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PREACHING ANOTHER GOSPEL

by Harold Turner

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9.)

In Rom. 1:16 Paul stated that the gospel is God's power to save the lost. Jesus declared that his gospel be preached to every creature in every nation (Mark 16:15). The salvation of every person depends upon his having heard the gospel of Christ, and where the gospel has not been preached, there is no salvation. However, in the above Scripture (Gal. 1:6-9) it is clear that there is but one gospel that will save the lost. Even if, after having been saved by the true gospel, one turns to another gospel, he will fall from the grace of Christ. Being saved and remaining saved depends upon the one gospel which was preached by the apostles.

Paul indicated in the above Scripture that there are some who by willfull action will pervert the gospel of Christ. To pervert means to change something in its design or nature. Once the gospel has been perverted it has lost its power to save and keep saved. This should stress to us that it does make a difference what we hear taught religiously, what we believe, and what we do.

In a similar warning, Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 4:2-4, "Preach the word . . . For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." While this passage

indicates that some by their own choice will turn away from the true gospel, there will be others who are innocently led away with them. Paul indicated this further in Rom. 16:18, saying that they will "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Innocent people are affected by false doctrines.

God's people have ever been faced with corrupt men who work to change His word. The apostle Peter warned, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you . . ." (2 Peter 2:1.) In nearly every book of the New Testament God has warned us about false teachers who work to deceive the honest and sincere. What is a person to do? Can we afford to bury our head in the sand, and believe that it just isn't so? It may be comforting to believe that all the honest and sincere people in all churches, no matter what they believe and practice, are going to be saved, but does the true gospel of Christ give any indication that such is true? When Peter gave the above warning, he added in the next verse, "And many shall follow their pernicious ways." And in the next verse warned that these false teachers will "with feigned words make merchandise of you." Too, Jesus warned, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.) The blind leaders of whom Jesus spoke were false teachers.

There are some things that we must do to protect ourselves from following a perverted gospel. When Jesus warned about false teachers in Matt. 7:15, he said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." What is the fruit of a teacher? Obviously it is what he teaches. It is not whether or not he does good to others, or appears to be righteous that identifies him as a false teacher. If this were the case how would we identify Satan and his followers? In 2 Cor. 11:14-15 Paul said, "And no

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Faith or Tradition?

by Ted Mountjoy

A man placing an order by phone, concluded by saying, "No substitutes, please." He was aware that we live in a day and age of substitutions and synthetics. Anymore, even the "real McCoy" is liable to be simulated! And regretfully, this is true with God's word. Men have taken words from the Bible and substituted meanings other than what the Bible communicates. Words such as "priest" and "Reverend" are often used to identify or set apart, those who are supposed to be proclaiming God's word publicly, from those who are not.

But, when reading the New Testament, it is obvious that anyone who is truly a Christian is a priest. John, in writing to the seven churches of Asia, says that Jesus Christ "made US to be priests unto his God and Father." (Rev. 1:4-6.) Peter, in writing to be Christians of the first century, refers to them as "a holy priesthood," and as "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9.) Therefore, EVERYONE who is a Christian is a priest.

In regard to the word "Reverend": the word carries with it the idea of reverence, revere, adore, worship, or worthy of reverence. When one is called "Reverend" it necessarily implies the definitions just stated. But, when reading the Bible, it is obvious that ONLY God is to be revered. Even the apostle Peter refused to let a man give him reverence in Acts 10:26. The word "Reverend" is a name applied to God in Psalm 111:9. Therefore, what right does man have to wear that name?

There wasn't a special class of Christians in the first century. No one was holier than the other. They were all ONE in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28.)

