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The Work of an Evangelist

By William S. Cline

As Paul wrote the final words he would ever write to his son in the Gospel, he charged him to: *"do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry."* (II Tim. 4:5b). Timothy might well have asked the same thing we may ask today, "What is the work of an evangelist?" By turning back a couple of pages in our New Testament we can *scripturally* answer the inquiry.

In I Tim. 4:13, 15, Paul wrote, *"Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them: that thy progress may be manifest unto all."* Dear reader; that is the Biblical requirements of an evangelist! You can search the New Testament inside-out, upside-down, and any other way you desire and you will search in vain. You will find no other requirement laid down by inspiration for the evangelist.

The present generations in the church have been brought up through the traditions of the clergy system of the denominations. Brethren have the idea that the evangelist is to do all the paraphernalia that the present-day denominational pastor does. It may be a displeasing fact, never-the-less it is a fact that such is not required of the servant of God, and if he spends his time doing the odd jobs of the clergy he might well lose his soul in the meantime because he left undone what God told him to do. Evangelists should be concerned about the desires of the brethren and the requirements of the elders. But his allegiance must first be to God! It is not his job, it is his soul that is at stake!

Paul charged Timothy to give himself wholly to reading, exhortation and teaching. The pulpits and classrooms would not be so dry, the local works would be much stronger and the brotherhood would advance at exceptional speeds if preachers did what the New Testament

enjoins them to do. As I think of the hundreds of bulletins (Most have at least one good article in them), the numerous magazines and papers which come across my desk each month, plus the volumes of books that need to be read, I realize that several hours a day would not be sufficient time devoted to reading alone. This would be time spent for growth and would not include the hours of study that must be devoted to preparation for sermons, classes and writing. In addition to the time spent in study the evangelist is to give himself to exhortation and teaching. In II Tim. 4:2 Paul said it his way, *"Preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching."* May the time come when preachers do this regardless of what the whims of the brethren might be!

I have in my possession a list of duties that an eldership gave their preacher. The list was a long one and required him to visit the hospitals, the sick, the aged, etc. It required him to be a good social mixer, to "win friends and influence people." Not one time in any of the requirements did it even hint at his ability to preach the Word, to study and to give himself to the Bible. I have shown the list to some of the great men of the brotherhood in the past few months who have been at the congregation where I preach. All of their comments can be summed up in one word as one recently expressed it, "Ridiculous."

Do not misunderstand me. I believe that one who works as an evangelist should visit. He should visit the sick, the hospitals, the new converts, the negligent, etc. There are other duties that he should perform. But this visitation and these duties are not requirements of the New Testament for an evangelist. There are services that he performs as a Christian just as any other Christian performs the same services. The truth of the matter is that after

the preacher has spent his time doing what God requires of him he still does as much or more than most Christians when it comes to the "clergy" duties. If the preacher does not visit as much as you think he should, if he is not active in the P.T.A., if he does not do the many things that brethren expect of him, don't criticize him as an evangelist. It just may be that he does not have time to do what brethren want him to do after he has done what God has told him to do.

May all preachers of the gospel take courage in the fact that if they spend their time wholly in reading, exhortation and teaching that they are pleasing the one that counts, they are pleasing God.

"HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN OR HIGHWAY TO HELL?"

By Ordell Heavin

The disciples of Jesus believed him when he said he would go prepare a place for them. (John 14:1-4). They believed him when he promised to come again in Matthew 24. They asked "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" In verse 3 Jesus said, *"No man knoweth that hour, not even me or the angels of heaven, only the Father."* William Miller, an advent of a wild theory set three dates, 1843, 1844 and 1845 (he guessed and missed). It's foolish for man to set a date for the Lord's return. I don't know when the Lord will come, but I do know it won't be on a day set by man (see Matt. 24:36.)

Read II Timothy 3:1-5. These are grievous times. Children are disobedient to God and to parents. Parents in many cases have brought this on themselves by raising or rearing their children out of the Lord. Many have no respect for parents and in that case or for the rights of anyone else. Shame on parents who fail to bring up their own in the admonition of

continued on page 2

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HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN OR HIGHWAY TO HELL?

continued from page 1

the Lord, (Ephesians 6:1-4). Shame on young people who, for the pleasure and sins of the world, fail to heed the teaching of Christian parents. Men and women in their speech uphold every dirty thing that is evil. Free speech, a time-honored and precious term has degenerated to the filthy dirty, sinful practices of the world. The apostle used the word implacable to describe men in the last days. This word means an enemy that pressed toward the complete destruction of all that is right. This is a term for senseless violence that has turned the cities, as well as the country into places of filthy, immoral living, where anything and everything wrong is tolerated, such as the sins mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21. Crime rates rise in our nation every year at the rate of 35%. Some of the more common crimes and sins are burglary, larceny, robbery, auto theft, rape, murder, drug abuse, riots, and immorality. Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived, (II Timothy 3:13). It is in these times many fall away from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits, doctrines of devils, hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded their conscience with a hot iron. (I Timothy 4:1-2).

