

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

VOLUME 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

June 1978

Number 89

GOD IS LOVE

By Harold Turner

Twice in the letter of first John, the writer states that God is love. This is probably the greatest statement in the whole Bible. I believe this is true because it embraces and provides the foundation for every great truth in God's word. Every promise in the Bible; every blessing that we enjoy in this life, as well as the hope we have of eternity, are made possible because God is love. If this great truth were not so, life would actually have very little meaning, and we would have no hope of a better life beyond the grave.

I'm sure that there are some who question that God is love, especially when their attention is centered upon the problems that trouble our world. It seems difficult for some to believe that God is love when there is so much suffering, diseases, and misery in the world, and when there is so much poverty and hunger among so many people. How could God be love and permit such to exist?

It's strange how quickly people are ready to blame everything bad upon God. Some openly declare that they aren't interested in serving a God who permits so much suffering to continue. And yet they devote themselves to serving the very one who is responsible for all the pain and misery known to mankind.

Are we being fair to point the accusing finger at God for all the bad things that happen? Is he responsible for all the suffering in our world?

The book of Job clearly reveals God's desire to bless man, and it reveals Satan's purpose for man. As strange as it may seem, there are some who look at the story of Job, and all they can see is that God permitted Job to suffer, therefore, He is to blame. This book is designed to teach many lessons, but two in particular. First it teaches us of the great faith and trust of Job, and second, it teaches us what Satan would desire to do to all of us.

Job was a man richly blessed before Satan took control of his life. And when he took control, he took from Job all his earthly possessions, all his sons and daughters, his health, he turned his wife against him, to some extent, and his friends also. Job was in a constant state of misery. Even in sleep he could not escape the painful dreams. Job's pain is so

great that he wishes he had never been born. Even the thought of death would have been pleasant, but he was not to escape this trying period of his life. But, now who are we to blame for the misery this man endured? No doubt, some are ready to blame God for permitting this to happen, but they fail to see the real lesson in this story. While the Lord was exercising control of Job's life, he was richly blessed, and even after this trying period was ended, God blessed Job even more richly than before. It's Satan who heaped all these miseries upon him. And he has been successful in convincing man that God is the one to be blamed rather than himself.

In Gen. 3:1-5, we see Satan working at this very scheme. He is successful in causing Eve to believe that God has been unfair to her. In verse one the Bible states, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the

Lord is love even in a world of troubles, and he will enrichen the life of all who will trust and obey him. In times of trouble, we are encouraged, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7) Jesus invites, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) The writer of Hebrews states, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) And as David said in Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." These are precious truths to those who have placed their trust in Christ. They know that God loves them and cares about their needs.

Of course God's greatest concern for us is in the salvation of our soul. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son..." Nothing could have more expressed this great truth that "God is love." In the reading of Rom. 5:6-10 we learn that we were ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God, but in spite of this He loved us and sent his Son to die for lost man. The Bible tells us that "God would have all men to be saved." And through the expression of his love and goodness, he reaches out to save the lost.

The great truth that God is love, truly

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The Glory Of Teaching

By Ordell Heavin

Teachers affect eternity. This is especially true of Bible teachers. If we communicate the gospel prayerfully, carefully, scripturally, and gratefully, we shall certainly affect the destiny of thousands. The opposite of glorious is dull or drab. The vibrant hues that Christianity always adds to an individual's life brighten and influence generations yet unborn. When God's word dwells within us we will just have to share its precious message with others. "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forebearing, and I could not stay." (Jer. 20:9) There is no thrill to compare with the teaching of the sacred Scriptures nor is there any responsibility so awesome. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (James 3:1)

Parents and teachers are building today the house our children will live in tomorrow. May God help us to build upon the foundation of TRUTH that cannot be moved by the vain teachings of man. True education does not necessarily remove problems and barriers, but it does prepare us to cope with them when we meet them and eventually gain the victory through truth over them. Someone has well said, "If the teacher does not love teaching, the pupil hates learning." There is no hope for the Bible teacher who is satisfied with past success. If we are going to set men free from the shackles of ignorance we must "Buy up the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16) Our time is short. "Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men vain?" (Psalm 89:47)

Because teaching creates the demand for knowledge that will motivate the public to action, it lies within the grasp of Christian teachers to change the world. Thousands are waiting to be taught the word of God. There is no greater purpose in life than to share the benefits of Christianity with the billions who inhabit the earth. "Let the earth hear the word of the Lord." (Jer. 22:29)

**FULTON COUNTY
GOSPEL NEWS**

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Place The Blame Where it Belongs

By W. L. Totty

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the powers, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Rom. 13:1-2)

Why has it become dangerous for people to walk our streets after dark? Or even in daylight hours, for that matter? And why is the crime wave among juveniles so alarming? Perhaps no one can formulate a perfect solution to these existing situations; but almost any one of us knows some of the contributing causes and can set about to make some changes for future generations.

