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## The Religions Among Us

Glynn V. Purdy

The apostle Paul said, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lust 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". 2 Tim. 4:3-4.

"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God", 2 Thess. 2:2-4.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth", 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

"And I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them", Acts 20:29-30. This was spoken by the apostle Paul to the leaders of the church of the Lord at Ephesus. They had met him at Miletus.

John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world", 1 John 4:1.

Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their  
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## Religious Fads

Clovis Ragsdale

The dictionary defines a fad as a passing whim pursued with great zeal for a short time then relegated to the background or completely forgotten. We often see this in wearing apparel, automobiles, hair styles, housing, and in many other things of life. After fads pass we look back upon them as having been foolish and frivolous.

Fads are also found in religious thinking and practice. In 1 Cor. 15:29, Paul hints of a teaching that some were baptizing for the dead. The shakers of early American History were quite popular for a short time. In our present day we have a number of fads that have sprung up. We could list the Jesus Movement, God is dead, various cults, and during the past year, demons and exorcism. A recent motion picture help fan the interest in demon possession.

In New Testament times demons did possess individuals and Jesus and the apostles were able to cast out and free certain persons from the power of devils. From a close study of the Bible it is also true that after Christ died on the cross that the power of Satan to bind people was broken, Col. 2:15, John 12:31, and 1 John 3:8 lead to this conclusion. The devil today, through deception and false teaching, misleads people, but does not have the bodily possession as was true before the cross. Paul states in Eph. 6, verses eleven through seventeen how we can fight against the devil misleading people.

With the passing of miraculous gifts, 1 Cor. 13, no man today would have the power to cast out a demon if it could possess a person. The doctrine of exorcism could only be passed off on a unformed public who will not take the time and energy necessary to become informed on what is taught in the scriptures. There is no substitute for each individual searching for truth from the Bible and not to depend on others to do it for him. This lack of individual study has led to a generation of unlearned who fall prey to such wild ideas that are found in religion today. This condition will lead to further fads which cloud the truth from a world which so badly needs to return to the Bible for its faith and practice instead of being moved by every wind of doctrine which is the tool of Satan to mislead and destroy.

## The Art of Listening

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

One of the greatest needs of our times of stress and strain is for concerned people who are willing to listen. James expressed the need in this way, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak." (James 1:19.) We have often reversed this principle as we have been "swift to speak, and slow to hear." Christian friend, do you listen? We get so involved in giving advice and telling others what to do that we forget to "give ear" and "listen"!

Preachers need to listen! The work of communicating the gospel demands listening as well as speaking.

Every Christian needs to develop ears that are open and compassionate. Who knows the cares of your neighbor, your classmate, or even the person sitting next to you in worship services? Hundreds of questions could be buzzing in his mind! A consciousness of failure could be breaking his spirit! His home and marriage could be threatened! These people could be on the verge of an emotional explosion.

But, you ask, "How can I help?" Why is it that most people just push their problems down deeper without seeing or talking to anyone about it? Why don't they open up to us?

Christians out to be the best of helpers. Often, however, the attitudes of professed Christians have not been conducive to such confidence. The troubled person needs a compassionate and understanding soul in which to confide. If we are critical and self-righteous, rest assured the one who feels ashamed and guilty will not approach us. If we are prone to "tell all we know" in gossip it would be dangerous to talk with us. People generally can sense whether or not we really care!

Think about it, isn't it a cold fact that many do not feel safe talking to us about their problems! We ought to be ashamed!

Question: How well do you listen? Examine yourself in this matter! Do you really listen to God? He is talking to us in his Word. Do you listen to your companion? Are you listening to your children? Could one of the reasons why

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
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*They Preached*

Our God is able to turn a seeming misfortune into a blessing. He can turn all things toward our good, and His glory, Romans 8:28. It looked like a calamity when the church was scattered from Jerusalem Acts 8:4, yet history shows it was a boom for the cause of Christ because it resulted in Christians being scattered to the uttermost parts of the earth and taking the knowledge of God with them. Note, Acts 8:4, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." One can "preach Jesus" without a formal situation being had where there is a crowd assembled; one man can ride along with another, and in a conversational manner teach him about Jesus. If you want an example of such teaching, read Acts 8:35.