One who proclaimed God's word publicly was called an "evangelist" (bringer of glad tidings), a "preacher" (herald for the king), or a "minister" (one who serves). These Bible names obviously de-

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GOSPEL NEWS

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and Harold Turner

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SMASHING THE BAROMETER DOESN'T STOP THE STORM

by Ordell Heavin

A few years ago Gayle Oler published an article in his paper, "Just A Moment", where he told about a business man who received an expensive barometer through the mail. The instrument just didn't look right to him. The pointer was way over to one side. In disgust he sent it back at once to the manufacturer, with some sharp rebuke about the pointer. That afternoon a storm came, the wind blew and much damage was done. Then the man remembered the barometer with the pointer off. He had failed to heed its warning.

This should be a real warning to us of not giving heed to God's warnings. There is no profit spiritually in becoming angry at the truth and its instructions. When the alarm clock wakes you up at six in the morning, you can silence the clock, throw it out the window, but it will still be six o'clock. If you ignore the warning, you have not injured the clock. If it is a warning from the Bible, it still reads the same. If you ignore it, you are the loser. You may ignore your responsibility to God, refuse to hear his word, but He is not mocked (Gal. 6:7). You may spurn all thoughts of the judgment, but that will not delay the day one minute. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb 9:27). It simply means that if you ignore your responsibility you are going to the judgment unprepared. You may hide your head in the sand like an ostrich, and you may try to forget the world and the sands of sin; you may try to forget you have a soul and that God let his Son die for you; you may ignore Christ and the church, but that doesn't mean you have escaped the judgment. An argument with a barometer, or the Bible, doesn't change the message of either. The truth alone has the power to make us free. (John 8:32).

The authority of Christ must be recognized and accepted if we are to escape destruction. In Acts 3:22-23, Peter said, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." This inspired statement remains true whether we heed

it or not. The wages of sin is still death (Rom. 6:23). This is a fact, regardless of how pleasant or enticing sin may be.

The most expert argument cannot remove the fact that the unbeliever and disobedient will be eternally lost at the judgment. It is also true that those who receive salvation have heard, believed, and been baptized. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). In Acts 2, after hearing and believing the gospel, "They that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." These are truths that all will face in the judgment, whether they chose to believe them or not.

We are admonished to "Remember thy Creator in the day of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Eccl. 12:1). It seems the older one gets the harder it becomes to give up the ways of Satan and become a Christian. The writer of Heb. 3:13 shows that it is possible for people to become hardened by sin. This doesn't mean that you can't become a Christian just because you have grown older, but it does suggest it will become more difficult to change with age. Heb. 4:7 warns, "Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation!

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marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." To test the fruits of a teacher we must go beyond appearance and examine what he teaches. This is what John is saying in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." What one teaches must be tested by the only true standard, the gospel of Christ. In 1 Peter 4:11, Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." The oracles of God are the Scriptures (Heb. 5:12-14). We must do as did the Bereans in Acts 17:11, who, "Received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." The only way we can know what is truth is to bring it in the light of God's word.

Our eternity depends upon our hearing and obeying the gospel of Christ. To follow the doctrines and commandments of men is to serve in vain (Matt. 15:9). "Let no man deceive you with vain words." (Eph. 5:6.) Take your stand on the word of God only. Every person owes it to himself to examine his religious beliefs and practices, not in light of some man-made church laws, but in light of the word of God. When we face God in judgment, we will face the gospel of Christ as the standard for our judgment. Jesus said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). "Take heed what ye hear." (Mark 4:24).

"The only difference between big-headed people and pig-headed people is one letter."

CONTRIBUTIONS

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"As you leave footprints on the sands of time, don't leave the marks of a heel."

THE PURE IN HEART

by Terry Frizzell

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8).

The heart includes the mind, the will, and the emotions. To be pure means to be sincere, unfeigned, upright, and void of evil. There are two basic concepts included in purity. (1) One must be morally clean. The actions of our life are to be patterned after the life of Christ. In 1 John 3:3 the writer states, "And every man that hath this hope (eternal life) in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This would also mean that we are to strive to be obedient, as he was obedient to God. (2) Sincerity of motives is also necessary for a person to be pure in heart. Even though we may appear to be pure to those around us, God knows our heart. We can be hypocritical to our fellow man, but we cannot fool God.