We should consider first of all that behind every juvenile delinquent there are two adults. It is obvious that the juveniles are the objects of much criticism which should be directed at the adults. An utter disregard for the rights of other people and a disrespect for the law is the foundation for most crimes. If children are taught to respect the rights of others and to respect the law, they will rarely, if ever, be numbered among the juvenile delinquents. This teaching must begin in the home. When children are old enough to know it is wrong to disobey their parents, they are also old enough to be taught that it is wrong to disobey the law. And they should be warned that anyone who breaks the law is subject to punishment.

We are living in an age of push-button activities. Many fathers and mothers no longer have time to instruct their children in the basic rules of right living. They neither set the example nor teach the children the importance of right living. Their idea is to get out of the home and have a good time and hire a "baby sitter" to care for the children while they are running around indulging in sin. A beer-guzzling mother can hardly be expected to rear a Christian daughter. Neither can a whiskey-drinking, swearing father bring up a Christian son. The unfortunate children of such apostate parents will reap the results of their parents' evil living, maybe even behind prison bars.

A flagrant disregard for the law of the land is a disrespect for the law of God. How many times have children seen their parents flout the laws of the land by disobeying the traffic laws, cheating at

the cash register or on their income tax returns, etc.?

When our government legalizes strong drink and drugs, we might just as well expect a high rate of crime. It has been argued that as long as people are going to be found using the stuff anyway, the government might as well reap some taxes from the sale of it. But one thing we should keep in mind is that during the days of prohibition, although there was illegal use of whiskey, it was not flaunted before the younger generation every time they turned around. Neither did the fathers and mothers spend their evenings drinking in taverns while someone else, who was interested only in the money, cared for their children.

Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Parents should teach their children to live honest, sober lives. They should teach their children that the world does not owe them anything, but that they are to live righteous lives, working with their hands to provide things honest for themselves and their families, and above all, that they are to honor God and keep his commandments. If all parents would adhere to the teaching of God, there would be no juvenile problems.

The blame must be laid directly at the door of the parents!

"As love delights in the happiness of its object, it effectually prevents us from injuring those we love, and consequently, helps us to fulfill all the law requires, because the law requires nothing which is not conducive to the best interest of our fellowman."

"Be friendly with the folks you know. If it weren't for them you'd be a total stranger."

"A man is poor if all his investments and possessions are laid upon the earth and he has no treasures in heaven."

"Doctors tell us that cheerful people resist disease better than gloomy, negative-minded people. In other words, the surly bird catches the germ."

God Is Love (Cont.)

provides a foundation for every promise, and every blessing we can enjoy in this life. His word encourages us, "Oh, taste and see that God is good." We can know the love of God through living as he directs us. And when we come to the end of life's pathway, how precious will be the promise, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

I hope this lesson will help us to have a greater faith in God as the source of all good. And I hope it will help us to realize that God is not to blame for all the problems of our world. The one to blame is Satan, who desires to rob us from all of life's wonderful blessings. May we never let Satan blind us to the love and goodness of our heavenly Father, and cause us to fail to walk in the light of his love.

"A man is poor if he is without friends."

CONTRIBUTIONS

Churches of Christ:

Agnos	\$ 5.00
Big Pond	12.00
Elizabeth	5.00
Garfield	15.00
Jeff	5.00
Sturkie	5.00
Viola	5.00
Williford	5.00

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Clara Pratt	5.00
Joseph T. & Edith Robinson	25.00
Clyde & Delphia Smith	5.00

The Devil, The Bible, and Man

By Paul Johnston

The devil, the Bible, and man, these are three of the most challenging subjects one could choose. What does the Bible say about Satan? How does he work? What power may he exercise over man? What does the Bible say about recognizing error? Does it tell us how we can overcome Satan and does it tell us something about how he works?

In our fight against the powers of evil, there are some things we need to know about God. He created the heavens and the earth; he also created man. He therefore knows the most intricate workings of both. We must recognize the Bible as His unerring will for man, and that it has been confirmed by miracles and signs which show the eternal sovereignty and right of God over every being, in all places. God's moral code is unchanging. He is ever holy, faithful and just; keeps his promises, and is impartial in all things. God is forever merciful, and he providentially rules over all his works. In a special sense his mercy is shown to mankind, yet he is severe toward those who disobey.

