

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 14

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

August, 1981

No. 43

## Closer than a Brother

By Harold Turner

*"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."*

(Prov. 18:24.)

Friendship is both one of life's greatest blessings as well as one of life's greatest virtues. One who has a true friend has one of life's greatest treasures. In the heart of most people there is a hunger for someone to be a true friend. All of us need someone with whom we can share both our joys and our problems. But why is it that we have a problem with finding a true friend?

Most of us, I'm sure, recognize the danger of false friends. At one time or another we have been betrayed by a person that we had thought to be a true friend. The hurt and disappointment of such a betrayal makes it difficult to place confidence in others. Solomon describes this hurt in Prov. 25:19, saying, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." The pain of betrayal goes deep, and too often it causes us to become reserved that we fear to be open and honest with others. Yet, our need for friendship is an ever present desire. However, we need the kind of friend that Solomon spoke of in Prov. 17:17, saying, "A friend loveth at all times." A person who befriends us for what he can gain from us is not a true friend. Such a person will not stick with you unless there is something for him to gain personally from you. In Prov. 14:20 Solomon said, "The rich hath many friends." Why is this true? Because "Wealth makes many friends." (Prov. 19:4.) "Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." (Prov. 19:6.) No doubt the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) had many friends until his money ran out, but when this happened he found himself alone. No one had any use for him in poverty. In verse 16 Jesus said, "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." His friends had proved false. They would

befriend him only as long as he had something to offer them.

We sometimes become amused at today's politicians, who express such concern and interest in us. If we will just elect them to office, they will do everything to help us. But in many cases their only interest is in themselves. But this practice is not new. It was practiced long ago by David's son, Absalom. In 2 Sam. 15:4-6 the Bible says, "Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Absalom was not truly interested in the people, but rather in himself. He wanted the people to follow him in order that he might become king. Jude 10 describes such people, saying, "Their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Because of such people, we find it difficult to really believe in true friendships. But this fact does not change our desire for true friends. How then can we know a true friend? For one thing, we know that true friendship is not bought. As Solomon said, "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." (Prov. 19:6.) If friendship is sustained only by what we have to give, it isn't true. A true friend loves at all times. He is more willing to give than to receive. He is willing to help when there is nothing to be gained personally. Such people love us for what we are rather than for what we have. Such friendship is a refreshment to the soul. In Prov. 27:9 Solomon said, "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Someone once compared friendship to a light, saying, "A lamp shines as brightly in the day, but its worth is found in darkness." Friendship is great when everything is going well, but it is even greater when we are down. One of the most beautiful stories of true friendship is seen in the relationship between Jonathan and David. Though Jonathan stood in line to

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## Who Authorized Music in Worship

By Glynn V. Purdy

In previous articles we have shown from the Bible that mechanical instruments of music are not authorized by God for Christians to use in worship. If the Bible did not teach them to be wrong for any other reason, the use of instruments would be wrong because they have been a reason for dividing religious groups. Division is sinful. 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-5. If this type of music is the cause of offence, it is sinful (1 Cor. 10:32; Rom. 14:23). We know that the use of instruments is not essential for acceptable worship. If the instrument were essential, then the apostles and all other Christians did not worship God acceptably for more than six-hundred years; because they did not have the instrument in worship.

Since God did not authorize the use of instruments in worship for Christians, then why have them? If they have not been authorized by God, evidently they are used by the authority of men. In Matt. 15:8-9 Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The use of anything that is not authorized by God makes worship in vain.

If God did not command instrumental music in worship, why is it that so many churches use them? And, how and when

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#### EDITORS

Erwin Cowen and Harold Turner  
Publication No. 211780

### WHO AUTHORIZED MUSIC IN WORSHIP

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did their use begin? Since the Bible is silent on this subject, we must turn to history for the answer. The earliest account that we can find of music being used by any church is 666 A.D., and some think it must have been a hundred years later than this.

From Chamber's Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, Page 112, it is stated, "The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by pope Vitalian I, in 666 A.D. In 757 A.D. a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Copronymus, and placed in the church of St. Corneille, at Compiègne. Soon after Charlemagne's time, organs became common."

