It seems like I'm always cold; I hope to go to Hell when I die so that I can keep warm." For all we know he may have been granted his wish. The "Lake of Fire" is the theme for more jokes than any other single subject, except for stories about illicit sexual activity. Usually the devil is pictured in a long flannel outfit; he has horns and a tail; sometimes he wears an asbestos suit, and he gives orders about how fast to shovel coal. And then after the story is told, the crowd sits back and bursts into gales of laughter. They think the matter of hell is just a great big joke. One man said, "The nearest I'll ever get to Heaven is when I'm riding in an airplane; I'm going to Hell, and when I get there, I'm going to help the devil shovel coal so that it will be all the hotter." Another person said, "I don't care whether I go to Heaven or to Hell; I've got friends in both places." Another says, "I'm going to Hell, and when I get there I'm going to laugh at all the church members coming in." The fact is, those who reject Jesus Christ will go there; some church members will likely go there too; but there won't be any laughing. Instead, seven times over, Jesus says there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13). A lady from Canada wrote to the Michigan state highway department and told of a visit she was planning to make to the Detroit area. She asked for directions to the small community in Michigan named "Hell." She said in her letter, "We thought it would be fun to go back home and be able to say to our friends that we had been in Hell." The man who replied in behalf of the State Department sent her a small map showing the location of the tiny unincorporated community, and then added, "To complete your trip you may also want to visit the town of Paradise in the upper part of Michigan." We don't know whether the one who inquired will spend eternity in Hell or in Paradise, but one thing certain—she will spend eternity in one place or the other. The attitude of the lady from Montreal is typical of the attitude of people almost everywhere. They speak lightly of Heaven, and joke about Hell, seemingly supposing that if they ridicule enough, and joke enough, they can laugh Hell right out of existence. But life is not a joke on this side of the grave, and it is not a joke on the other side either. The kindest Man who ever lived says that we ought to "fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Jesus said it! It is a remarkable fact that the most fearful accounts of Hell to be found anywhere in the Bible come from the lips of Jesus himself. The word "Hell" "Hell" is used twenty-four times in the New Testament, and twenty-two of those times the word was used by Jesus. There is much about the subject of Hell that we don't know, but there are three things that we do know for sure. a) Hell is a real place. Hell is not merely some spirit-state of being. The rich man in Luke 16 knew that he was not merely in some hazy, spirit state of existence, because he wanted his five brothers warned "lest they also come into this place of torment," Just as Heaven is real place (Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" John 14:2), so Hell is real, literal place. The Bible says so, The man in Luke 16:28 said, "I want my brothers to repent lest they also come to this place torment." The final testimonies of those who have died unsaved, especially before the days of sedatives, confirm our belief that these words of the Bible are true. It's not a pleasant thing to see the ungodly die. Voltaire, the skeptic, died a horrible death; his condition became so frightful in the closing moments of his life that the nurse who was standing by later said, "For all the wealth of Europe. I never want to see another infidel die." Charteris (a

wealthy man), on his death bed, said, "I would gladly give \$150,000 to have it proved that there is no Hell." M. F. Rich (a poor man), a few moments before death, pointed to an almost red-hot stove, and said. "I would sooner lie on the stove and boil for a hundred years, than to go into eternity with the awful torments that are hanging over my soul." Friends—if it's reasonable to hold up the hope of Heaven as the home of the saved, it is just as reasonable to hold out the fear of Hell as a penalty for rejecting God's salvation. If you are still not sure that Hell exists as a real place—why would you even needlessly take a chance? A skeptic was teasing his Christian friend who talked often about Heaven: "George, what would you say, if when you died, you found that there wasn't such a place as Heaven after all?" George smiled and said, "Well, I'd say that I had a fine time getting there anyway." (He enjoyed his Christian experience.) And then George responded with a more difficult question: he said, "Fred, what would you say, if when you die, you found that there was such a place as Hell after all?" That is the real question to consider if you are a person who scoffs at the idea of eternal damnation in Hell. "What if there was such a place as Hell after all?" b) Hell is a place of torment. Make no mistake about it—Hell is a horrible place; it is a land of unspeakable torments. The Bible describes Hell with a number of words. One of the words is darkness. Jude calls it "the blackness of darkness" (Jude 1:13). Jesus calls it "outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12). Peter describes it as "chains of darkness" (2 Peter 2:4). Hell will be a land of darkness a land where the sun never shines; a land where the day never comes; a land where there is blackness, darkness, and night time forever. The Bible also uses the word fire to describe Hell. In Matthew 5:22 Jesus speaks of "hell fire." In Matthew 13:42 He speaks of a "furnace of Fire." In Matthew 25:4 He says "everlasting fire." In Mark 9 He says "unquenchable fire." In Revelation 20 we read about the "lake of fire." Someone says, "But this is only figurative language." Perhaps it is. I believe it is literal language, but if these are only figurative words, we must remember that the real thing is always worse than the symbol is. Another responds by saying, "But you said that Hell is a place of darkness; now you say it is a place where there is fire. How can that be?" It is God who said these things—but it is not hard to believe that God can create a fire that doesn't give light. Still another says, "But surely God is too good and too loving to permit a person to burn in Hell. " By way of response, I challenge you to put your finger on a red hot stove and see if God is too good to keep you from getting burned! If God permitted His only begotten Son to be whipped and spit upon and then nailed to a cross—don't fool yourself into thinking that God won't permit human beings to burn in Hell—if they ignore Him and refuse to accept His offer of salvation. God's love was revealed at Calvary, and if you reject that love, there'll be nothing left but the wrath of God (Hebrews 10:28-31). Jesus also uses the theme of extreme thirst to describe the torments of Hell. The rich man in Luke 16 cried for water—only a drop of water to cool his tongue. He called for Lazarus to dip his finger in water, and said, "Cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). During the Battle of the Dardanelles in World War I, a company of marines was stranded on an island. They had only meager supplies; their canteens one by one went dry; some tried to quench their thirst by drinking ocean water, but the salt added to their misery. Others put their parched tongues against the damp ground, but it did not satisfy. Some tried to quench their thirst by chewing on the soles of their shoes just to find a little moisture. They were so thirsty that their tongues literally hung out of their mouths. A news correspondent who later came on the scene and saw the sight, and heard the groans and cries of those thirsty men said in his report the next day in newspapers all across America: "If Hell can be worse than that, Oh God save me from Hell!" Hell is a real place of torment. If there is no fire in

Hell; if there is no real torment there; if souls beg for water in Hell then why are these passages in the Bible? c) Hell is eternal punishment. Hell is a miserable land of weeping and bitterness, hut perhaps most tragic of all—those who go) there will he there for eternity. Jesus says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). Daniel says, "Some (shall awake) to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). Jesus describes Hell as, "The fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43). The Scriptures teach that the torments of Hell will never end. If men and women die in their sins, the Bible indicates that they will suffer consciously under the judgment of God for all eternity. Each human being can either open the door of his heart to Jesus, and respond to God's love, and live with Him forever—or, each can Continue on in the path of rejection, and suffer conscious torment in the place of outer darkness. If you have never committed your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, why not turn your life over to Him today? Weep your way to God before the door of opportunity for salvation closes.

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