As our Creator, God knows man fully and completely. He knows our weaknesses as well as our strengths, and will sustain us if we trust in him. It is imperative that all men know, however, that there is no appeal from his divine estimate of man. The Bible teaches that a curse abides upon those who choose their own way, and death awaits all who oppose God. God seeks the whole of man - body, soul, and spirit (Matt. 22:37). He does not seek so much what man has, but man himself. God gave his law, the holy scriptures, to govern man completely, and he expects us to know and understand what that will is (Eph. 5:17). Man must keep his place and not seek to usurp the authority of God, nor play at being God. The subjection and dedication God desires on the part of man is aptly described in the words of Paul, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20)

In our fight against sin and Satan, it will be of tremendous help to see ourselves as we are, frightfully weak and dependent on God. In the garden of Eden man sinned by his own choice, yet his choice was not without influence. Gen. 3:1 says, "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which God had made . . ." He tempted Eve through the only three avenues through which man can be tempted: The lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Man failed the test. He sinned by disobeying God's positive divine law, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17) This was not an immoral act, but rather a setting aside of the authority of God - disobedience to a positive divine law. Men live immoral lives because they have rejected the authority of God and live by their own. Because man transgressed God's law in the beginning, sin, sickness, suffering, and death have been in the world. Man's greatest interest seems to be in fleshly, material things - the fleeting, vanishing things of the world. This is the influence Satan has over man. Only to the fleshly realm does the devil direct man's aims, thoughts, interests and purposes. Man's greatest need in relation to self is how he can overcome self and give all of self to God and serve his holy purposes.

Because of the devil and sin man's stay on earth is frightfully short. Because of sin we are constantly beset by pitfalls that endanger the soul. There is a widespread spirit of rebellion against God's spiritual law. And because this is true, men rebel against Civil law; against the authority of the home, the government and society itself. Men live in their own conceit, attempt to command life itself, and think there will never be a day of retribution for evil deeds committed. The devil takes advantage of our weaknesses: pride, foolishness and ignorance. Even in religion he seeks to destroy God's purpose in turning men from things divine. He is the father of sectarianism, a monument of human pride. Satan is the author of sin. Sin is unrighteousness and disobedience to God. And through sin he rules the hearts of men. Only the blood of Jesus can erase its horrid stains. In Isaiah 1:18 Isaiah wrote, "Come now, let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." But in verse 19, he said, "If ye be willing and obedient." Man's allegiance must be transferred from the devil to God if it be so. Jesus is our redeemer, and we are cleansed by his blood when we obey him. In Rom. 6:3-5 Paul shows this cleansing to take place when we by faith turn from sin and are baptized into Christ, where we are cleansed by his blood, and we are raised to walk in a newness of life.

To encourage you to turn to God in his divinely appointed way, let me suggest to you some sobering thoughts in relation to yourself. It is indeed sobering when we think that man's flight through time is so very swift. There was a time when I thought that some event predicted ten years in the future, "why that seems so far off!" but now, ten years seems such a short time. The Bible says, "We are but of yesterday and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow." (Job 8:9) "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble." (Job 14:1) The Bible further says man is "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." (Job 7:9,10) This passage simply teaches that man shall know this earthly life no more once he has passed from it in death. He will know life after death, an eternal existence, either in heaven or hell. God has told us in his word that we are as dust, our days as grass, and the glory thereof as the flower thereof; the grass withereth and the flower falleth. It was James who asked, "For what is your life? it is even a vapor that appeareth for a little while, then vanisheth away." (James 4:14)

In view of the brevity of life and of Satan's desire to ensnare our souls, surely our thoughts can only turn to God. We may have our fun and high times here in sin, but is it worth the price that will be paid in eternity? We profess ourselves to be wise, but the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is wisdom." God alone knows what is good for man in this life. With David we must pray, "Lord, make me to know mine end, the measure of my days, and how frail I am, that I may apply my heart to wisdom." (Psalm 39:4) There is so little time to prepare that we have not one moment in which we can afford to doubt the word of the Lord. If the Lord said it, it is sure; there can be no doubt. Jesus wants men to believe in him (John 8:24), to repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), to confess their faith in him (Matt. 10:32), and to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). He then wants those who so obey to faithfully serve him unto death. Let's not allow "sin to reign in our mortal bodies", Rom. 6:12, but rather, "present ourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God", Rom. 6:13. Satan's message is "Just believe, don't be baptized, just be

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The Family Troubles of Abraham

By Clovis Ragsdale

The consequences of family troubles can be far reaching, troubling not only the lives of its immediate victims, but reaching over into the lives of future generations. One of the most far reaching examples in all history is that of Abraham. He lived about 3800 years ago. His descendants are still hating and killing one another with a vengeance which has existed from their earliest existence. Their troubles are the concern of many nations and have cost the taxpayers of the United States billions of dollars, not to mention the danger of causing a global war.