From the American Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, Page 688, it is stated, "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe, about 670 A.D.; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek Emperor, Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 775 A.D.

There it is! From God? Oh, no! The New Testament is as silent as the tomb concerning mechanical instruments of music in worship, and the Lord's church was more than six-hundred years old before the Roman church introduced the organ in worship, and maybe nearly eight-hundred years old. The churches that use the instrument have borrowed them from the Roman church. If it is a little shocking to learn that this type of music is from the Roman church rather than from God, keep in mind that denominational churches is a result of trying to reform the Roman church rather than returning

to the New Testament. Those who love the Lord will demand a "thus saith the Lord" for everything they practice in worship and work. It is the Bible, not human creeds and traditions, that will judge us before God.

As we turn to the New Testament for the authorized type of music in worship we find that singing is the only type mentioned. Christians are to sing and make melody in the heart unto the Lord. Consider the following Scriptures: 1 Cor. 14:

## IF YE LOVE ME

By Harold Turner

*"If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me . . ." "If a man love me, he will keep my words . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings."*

*(John 14:15, 21, 23, 24.)*

*"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.)*

From the above passages it is evident that the type of love that God wants from us is a love that obeys his teachings. A love that will not express itself in obedience is not the type that pleases him.

Obedience is a test of our love for God. No matter how we may feel, unless we do his will, we do not really love him. From the very beginning God has always demanded obedience from those who seek to please him. When God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, he gave them one command of restriction. He commanded them not to eat of the tree that he placed in the midst of the garden. To violate this command would bring the penalty of death. Have you ever wondered why this tree was placed in the garden in the first place? Why didn't God just leave it out. After all, it served no apparent purpose to man; because he was forbidden to eat of its fruit. But isn't it possible that God placed this tree in the midst of the garden for a test to the loyalty and love of man? To be of any real value, man must be a creature of choice. God didn't create man to be a mere puppet on a string, or even as a slave, but he wanted man to be free to choose and to serve him by this freedom of choice. If Adam and Eve really loved God and appreciated God's love for them, they would be loyal to whatever God requested of them. But, notice how the

15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12.

Please keep in mind that most Bible scholars of note, admit that there is no authority for the mechanical instrument in worship. The use of mechanical music is of uninspired men, and not of God. The use of the instrument is a part of the "doctrines and commandments of men", which Jesus said makes worship vain (Matt. 15:9). How we serve God is vitally important. Let us not place our faith in the wisdom of men, but in the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:5).

test began and developed. Satan soon enters the picture and actually begins to cause man to feel that God hasn't really loved him. Adam and Eve begin to feel that God has unduly restricted them. Isn't this implied in Satan's question, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1.) And then in his reply to this restriction, said, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:5.) He seems to be implying, that rather than God having placed you in a paradise, he has actually placed you in a prison, and rather than making you free, he has actually placed you in bondage. Satan then offers them a way of "real freedom" where life is not governed by strict laws that demand restrictions and require actions of obedience. But Satan's way was deceptive, and actually it was the means by which man was brought into bondage.

But, why was it such a terrible thing to eat of this restricted tree? Actually, it was not the eating that was so terrible, but the attitude which expressed a betrayal of love and loyalty. Their choice to eat was a choice to let Satan influence their lives more than God. They evidently had begun to doubt the love of God. Satan seemed to have the right answers, and so they listened and responded to his advice. They failed the test of love.

God has given us every reason for expressing our love and appreciation to him. He doesn't ask for a one sided love. John wrote, saying, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10.) "God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were

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# What God Hath Joined Together

By Ordell Heavin

One of the more familiar verses in the Bible is found in Matt. 19:6 where Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Jesus used these words in referring to the marriage relationship, and preachers usually read these words whenever they perform a marriage ceremony. This divine principle needs to be deeply instilled in the hearts and minds of all who enter this relationship.