All of God's children might not be able to teach in the pulpit and class-room, but every child of God can and must be able to tell others how they can become Christians. YOU CAN IF YOU WANT TO. YOU CAN IF YOU ARE NOT ASHAMED OF JESUS. Before you do anything else read Mark 8:38. How many persons a day would you speak to about their souls if you were paid ten dollars each? God does not see things as men see them. What seems hopeless and discouraging to us--such as a small church-house and few in the congregation--does not necessarily appear that way to God because He is able to do all things, which seem impossible to men. Paul said that he could do all things through Christ.

--L. Stewart

**The Indestructible Book**

The Bible is indestructible. There is no danger that any man, or any combination of men, will destroy the Sacred Volume. They can, and do, destroy the faith of men in the Bible; but they cannot destroy the Bible.

About twenty-five hundred years ago, Jehoiakim, king of Judah, cut the roll of Jeremiah's prophecy with a penknife and then consigned it to the flames; but he did not destroy the inspired message of the "weeping prophet." Jehoiakim died in disgrace and, as the prophet said, was given the "burial of an ass." "Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not lament him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah Lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer. 22:18, 19.)

Early in the fourth century of our era, Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, launched a relentless and bitter attack on the Bible. He sought to consign every copy of it to the flames. About two years after he began his ruthless destruction of Bibles, he erected, over the ashes of burned Bibles a monument which bore the inscription -- Extincto Nomine Christianorum -- "Extinct is the name of Christians." Twenty years later, another Roman Emperor, Constantine, was seeking to put the New Testament in all the churches in his empire.

Voltaire predicted that the Bible, within one hundred years, would be a forgotten book. Within much less than a century the Geneva Bible Society was using his home as a basis from which it distributed millions of Bibles. Bob Ingersoll, American agnostic, once held a Bible high in his hand and boastfully exclaimed, "In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue." Within fifteen years Ingersoll was in the morgue--in his grave; but the Grand Old Book lived on.

The poet, Blake, well said:  
"Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau;  
Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain!  
You throw the dust against the wind,  
And the wind blows it back again."

Another poet, Flynn, has said:  
"They burned Truth in the market place  
And thought their work complete;  
But next day, with a smiling face,  
They met it on the street.  
They threw it in a dungeon-damp  
And thought it was no more;  
But lo, it walked with lighted lamp  
Among them as before.  
They scorned and ostracized it,  
And ordered it to depart;  
But still it dwelt in all the land  
And challenged every heart."

A recent writer, A. Z. Conrad, paid this tribute to the Bible:  
Century follows century--There it stands.  
Empires rise and fall and are forgotten --  
There it stands.  
Dynasty follows dynasty -- There it stands.  
Kings are crowned and uncrowned --  
There it stands.  
Despised and torn to pieces -- There it stands.  
Storms of hate swirl about it -- There it stands.  
Agnostics smile cynically -- There it stands.  
Profane punsters caricature it -- There it stands.  
Unbelief abandons it -- There it stands.  
Higher critics deny its inspiration -- There it stands.  
Thunderbolts of wrath smite it -- There it stands.  
An anvil that has broken a million hammers -- There it stands.  
The flames are kindled about it -- There it stands.  
The arrows of hate are discharged against it -- There it stands.  
Radicalism rants and raves against it --  
There it stands.  
Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily --  
There it stands.  
The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it -- There it stands.  
Infields predict its abandonment -- There it stands.  
Modernism tries to explain it away --  
There it stands.  
"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Psalm 119:89.)  
"The grace withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:8)  
"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35.)  
"The Book of God will stand secure  
When sun and stars decline;  
Its ageless truths will still endure  
To prove its Source divine."

--Selected.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

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# Is He Really?

Paul T. Breakfield, Jr.

A few days ago some Christian friends were discussing weekend camping trips. It was suggested that everyone needs to "Get away from it all and just relax" once in a while. Certainly this is true. Even Jesus himself, on occasion, went aside with his disciples for some quiet time. (Matt. 14:13, 23; 17:1, 19; Mark 6:31.) It is quite clear, however, that the reason behind Jesus' action was that he might be able to pray and commune with God-not for pleasure in today's parlance. These things aside, I am not disturbed over brethren wanting to "get away from it all" by taking camping trips.

I was disturbed, however, when some of them resorted to "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst," (Matt. 18:20) as justification for willfully forsaking the assembly of the saints. The argument was, that on such occasions it was not necessary to leave the camping area and attend worship with the nearest congregation of God's people. It was argued that acceptable worship could be engaged in by family that had gone out, strictly for a weekend of pleasure, even though they did not seek out and worship with the nearest congregation. I think this is a perversion, or at least a misapplication of the Master's words and I sincerely question the acceptability of such worship services.