The Christian's heart is pure to the extent that he allows God to dwell within his mind, his emotions, and his will. Paul said in Phil. 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things

are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." What? Engulf yourself with these things that are pure and good, and "Abstain from all appearances of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22).

Purity of heart is not sinless perfection, for John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8). While not perfect, the pure in heart are those whose hearts are essentially in tune with the love, grace, goodness, and the will of God. The pure in heart worship God "In the beauty of holiness." (Psalm 29:2.)

The promise to the pure in heart is that "they shall see God." This promise is true, the pure in heart shall see God. The pure in heart, not only will see God in eternity, but in various ways will see his power. In Psalm 19:1 the writer said, "The heavens declare the glory of God;

and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Even nature reveals to us things about God. Too, the pure in heart are able to see that God is the source of all blessings. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, in whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1:17.) Those whose hearts are impure are blind to the powers and blessings of God about him. Peter said, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." (2 Peter 1:9.)

The promise "they shall see God" is more than just what we now see and know of him. It is still promised and is still to be fulfilled. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:2-3.) Therefore, let us be pure in heart that we may someday be with him in glory.

IS CONVERSION A MIRACLE?

by Ernest Loomis

Often one hears people speak of the "miracle of conversion", but is conversion a miracle? Those who insist upon a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the alien sinner must teach that conversion is a miracle, otherwise their doctrine falls. The Bible, however, teaches that the Spirit works through the word to convince, convict and convert. Paul declared the Gospel to be God's power to save (Rom. 1:16); and that God has chosen, by preaching the Gospel, to save the believer (1 Cor. 1:21). He also states that one must hear, believe and obey the gospel to be saved (Rom. 10:13-14). A graphic illustration is found in Acts 2:37, where, when people heard the preaching of the apostles, they were convicted of their sins, and asked what they must do. They were told to "Repent and be baptized" for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

We would not deny that something wonderful takes place when one is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), which cannot be accomplished by the power of man, but we have to deny that a miracle has taken place. Admittedly all things began by a miracle, but they continue by law. We need only to consider the material creation to understand this principle. In creation God decreed that all

things bring forth after its own kind, and placed life in the seed, thus, the seed brings forth after its own kind by the law of procreation. While we may not fully understand it, we know that a seed must be planted before a new plant comes forth. We also know this is not a miracle, but according to God's law, which is usually referred to as the law of nature.

The same is true spiritually. When the seed, which is the word of God (Luke 8:11), is planted in good and honest hearts, it brings forth fruit after its kind (Luke 8:15). This is not a miracle but a result of the law of procreation. This truth is also stated very plainly in 1 Cor 4:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23 etc. Our physical birth was not a miracle, neither is our spiritual birth a miracle, but both are by God's law of procreation. If conversion were miraculous in nature, we would expect to read something in the Scripture to illustrate or prove it, yet Jesus used the law of procreation in the vegetable kingdom to illustrate the law of procreation in the spiritual kingdom (Matt. 13).

Conversion indeed involves a power, but not a miraculous power, for Paul said the "Gospel is God's power to save." (Rom. 1:16). Conversion requires three distinct changes. (1) A change of mind

or will, which is repentance (Matt. 21:28-29). (2) A change of life, character or direction. How shall one continue to live in sin after becoming dead to it (Rom. 6:1-2). (3) A change of state or relationship. When this takes place one becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26-27), a servant of God (Rom. 6:17-18), and a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). Conversion involves the Holy Spirit, but not in a miraculous way, for Paul said the word of God (which is able to save, James 1:21) is the "sword" of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

A miracle is something contrary to the law of nature, but the process of conversion follows precisely the law God introduced into the spiritual kingdom. The seed, which is the word of God, is planted in receptive hearts and it produces Christians just like it did in the first century.

If you are waiting for a miracle, you are waiting for something you have no right to expect. It wasn't promised — it won't happen! Jesus is the author of salvation to those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). Those who "DO" the commandments of God will have right to the tree of life (Rev. 22:14). Not those who "say" but those who "DO" will enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 7:21). Don't wait for a miracle, but believe and obey the gospel that you might be saved.