The tragic divorce rate of our time indicates the need for the home to follow God's pattern for this institution. Marriage is an institution of God, and for the home to be what it should be it must follow His instructions for it. God planned marriage for the good and happiness of mankind. In the beginning God recognized that it was not good for the man to be alone, even in the paradise of Eden. God then made the woman and presented her to man. Jesus said that when two enter this relationship, "they are no more twain, but one flesh." (Matt. 19:6.) Both can now be complete. Their hearts and lives are bound together in the closest of human relationships. And in God's plan for marriage in the beginning, He planned that only death would break this relationship. In Rom. 7:2 Paul wrote, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." Thus, what God hath joined together, man is not to put asunder, or break apart. No man has a right to separate this relationship, no court, judge, or lawyer has the right to break apart a home by granting a divorce.

In our nation more than twenty-five percent of the marriages are ending in divorce. Broken homes mean broken hearts, and when children are involved it is sadder yet. A home cannot be built upon deception and dishonesty, and still bring happiness and fulfillment. Husbands and wives need complete confidence and trust in each other. No home has ever ended in divorce, and no home has ever failed of success and happiness when it is built according to the instructions of God. Every person entering this relationship should enter it with a good measure of common sense and with a strong commitment to his Christian faith, and with a determination to follow the words

of Jesus, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matt. 7:12.)

Marriage should be preceded by a period of courtship so that each man learn whether or not they have enough in common to make a happy home for the other. Marriage is no miracle worker. It is not likely to bridge the gulfs of differences between the two who wed. Amos once asked, "Can two walk together, except they agree;" (Amos 3:3.) Sometimes people expect the impossible from the marriage relationship. They expect it to be free of all problems, and in fact, nothing short of a heavenly state, but such is not always the case. If a person is looking for perfection he is likely to have a rude awakening. None of us are perfect, none of us are free of problems, and because of this marriage requires patience, tolerance, longsuffering, forbearance, and a forgiving spirit. Many marriages have failed because of stubborn pride, and a refusal to repent or ask forgiveness of the other. Tempers uncontrolled have probably caused as many divorces as has immoral acts. The Bible teaches us not to let the sun go down on our wrath. This is certainly good advice for the home.

In Matt. 7:24 Jesus said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." Marriage needs to be built upon this rock also. God's word needs to be studied and followed daily. Satan is still working to spoil every woman and corrupt every man. He wants to plant suspicion, jealousy, hatred and bitterness between husbands and wives. No home will fall if built upon the solid rock of God's word. The many storms of life may beat upon it but it will stand.

We need to restore the beauty of holiness and Christianity to the family life. Righteousness can never be strong in our nation until we put God back into the homes of the world. This old world is due to a much worse fate than nuclear destruction. God will bless our homes if we allow him to be the builder of them. In 2 Kings 20:15 the question is asked, "What have they seen in thine house?"

Do people see God as a central part of our home life? May God help us to never let anything cause us to put asunder what God hath joined together. Let us work at building our home rather than tearing it apart. We can be "fellow laborers with God" in building our homes, as well as building a Christian life.

## CLOSER THAN A BROTHER

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become king after his father, he was willing to take second place to David. Jonathan protected David on different occasions from his father, Saul, who was ever trying to kill David. In 1 Sam. 23:17, Jonathan told David, "Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." Not everyone would be willing to take second place to be a friend. When Jonathan died David wept, and said, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." There was nothing false about the friendship of these two men. There was nothing selfish between them. Solomon's description of a true friend is clearly seen in their relationship, "A friend sticketh closer than a brother."

To find true friends greatly depends on the attitude we have toward friendship. Do we want friends solely because of what we can get from them? "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly." When we are willing to do more for others than we require them to do for us, we have taken a step toward finding true friends. Since we must first prove ourselves to be a true friend, we must express a generous and unselfish attitude toward others. Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38.) This principle will apply to friendship, as well as to other things. To have friends, we must first be a friend. Our attitude toward others will greatly influence the relationship as to whether it is true or false. If friendship is ever destroyed or proven false, let us make sure it is of no fault of our own. Let's strive to be a true friend to others, and we will more likely find true friends.

# GUARDING OUR VALUES

By Harold Turner

I believe that Christians have become children of God because they desire to go to heaven. And I'm sure that most Christians realize that going to heaven requires diligent effort. In Heb. 12:1 the writer encourages Christians, saying, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us". We cannot live the Christian life and go to heaven by accident. We must determine this above all else; because Satan is going to do everything he can to keep us from reaching this goal.