Let me explain what I mean. Suppose another Christian brother, who lives next door to the meeting place of the church, is not an outdoors type but one who loves his home and its comforts, decided that he is "up tight" and needs to "get away from it all and relax." Comes Lord's day and he and his family sleep late, have a late breakfast, read the paper and really enjoy themselves. Later, at some accidental time, he, his wife and children break out the Bible, read a few verses, make a pretense of singing a couple of songs, have a short prayer, and go through the motions of the Lord's supper. Would they be doing right? Would their worship be acceptable to the Lord? Would they be forsaking the assembly next door to them? Two or three would be gathered together (not specifically for worship, I'll grant), but they were together and they did go through the motions of worship.

There could be many variations of the application, but they would all come out the same-it would not be what the Lord had in mind when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst . . ." A close study of the passage in question will

# Ten Rules For Improving Attitudes Within The Church..

1. Tell yourself over and over that since you are not perfect, you would not fit into a perfect congregation, if one existed . . . . .

2. Instead of picking out the worldly members to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them. You will find what you seek.

3. If you are old, treat the young with consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat adults with the respect you will want when you mature.

4. When you are tempted to criticize others be sure to pray earnestly for them first, this may not change them, but it will do wonders for your attitude!

5. When you see a work being neglected, instead of being critical, offer to help.

6. Never, NEVER blame others for your own failures . . . Every individual can be faithful to God in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others if he is determined to be.

7. Remind yourself every day that the only way you can improve the world or church is to begin with self!

8. Consciously look for the good qualities in every brother and sister in Christ. When you think of a brother or sister, make a quick mental note of the good points each possesses.

9. Constantly strive to increase your circle of associates in the church. Try to do something good for each.

10. Every church has problems. Constantly ask yourself, "Am I a part of the problem or am I a part of the solution?" . . . "Am I trying to be merely a critical spectator?"

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show that the Lord had in mind an action taking place when the church was assembled. (Matt. 18:17.)

Somehow we have encouraged the idea that driving a few miles from home and setting up camp in the woods or on the river bank makes it right to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together . . ." (Heb. 10:25) MY brethren, it ought not so to be!

# You Can Be Just A Christian

Has it ever occurred to you that you can be just a Christian . . . nothing more nor less than just a plain Christian? Yes, even in the midst of the religious confusion of our creed-bound, denomination - divided age, it is possible for you to be just a Christian and nothing more.

What does it mean to be just a Christian? Well, being a Christian means so much more than merely being a good moral person. More than just going to church on Sunday. More than just having one's name on a church roll.

Being just a Christian means to trust and obey Jesus Christ, just as Paul, Philip, and all the Christians of the first century. It means going back beyond all distinctive Catholic and Protestant doctrines of today to find Christ just as He is revealed in the inspired New Testament.

You see, there were no different denominations in the beginning of Christianity. The early disciples were all one body. They were called simply "Christians", (Acts 11:26) They did not follow different creeds but were guided by "the faith once for all delivered to the saints".

The New Testament, first as the spoken Word and later as written by "holy men of God" as they were guided by the Holy Spirit, was their only rule of faith and practice. (2 Peter 1:21) We have this same New Testament today and can reproduce the same pure Christianity, which flourished in the first century. We can be just Christians.

To find the details of just how you may become and remain just a Christian like Peter, Paul, Barnabas and John, you need only to open your New Testament and read for yourself. We suggest that you begin with the Acts of the Apostles, because this is the book of conversions of the New Testament.

In the thousands of recorded cases of conversion listed in Acts you will observe a consistent pattern of obedience. They all did the same thing to be saved. They believed in Christ, repented of their sins and were baptized. (Acts 2:38; 16:31) In this fashion they became all that the Lord required of them.

Modern concepts of Christianity may vary so much from the pure form of it seen in the Bible. There was not a multitude of ways of being saved, for the Lord stated His terms of salvation that were to apply to the whole world. (Mark 16:15-16) The concept of joining "the church of your choice" had not yet been developed. People had only the choice of one church-the divine one for which Christ died. There were not a multitude of faiths, but the "one faith". (Eph. 4:4) -- Selected - Sandusky Sower



The Religion Among (Cont.)

heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men", Matt. 15:8-9.

The church at Ephesus was commended for, "... and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars", Rev. 2:2. This was in A.D. 96; yet even today there are those who claim to be apostles! They must be tried today, even as in A.D. 96.