Of What Value is Our Example?

by W. L. Totty

There is an old adage which says, "I'd rather see a sermon than to hear one any day." Actually, there is much truth in it. The effectiveness of our teaching, many times, is lost because our "actions speak louder than words."

Christ is the perfect example; yet, our lives, as God's children, are to be such that, when imitated by others, will draw others to God. Jesus said, while here on earth, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14); and we are to let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16). The apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians to "Be followers of me" (I Cor. 4:16); and, in I Cor. 11:1, he said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." He said as much to the Colossian brethren: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Col. 3:17). It is vital, therefore, that when we put on Christ in baptism our lives from that day forward are to be examples, both in word and deed, that will lead others to glorify the Father in heaven."

There are many poor examples of Christianity which we must recognize as such, so as not to be influenced by them. While upon earth, Jesus told his disciples, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21). The man who hears the word of God and does it is likened to the wise man, whereas the man who hears but does not do the will of the Lord is compared to a foolish man. Jesus cautioned the disciples about imitating the example of the scribes and Pharisees. He said, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23:3).

A few times in my life I have heard preachers of the gospel, in trying to encourage the membership to get involved in doing personal work, visiting the sick, etc., make the statement that they are "not hired to visit the sick"; that they are hired to preach the gospel. It is unfortunate that one would hold that view, much less publicly state it, for it is a false conception of what his work in the kingdom really is. One holding such a view of Christianity as that is like those Pharisees and scribes of whom Jesus spoke, who would lay upon others burdens that they themselves would not lift a finger to relieve. He needs to consider the examples as well as the precepts taught by Christ and the apostles and put into practice that which he preaches. He needs to tell the people in the pew to "be ye followers of me," and demonstrate the principles that he is trying to instill in others. James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and

doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17).

Elders, as well as preachers, may set up all sorts of programs for the church, but if they themselves do not LEAD the way, they may not expect much cooperation from others. Peter, himself being an elder, says that elders are to take the oversight of the church, not as "being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (I Pet. 5:3).

To the Phillippians the apostle Paul wrote: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Now, if one who claims to be a child of God is not imitating the apostle Paul in those things which Paul both commanded and taught by his actions, we may mark it down that that one has his mind on earthly things, and his end will be destruction.

Paul made himself an example for us to follow in actions as well as his teaching, saying unto the Thessalonians, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you." (II Thess. 3:7). He said he did not eat any man's bread for nothing, not that he did not have the right to receive their financial assistance, but that he might set the example of being industrious. When he was in Corinth and was in want, he kept himself from being burdensome unto the church there. However, his needs were supplied by the brethren of Macedonia (II Cor. 11:9). It behooves us, therefore, not to be idle. From the beginning of the history of man in the Garden of Eden, it has been decreed that he shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

The brethren of Thessalonica, having become followers of Paul, were themselves an example to all that believed in Macedonia, "For," Paul said, "from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any things." (I Thess. 1:6-8). If we will imitate those brethren of Thessalonica, we will spread the word of God wherever we have the opportunity.

Jesus, when he washed his disciples' feet, set an example of service to his fellowman, not elevating himself above others, though he is our Master. He said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15). We need to be busy in bearing one another's burdens. Our perfect example "suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile

found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness . . ." (I Pet. 2:21-24).

The apostle Paul sounded out a warning to the young preacher Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12). It behooves us, then, to be examples of righteousness and not to be beguiled by examples of wickedness set forth by those who do not the will of the Lord.

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scribe their job, and are not intended to make a "holier than thou" impression. They didn't dress in special clothing to show who they were, or wear big crosses to show how holy they were. They lived their lives, and performed their task of proclaiming God's word, to the point that people knew who they were—not by their dress, but by their lives.

The question is: Are you listening to, or following, a substitute, or the "real McCoy"? Are you listening to tradition or faith? Remember, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.)

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