Living the Christian life and going to heaven requires living by the highest moral standards known. In 2 Tim. 2:19-20, Paul wrote, "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In Titus 2:7-8, he said, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that can not be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." And in 1 Thess. 5:22 he wrote, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." So the Christian must abstain from and flee from all things and influences that are evil. We must dedicate ourselves to a life of purity and holiness. In 2 Cor. 7:1, Paul said that we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So, as a Christian, we must live by the standards and moral values which God has set forth in his word.

Our moral values and standards are under constant attack. Again, Satan is doing everything possible to influence us to lower and even abandon these high values of the Christian life. There are so many different ways that this can happen. We are influenced to believe that everything is either black or white. If a matter is sin it will be specifically condemned by a "Thou shalt not." When we like and want to do something, we begin looking for a "Thou shalt not" to condemn it, and when there is no specific condemnation pronounced upon what we are wanting to do, we then ignor all other danger signs, and do it. We close our eyes to its effect upon others; we refuse to consider its influence upon our reputation as a Christian, and we argue with all reasons offered by older and more mature Chris-

tians concerning the dangers involved. We justify it in our minds because we want to do it, and then we do it.

The Christian should want to guard his reputation from even the possibility of it being damaged. We are to pattern our life after Jesus, and we should want to be as nearly like him as possible. We should seek to glorify God in everything we do. We should want to live the kind of life that others can follow to have a closer relationship with Christ. Let's refrain from any and every thing that might cause another to stumble. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14:21.)

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## IF YE LOVE ME

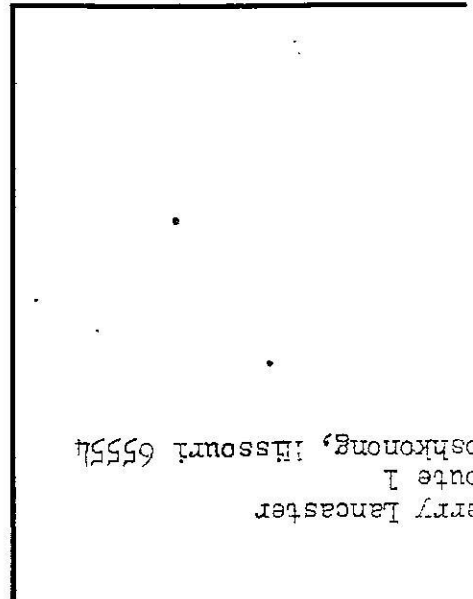
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yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8.) Christ died for us, not only to give us a hope of eternal life, but to actually make life better for us today. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." He wants life to be better for us, as Paul expressed in 1 Cor. 1:5, saying, "That in everything ye are enriched by him." Since God has expressed his love for us in such a marvellous way, shouldn't it be only natural that we express our love toward him in doing the things that please him? God has never asked us to do things that are designed to deprive us of happiness. As John wrote, "His commandments are not grevous." (1 John 5:3.) The things that God requests of us is for our good. He wants to protect us from the hurtful experiences of sin.

In becoming a Christian, and in living the Christian life, we should begin and continue with a commitment to do all things that God desires of us. He has so much to offer in this life when we serve

him in a warm spirit of love and devotion. Look at some of the promises he has made us. In Matt. 11:28 Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Do you ever get tired and burdened down inside? Do the problems and disappointments of life cause you to become discouraged with life? In Jesus, the Christian has a source of inward strength and encouragement. In Phil. 4:6-7 he promised, "In nothing be anxious; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." There are many things in this life that causes people to be deeply disturbed by fears, uncertainties and doubts. In Jesus, the Christian has something to hold his life in place. There is an inward peace in the soul of the Christian that passes human understanding. These promises, along with many more, show us that God wants to enrich our life rather than to rob and deprive us.

When we really consider all that Jesus has done for us, and also continues to do for us, it is such a small thing that we express our love for him in obeying and serving him. The power of his love will redirect our life if we will open our heart and life to it. And when we do this, we will find life to have so much more meaning and purpose. With David we would likewise encourage, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." (Psalm 34:8.)



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