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DISAPPOINTMENT

By Dale Smart

There are many things in this life that are a disappointment to us — and as there have been in the past, so shall it be in the future.

We are sometimes disappointed in our sons and daughters. This is not a new thing that has just started. Adam no doubt was disappointed in Cain. I Samuel 2:12-17 tells us about the sons of Eli. They knew not the Lord. Instead of accepting the offering they were entitled to, the cooked roasts of the offering — they demanded raw meat. The 17th verse says: *"Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord."* This was a disappointment to Eli.

We sometimes are disappointed in our sons' or daughters' selection of a mate. When marriage is considered, one should be very careful in the choice they make. Marriage is for life except for adultery or the death of one's spouse.

Jonah was disappointed when the word of the Lord came to him and told him to go to Ninevah and cry against the city. Jonah tried to run away from the presence of the Lord. The Lord was disappointed in Jonah.

We sometimes make the remark: "I don't know what is happening to the young people today." We find that some are on drugs, others smoking pot, and think nothing of living together before marriage. What causes this? Let's go back to the starting point — our life of example to them. Do they have respect for us, or are they just following in our footsteps? The generation of

today is a direct result of the way we have "brought up" our children. The Bible tells us to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I for one have made remarks about the younger generation being sinful in the use of drugs, etc. A newspaper article stated that in a recent survey of identifying who was "hooked on drugs", they found that the greatest number that were "hooked" were found to be in the 35 to 50 year old age range.

In reading of our Lord's life, we can plainly see that even the apostles were a disappointment to Him at times. No doubt, Peter's denial was a great disappointment to Him. Judas certainly was.

Our Lord led the perfect life as an example for us to live by. We became a big disappointment to Him when we fail to live by the standard He set. Our Lord was never a disappointment to His Father in heaven. God was well pleased with Him.

God the Father will be disappointed in us if we fail to make heaven. Our Lord desires that all should be saved, that none should perish. (II Peter 3:9). There will be great disappointment in the day of judgement. Many will cry out "Lord haven't we prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name cast out devils?" These will be disappointed because they "thought" they were doing God's will. To avoid this disappointment, why not go back to the Bible and speak where it speaks and be silent where it is silent? Let us quit doing it like we want to do, and do it as God has directed us.

The "ball" is in our hands, let's be careful where we "bounce" it. "Avoid disappointment", do it like the book says.

"The Choice Is Yours"

By Mike Pace

We live in a nation where every man's religious belief is respected and protected. Aren't you glad? I am! Freedom of choice, in fact, has its origin in God's own scheme of things. God created man a free moral agent, and has always allowed him the liberty of making his own choices. The words of Joshua to the Israelites of old (Joshua 24:15) reflect God's manner of dealing with all men of all ages: *"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."* What we tend to forget, is the fact that we are also held responsible for the choice we make. Joshua told Israel that God would turn against them if they chose to turn against him (Joshua 24:20). Just because God allows us to choose, does not mean God approves.

So it is with us today with regard to churches. There are hundreds of different churches, and we are free to choose any one of them. God allows it, and our nation defends our right to do so; but that does not mean GOD APPROVES of our choice. We may choose a church which wears and glorifies the name of a man, of a place, or of some peculiar doctrine, but God approves of the church for which his Son gave his life, his Son's bride (Eph. 5:22-33), and which wears the only *"name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). We may choose a church which has its own set of rules discipline or creed, but the Son of God says our worship is vain if we teach as doctrine what is nothing more than man's commandments (Matt 15:9). The Holy Spirit also

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"THE CHOICE IS YOURS"

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pronounces an eternal curse on any, including angels, who would dare teach anything other than what the prophets and apostles by inspiration proclaimed (Gal. 1:6-12).

When we talk about the church of OUR CHOICE, we should keep in mind that the very foundation of truth as revealed by God, and the only solid basis for Christian unity, is in reality the fact that there is ONLY ONE CHURCH (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:1-4). That one church is not my church, your church, or their church; it is HIS church. It is HIS because he purchased, built, founded it; HIS because it wears his name, teaches his doctrine, and defends his word.