You are either on the highway to heaven or hell. There are only two roads to travel! Christ gave His life for you and made the "one way" to be saved. He warns that the wages of sin is death. Is there a way out? The answer is "Yes", there is a way out -- one way. The Way of Christ. As His life was almost gone, as he hung on the cross, he said "It is finished." You can't change that way. The way of Christ. He said, "*I am the way, the truth, the life, no one cometh unto the Father except by me.*" (John

14:6). You can't follow the highway to heaven while listening to the opinions of men either. There are some 400 different ways saying "Lo, here is Christ." Christ says, "*For other foundation can no man lay.*" (I Corinthians 3:11). Again he said, "*In vain you worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.*" (Matt. 15:9). "*Not every one that saith Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. 7:21).

Long ago the prophet Isaiah said, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than yours." (Isaiah 55:8). Man's efforts to change, twist and mutilate the church Christ died for and the Gospel given by inspiration in the New Testament, have resulted in widespread decay and despair. The word teaches one Lord, faith, baptism, gospel and also one highway to heaven. Do you want to travel it, or trust in man? James says in James 3:15-16 that man's wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish. Where jealousy and factions are, there is confusion and every vile deed. This is what happens my friend when you give up the truth for false doctrine. On the other hand, James in the same chapter and verses 17 and 18 says, "*The wisdom from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy, good fruits, without variance, hypocrisy. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.*"

Some of the brethren have made shipwreck of the faith, forsaking the assembly. They act like they don't need to study anymore. Well you had better read Hebrews 10:25. You can't forsake the assembly and travel that highway to heaven. You had better learn to speak the things that become sound doctrine, (Heb. 2:1). James 1:21-23 says we are to "*Lay apart all filthiness, naughtiness, receive with meekness the word which is able to save your soul. Also be ye doers of the word and not hearers only.*" If you don't, you can't travel that highway either, and don't you forget it!

A dreadful sign of these days is the foolish counsel of men who claim to be servants of God. Some widely-known educators and advisors of young people, tell them if you don't believe it's wrong to live together outside of marriage then it isn't wrong. This is widespread teaching today in our higher degrees of learning. Friends, you don't have to doubt which highway they travel and are causing your sons and daughters to travel. Romans 1:

21-25 warns that there are those who are "*professing themselves to be wise, they became fools changing the glory of God for the corrupt man.*" God gave them up in their lusts unto uncleanness, their bodies dishonored, they trade the truth of God for a lie, worship and serve the creature rather than the creator.

But for the grace of God and His truths our situation as well as the entire world would be hopeless. But thanks be to God you can change highways any time you are ready to obey the one and only truth of God. Not what man has messed up, but the truth. The world is a dark place. But there is a way that leads from darkness unto light from the broad highway to hell to the narrow highway to heaven. Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world, he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" (John 8:12). Peter wrote to fellow Christians, "*Ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, holy nation, a people of God called out of darkness into light.*" (I Peter 2:9-10). Unity of the truth encourages belief, for the Lord said by their fruits ye shall know them, (Matt. 7:20). Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Matt. 16:18). "*Every plant my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up,*" (Matt. 15:13). There is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved except Christ, according to Acts 4:12.

Is it safe to wear any other name? Jesus made the way. There is no other. We must walk in his way (I Peter 2:21). Our Lord offers salvation to the faithful ones who obey him (John 8:24 and John 8:32). "*Ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.*" Which highway are you on now? The highway to heaven is as easy or difficult as you make it. It's a controlled access road. You must enter in a prescribed manner. You must have faith. Without it you can't please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). God demands repentance for without it you will perish, (Luke 13:3). Confess Christ unto salvation, (Rom. 10:10). Christ insists you be baptized for the remission of your sins, where they are cleansed by His blood, (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4). Then He commands you to a life of devotion, work and consecration in the Masters service till death. At the end of this highway is your eternal home. If you travel the broad road your destiny is the lake of fire forever and ever. Which road are you traveling?

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"Must I Obey the Gospel?"

By Mike Pace

The gospel is preeminently a New Testament subject. First Corinthians 15:1-4 tells us that the gospel is the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Around these events that happened to this One is centered the greatest concentration of human thought that the world has known or ever will know. This word - gospel - is recorded 101 times in the New Testament, not once in the Old and is absent from the books of John, James, epistles of John and Jude. Paul's epistle to the church at Rome heads the list with 13 entries of the word "gospel".

The value of the gospel is of such worth that only the blood of God's Son could pay the cost of it. It is by and through the gospel that we are saved, for the Book declares, *"the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). A mere chance observation of this word in the Bible is sufficient to show that the believer as well as the unbeliever sustains certain relations to the gospel.

First, consider the unbeliever. Since the gospel saves the obedient believer, it is certain that the unbeliever is lost, separated, alienated from God.