We CAN understand from these PLAIN Scriptures that after the life time of the apostles, FALSE teachers and FALSE religions would arise, claiming to be FOLLOWING Christ! They would claim to be apostles, they would lie, they would arise even IN the Lord's church and draw away disciples AFTER themselves! These false religions would FORBID men to marry, and FORBID them to EAT MEATS which God gave men to eat with thanksgiving! They will draw near the Lord with their MOUTHS, but because they are NOT governed by the word of God, BUT BY THE CREEDS OF MEN, their HEART IS FAR AWAY from God! Their worship is vain said Jesus! Who wants his worship to be vain? Yet many are worshipping God according to the creeds of men today! We know this is true! God's people, those who worship God in spirit and truth, John 4:23-24 (TRUTH is God's word, John 17:17) are to TRY these by the BIBLE and "find them LIARS". This may sound hard, but it is God's word! A man was to arise later, who would claim to be God on earth even to telling himself that he IS God, and have men worshipping him, rather than God! It does not take a Bible student to know that ALL these things have been fulfilled before our very eyes today! Who is the man today who calls himself "god" and millions kiss his feet? Who forbids to marry, who forbids men to eat meat? Millions have turned their ears from the truth!

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The Art of Listening (Cont.)

children sometimes hesitate to talk to their parents concerning their problems is parent's failure to really listen? Do you listen to your friends?

There are people all around us who are about to give up. They feel alone, afraid, misunderstood and worthless. Remember that Jesus took time for the downtrodden! As Christians let us make a determined effort to be a listening, understanding friend. And when we have listened, perhaps we will better understand the words of Peter who said, "The ears of the Lord are open unto our prayers." (1 Peter 3:12.) Listen, please!

# Full of Deadly Poison

Alan E. Highers

James says of the tongue: "It is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison." It is interesting to note that with the tongue we may praise God, we may proclaim the gospel of peace, we may utter prayer, we may sing with the spirit and with the understanding, or we may curse, we may swear, we may lie, or we may use the name of God in vain, we may be tale-bearers and rumor-mongers. The tongue is the instrument of either great good or tragic harm, all depending upon how it is used.

James further stated, "And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defieth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature and is set on fire by hell." (James 3:6) It would seem with such a severe warning as this that people would be extremely cautious in using the tongue, but such is not always the case. James goes on to show the dual use of the tongue: "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and there-with curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (James 3:9-10.)

SOWERS OF DISCORD

In Proverbs 6:16-19 there is a list of seven things which "Jehovah hateth." Three of the seven (nearly half) involve the tongue: "a lying tongue, . . . a false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." One of the condemnations of Diothrephes was that he was guilty of "prating against us with wicked words." (3 John 10.) Paul warned Titus that "there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, . . . whose mouths must be stopped." (Titus 1:10-11.)

The psalmist, in striking language, describes those "who have aimed their arrows, even bitter words." (Psalm 64:3) Again, in Psalm 73:9, we read of those whose "tongue walketh through the earth." In answer to the question as to who would dwell in the holy hill of God, David said, "He that slandereth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his friend, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." (Psalm 15:3) Little wonder that the psalmist said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with tongue." (Psalm 39:1).

THREE WRONGS

1. It is wrong to tell that which is false. "Lie not one to another," (Col. 3:9) One has an obligation to know that what he speaks is the truth. The scriptures are extremely severe upon one

who has no regard for the truth. "All liars . . . shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. 21:8). "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. 22:15) It seems, strange that anyone would love a lie, but some would rather tell a falsehood than to tell the truth.

2. It is wrong to repeat that which is false. This is what the Bible calls talebearers, where one spreads a slander which he has heard from someone else. People sometimes endeavor to justify talebearing by saying "I am just telling what someone told me." But the law said, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." (Lev. 19:16) The wise man said, "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter." (Prov. 11:13) Listen further to the wisdom of these words: "Where no word is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." (Prov. 26:20-21, KJV) It appears that some are always willing to add wood to the fire: the best way to kindle strife is to be a talebearer.

3. It is wrong to receive that which is false. You recall that the young prophet lost his life not because he told a lie as the truth. (1 Kings 13) The New Testament teaches that men will be condemned for believing a lie. (2 Thess. 2:11-12.) Every person has an obligation to ascertain the truth before he speaks it, repeats it, or receives it. A gossiping tongue cannot function without a receptive ear! Well did the wise man say, "An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips: and a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue." (Prov. 17:4) Notice especially the teaching of the Scriptures with reference to the character of the one who listens as well as the one who speaks.

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