"But," someone might observe, "aren't all the churches HIS churches, and if not, how do I know which is which, and how can I possibly sift through the hundreds of churches until I find the one that is His? The answer is so simple, and so easy, that most simply refuse to believe it. There is no need to sift through all the hundreds of creeds and doctrines of the numberless churches. Just read the word of God, and obey *"from the heart that form of doctrine"* found in His word (Rom. 6:17). God will, according to his promise, purify our souls because we have obeyed the truth (I Pet. 1:22); and in keeping with God's purpose and plan, He will ADD us to the church of HIS choice (Acts 2:47). That's all there is to it! We don't join any denomi-

nation, we are not obliged to defend any denomination's doctrine or creed, we are not subject to the decisions and deliberations of any ecclesiastical authority, and we need not wear any name other than Christ's name. We are Christians, and God has added us to the church of the Lord; what could be easier? "But", someone objects still, "we can't just be nothing, we wouldn't have even a sanctuary to meet in, and what about a minister or priest, or someone to administer the sacraments?" I told you the solution was so simple people refuse to believe it. We object because we are steeped in human traditions, and unacquainted with the Scriptures. There is no special "holy" place where Christians have to meet (John 4:20-24). We can meet in our homes if we want to, or, several who have been added to the Lord's church can pool their resources and build a building if it is convenient and practical to do so; any building, any size any place. The church of God is the people, not the building. And there is no special clergy in God's church; all are priests (Rev. 1:6), all are brethren (Matt. 23:8), and all are equal in God's sight (Gal. 3:26-29). As for sacraments, no such thing is ever mentioned in the Scriptures.

There are millions today around the world meeting in homes, in rented halls, in small buildings, in large buildings, people who exercised their free choice and said "we will serve God — we will not be a member of any church but God's church." You too, are free; the choice is yours.

PREACHER TALK

By Bobby Duncan

No doubt, every gospel preacher has been disturbed by the fact that his preaching has not had the desired effect. This is especially true when members of the church have not been convinced of the truth by sound logic and plain passages of scripture dealing with some moral issues, such as dancing, social drinking, or immodest apparel. We lament

the fact, and rightly so, that members of the church hold to their prejudices as tenaciously as do some in the denominational world, despite the fact they give lip service to a respect for the Bible as the infallible guide.

Could it be that those of us who preach are at least partly the reason some members of the church pick and choose the part of our preaching that suits them and reject the rest of it as being nothing more than the opinions of a preacher; Is it possible we have conditioned some to reject as unimportant that preaching which is not according to their fancy?

I refer to the fact that some - perhaps most of us at times - have yielded to the temptation to preach our opinions with reference to certain matters. Those members of the church who have heard such preaching, recognized it as nothing more than our opinions, and eventually became conditioned to tuning us out when we began to preach something with which they chose not to agree. Notice an example or two of what I mean when I say some have preached their opinions:

Card playing is not a sin, within itself. I know there are those who gamble on card games, and gambling is a sin. I know there are those who allow card playing so to dominate their time that they neglect matters of great importance. This is a sin. But playing a game with cards is no more sin than playing a game with a baseball or with a checkboard. When a preacher who has strong negative feelings about playing in general, and indicates in his teaching and preaching that those who are loyal to Christ do not play cards, he is conditioning his audience to reject his preaching, even when he preaches that which can be substantiated by the Bible.

Watching television is not a sin. It is true that much - maybe most - of what is seen on television should not be watched. And there is no doubt that most people spend entirely too much time watching television. Perhaps it is a fact that we would be better off if we did not

even own televisions. But for me to preach that television is wrong and sinful within itself, and that those who watch television are guilty of sin, is to preach that for which I can find no scriptural justification. Such preaching causes those sensible people who hear to conclude that at least some of the things I preach are not based in scripture. They become conditioned to consider the preaching they do not like as being nothing more than the opinions of a preacher.