Secondly, the unbeliever is in darkness spiritually, for Paul so says in II Cor. 4:3-4. *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

Thirdly, the unbeliever one day will be punished with everlasting destruction for refusing to obey the gospel. Peter has well said, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of*

them that obey not the gospel of God: And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I Pet. 4:17-18). Another similar passage is to be found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9, where Paul says to Christians, *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord 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: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."*

Let us now examine the relationships that exist between the gospel and every believer. It is difficult for many to understand that a person may believe the gospel and yet be in a lost condition. The passages just cited not only teach that an unbeliever will be lost, but also one that obeys not the gospel will be lost. The believer that is saved is the one that has obeyed the gospel. The Hebrew writer, speaking of us and of Christ, said, *"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him."* (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Since it requires faith coupled with obedience to save a sinner, you might well ask, "What does it require of me to obey the gospel?" Retracing our steps to I Corinthians 15:1-4 we learn the gospel is the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to obey the gospel we must do something that is a picture of those three facts of the gospel. To find the answer for this, turn to Romans 6:3-4, *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

"It is done," I have believed in Christ repented of my sins, confessed Christ, and have been buried with Him in baptism, risen to walk in the newness of life. I have obeyed the voice of the Savior and am now a saved person, that is, an obedient believer. This brings us to the final part of the discussion. What relationship do I, as a believer, sustain to the gospel? At this point one has only begun the relationship to the gospel.

In a passing reference to the liberality of the Corinthian brethren Paul said, *"While by the experiment of this minist-*

ration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men." (II Cor. 9:13). Not only in our giving, but in every thing that pertains to the Christian life we should be in complete subjection to the gospel of Christ; but how many of us fail on many points;

"Our conversation (our manner of life) *is in heaven"* (Phil. 3:20), and we are partakers of the promise of eternal life through the gospel (Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:5). Since this is true, our life should be as that which becometh the gospel of Christ, (Phil. 1:27). This means that if we have obeyed the gospel, we should live as a Christian ought to live.

We must do what we can as Christians to further the gospel. That is, we should use our talents to cause the *"light of the gospel of Christ to shine in places of darkness."* (II Cor. 4:3-4). When we are determined to further the gospel it is natural that we shall have to defend the gospel. That is why Paul could readily say that he was *"set for the defense of the gospel."* (Phil. 1:17). As there will always be those that *"pervert the gospel of Christ."* (Gal. 1:7), we must *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh (us) a reason of the hope that is in (us) with meekness and fear."* (I Peter 3:15). This is just another way of saying *"earnestly contend for the faith."* (Jude 3). In view of the great cost of the gospel it is a small effort on our part to be *"set for the defense of the gospel."*

Finally, notice Paul's reference to the fellowship of the gospel. In Phillipians 3:6, Paul said, *"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing; that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* Fellowship in the gospel was expressed by the Phillipians by their helping the needs and necessities of Paul while he was imprisoned in the city of Rome. Special reference is made in 4:15-16 of their contribution. Today we can have fellowship in the gospel by aiding and helping in the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never heard it in its truth, entirety, and saving completeness.

Do you believe the gospel? Have you obeyed the gospel? Are you continuing to obey the gospel?

He Won't Last

By Ronald Gilbert

Most of us have felt low and needed some encouragement from time to time. Sometimes when we feel that the whole world is against us, a friend will give us an encouraging word. Jesus taught that "we are to bear one another's burdens." (Gal. 6:2).

While working with a small church some years ago there was a man in his late 60's who was known as "the town drunkard." After much study and many visits he was baptized into Christ one cold Sunday afternoon. The people in the small town all knew him and were amazed to hear the news of his conversion. The day he was baptized some were overheard to say, "He won't last a week." To my knowledge, during the next few weeks no one from the congregation visited him or gave him any encouragement. Sure enough in a few weeks he stopped coming to services. Some even teased me by saying, "Where is your friend, the drunkard?" Others said, "I told you that you were wasting your time with that man."

One wonders what would have happened had everyone encouraged him and visited him, letting him know they believed in him and were praying for him to remain faithful. What a waste to let this precious soul sink back into the world of sin! What a "stinking" attitude on the part of many of those who seemed to be glad he fell by the wayside so they could say "I told you so."

Some seem not to have learned yet the value of a soul! Jesus said in Matt. 16:26 that "one soul is more valuable than the whole earth." The Bible teaches that even a drunkard's soul is more valuable than the earth itself. Oh, how some brethren need to learn this lesson!

Moved by this sad experience in my life led to the writing of the following poem. Please ponder the message it bears:

He Won't Last At All!

A man's heart was touched by the gospel call.

*"He won't last a week," cried they all,
Trying his best to stand erect and tall,*

*Yet, no encouragement found he, no, none at all.
Yes, the man fell and oh how great was his fall.*

*"I told you," they said, "I knew he wouldn't last at all."
Oh, how can people be so blind and cruel and unkind.*

*And not help their brother find.
The Christ who died for their sins and mine.*

*So, if you see your brother fall,
Encourage him to give his all;*

*And if, by chance, he sees you fall,
Hope and pray that he doesn't say,*

"I knew he wouldn't last at all."

How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8,

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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