In Genesis 16 - 21 we have a somewhat detailed explanation of how this all began. God had promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. However, Sarah, Abraham's wife, was barren at this time, and they were greatly perplexed about how this promise could be carried out. This troubled them so much that it seems they attempted to help God out. Sarah proposes that Abraham take her maid servant, Hagar, and raise up children by her. The plan worked, but even before Ishmael was born, they regretted the action they had taken (Gen. 16:4). In due time, God lifted the laws of nature and Sarah bore Isaac, whose descendants became the Jewish nation, and through which the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be born into the world.

With the birth of Isaac troubles really began. When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac, she requested that Abraham send both Hagar and Ishmael away. Though Abraham was reluctant to deal so severely, God instructed him to do this. God then promised Abraham that Ishmael would be the father of a nation of people (Gen. 21:13). Ishmael survived and married an Egyptian woman, and their descendants became a part of the Arab nations, which are still with us till this present day.

Isaac's descendants grew into a great nation of people after their release from captivity. After delivering them from Egypt, God delivered the land of Palestine into their hands, with the condition that they drive out the gentile nations inhabiting the land. With the exception of short periods of captivity, until Christ came, they looked down on all gentiles and in turn were despised by the Arabs. The Jewish nation ended at the destruction of Jerusalem by the

Roman general, Titus, in A.D. 70. After world war 2, a remnant of Jews returned to Palestine, and with the help of the United States, drove out the Arabs and set up a small nation which has renewed the bitterness and strife between Jew and Arab. To date the Jews have not accepted Christ. The apostle Paul, in Romans 10, 11, seems to hold out hope that the time would come when the Jew would accept Christ. Until this happens there doesn't seem to be any hope for the Jew to live in peace.

If only Sarah and Abraham could have trusted the Lord to take care of the problem rather than taking matters into their own hands all this trouble could have been avoided. It should be a lesson for us today to do all things the way the Lord tells us to and not try to substitute our ways. In Isa. 55:8-9 God said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

The Devil, The Bible (Cont.)

sorry you did something wrong, and ask God to forgive you, and when you do, what you do from then on will not make any difference in your eternal destiny." My friends, this is not Bible talk. Let me urge you to seek the truth, believe the truth, obey the truth, and live by the truth. This is man's only hope, and the truth in the matter of going to heaven can only be found in God's word. Time is fleeting, and moments are passing, why should we longer delay?

Satan wants your soul! Are you content to let him have it? Flee him with all your might resting secure in the knowledge that with God we can win the battle. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

"In quest of precious metal men have left homes, crossed continents, sailed the seas, endured hardships, suffered pain of body; but the soul of one man, even of the vilest sinner, is worth more in the Divine estimation than all the wealth of the world. Oh how important it is to know relative values, to place the emphasis where it belongs!"

Too Busy

By Lavern Stewart

In Luke 14, when the invitation was sent out to come to the great supper, they all were TOO busy. One was busy with his real estate, one was busy with his livestock, and another was busy with family affairs.

The man in Luke 12 was TOO busy saving money for his fleshly enjoyment; therefore he did not have time to prepare for his soul's good. Martha was TOO busy with household duties, but Mary took time to show her devotion to the Lord, Luke 10:38.

The reason some people quit the Lord is that they are TOO busy with the wrong things, or perhaps the objects that occupy their attention are right within themselves, but they devote TOO much time and talent to them and TOO little to the Lord. Consider Luke 8:14, "But that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." Parents must not be so busy providing food, clothing, shelter, medical care and education for their little ones that they fail to provide for their spiritual needs.

None of us will be TOO busy to die, because it is appointed to all men to die, Hebrews 9:27, moreover, after death we will all appear before the Lord on the Judgment day -- on this day none can say that they are too busy. Friends, if you and your household are TOO busy to serve God like you know you ought to -- you are truly TOO BUSY!

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