Matters of taste should not be preached as if they were the matters of faith. A few years ago, when pants suits for women became quite stylish, many preachers began speaking out against women's wearing that "which pertaineth unto a man." I, for one, do not believe the pants suits which are worn by women could reasonably be construed to be men's clothing. I have never seen a man wearing one of them, and were a man to wear one he would look ridiculous. Immodest apparel is wrong and sinful (I Timothy 2:12), and a pants suit which is not modest is sinful. But for a preacher to preach against pants suits as being in violation of scripture is to condition his hearers to reject his preaching, even when he preaches the Bible.

This is not to say that elderships which have requested ladies not to wear them to services are in error. Elders have the right and the responsibility to do those things which they believe to be in the best interest of the congregation in matters of judgment and taste.

I think it is in good taste for those who serve at the table of the Lord to be dressed in coats and ties, in most cases. If an eldership thinks it wise to do so, it can request that such be the case. Certainly the ability of every member of the congregation to wear a coat and tie should be given much consideration before even a suggestion should be made to this effect. But should I preach my feelings about this matter as if it were a matter of faith? Certainly not.

What I am saying is that those of

us who preach should be absolutely certain that our preaching is that which can be upheld by the Bible, and not just our own opinions. To preach our own opinions, even when our opinions are right, is to condition people to reject our preaching, even when we preach the Bible, as nothing more than PREACHER TALK.

"A Mother's Love"

By Naomi I. Price

Probably no love on earth is so great and lasting as a mother's love. Of course I am aware there are some mothers who do not love their children, some don't care enough to even keep their children. Some do not want all the constant care, training, and sacrifice of raising children, but this is in the minority. Most mothers love their children, they work hard to take care of their every need, the table is always full of good food, their beds and clothes are constantly being cleaned. Their home is a place of refuge, full of love, peace and a feeling of being loved and wanted. This is as it should be. But let us recognize all this hard work and love, is given freely. Mothers deserve so much more love and consideration than they usually get. Children don't take your mother's love for granted!

People meet, fall in love and marry, only someday to somehow fall out of love and divorce. They once thought there was no other love like this love. Never do you see a true mother divorce her love for her child. They may forsake and forget her; they may never have learned to love and give their mother their love, but she never quits loving them. They may hurt their mother deeply with their thoughtless actions, but she never stops loving them. Before they come into this world she carried them nine

months and she began to love them. They arrived helpless. She fed, bathed and clothed them and comforted and soothed away their every cry. What "love" she has; it goes on into eternity. She never stops loving and caring. Not for a moment does her love diminish.

Recently I heard a Christian mother make this statement, and I quote, "You feel concern for your children from the day they are born until the day you die." This is so true, and shows the deep love and care of a "Loving Mother". Young people, God made your mother a very special kind of person. There is just no one like her and no one that will ever fill her place. Are you mindful of her, do you show her your undying love? If not, begin now or you may have to answer to your God later.



Try Beginning Again

By Gus Nichols

Perhaps some reader has tried to be a Christian, but failed. If so, why not try again? Great success does not always come from a single effort. Worthwhile things are worth trying and striving for, even if we must try again and again. In the year 1917 a tornado destroyed our home, blew us away and ruined our crops out on a farm before it tore into Carbon Hill, Alabama and left the dead and the homeless in its wake. But we did not give up and quit. The next spring we found ourselves planting again, and soon we were growing a crop.

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TRY BEGINNING AGAIN

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Life is very much like that. Wars are not usually won by a single battle! But battle after battle must be fought before the victory is won. In a way, some of these battles are lost but victory belongs to those who win the last battle.

Very few spend a long life in the service of Christ without getting discouraged, and for the moment, giving up in despair. But those who overcome the world are they who (if need be) try again and again — who refuse to surrender to the evil one. If they fail, they go down fighting — soon to rise again.

It is easy to give up and quit when the going gets rough, as it most certainly will — sooner or later. Long roads usually have some detours and rough places over which one must travel in order to reach the desired destiny.

The Christian life is like running a race (Hebrews 12:1-2; I Corinthians 9:25-27). If one falls he should get up and try again. The new birth is a sort of "land of Beginning Again" (John 3:5). So is a restoration of an erring child of God (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).

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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. (Matthew 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

Mail all address changes to:
CHURCH OF CHRIST
P. O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, ARKANSAS 72554