

Banner of Truth

"The truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

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"The Love of the Truth"

**The love of the truth and obedience to it brings salvation.
Receiving not the love of the truth brings damnation.
Multiplied millions are walking in darkness because they
know not and receive not the love of the truth.**

Millions, even billions, of accountable human beings are marching toward the end of their earthly journey. Very few have any valid reason to look forward to anything positive when the hand of death touches them. One of the saddest of things ever is that this does not have to be so. The Creator of humankind had in mind something far better than an earthly existence, and He has demonstrated it both by action and by His word.

It is not possible to fully fathom the nature and mind of God. Reasonable men surely believe that God who brought all things into existence has the power also to provide something for man after physical death.

God's plan from eternity was to offer His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. That plan was fulfilled when Christ shed His blood on the cross; by this blood, He purchased His church. God made it possible to know His will through His inspired word, the Bible.

God's will for man today, by which man may know how to receive the eternal blessings God has provided, is "the truth." This we shall consider in the following discussion.

A good place to start is a response to the all-important question of:

I. WHAT IS "THE TRUTH"?

The word "truth" is used well over two hundred times in the Bible, but we are discussing *the truth* as it is used in the New Testament more than fifty times.

When Christ stood before Pilate he said, "for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth..." (Jno. 18:37). There is no way to know just what was in the mind of Pilate, but he asked Jesus: "What is truth?" (v. 38). It is not likely that Pilate was interested in the truth since he inquired no further even saying that he found no fault in Jesus.

The basis for our discussion of

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BANNER OF TRUTH

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The Love of the Truth, is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, where Paul discussing "the man of sin," says of them that perish, "[they do so] because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (v. 10). Then he speaks of God sending a strong delusion, "that all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (v. 12).

It is important to note that Paul speaks of "the," not "a" truth." "The truth" and other terms make it clear that the truth has reference to a specific body of truth. For example, Paul speaks of those who came in to spy out the liberty they had in Christ Jesus saying of them: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel; might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). Paul then uses the term "the gospel" again in verse 14, when he calls speaks of Peter and other Jews who "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel."

The truth has reference to the gospel, which is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). In writing

to the Colossians, Paul gives thanks "for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:3-5). Paul points out the distinctiveness of the gospel saying, "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" (Gal. 1:8).

Another term which is synonymous with the truth is "the faith." Paul told the Corinthians to "stand fast in the faith" (I Cor. 16:13). Note again that it is "the faith," and not "a faith." We often hear people speak of many or different faiths. In reality there is only one. I know this because Paul said there is "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). Jude writes, "...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Christ points out that He is the very embodiment of the truth, when he said to his disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life..." (Jno. 14:6). Christ is "the way" and not "a way." It would be meaningless to speak of Christ apart from the truth. Men have conjured in their minds many ways, many faiths, many religions, but they are not based on the truth. Christ identifies God's word as being the truth when he prayed to the Father for the apostles and those who might believe on Him through their word, that God would, "sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jno. 17:17).

Now that we have seen the significance of the truth, that it represents the one and only way of pleasing God and reaping the benefits that God has made possible through it, let us turn our attention to the attitude toward that truth.

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE THE TRUTH?

Loving the truth is something more than just accepting God's word as being truth. Many people quantitatively know much of God's truth, yet they do not have a love for it. Love, as it is used in Second Thessalonians 2:10 is the *agape* form of love. It is more than just an emotion. This form of love is of the highest order. It is the love which God has for man, and that man is to have for God and for all men. †

This form of love with regard to loving the truth, suggests an attitude of really wanting to know and have the truth.

There are a number of things which both exemplify one's love for the truth, and one's lack of love for the truth. Let us first consider several things which are characteristic of those who actually love the truth.

Desire for the whole truth. We all know that some people have a respect for some of God's truth, but not all of it. To the elders at Ephesus Paul said, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). The person, who truly loves the truth, wants all the truth. All of God's word is truth and is worthwhile to man in some way; otherwise, why would God have made it known?

Not a few Christians want only "positive" truth; they do not like negative truth, though about half of God's truth is stated in negative terms. There are those who do not want all the truth on the subject of divorce and remarriage. Some do not want and will not accept the truth with regard to the authorized work of the church. Not to be left out are those who do not want God's truth which limits worship to what Christ said in John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This portion of the truth rules out the present practice of many who like entertainment in its various forms in lieu of true worship. More could be said, but let us move on to another characteristic of truth lovers.

Desire for the unadulterated truth. One of the dangers faced by some is the desire for versions of the Bible which are not trustworthy. An example of that is the New International Version (NIV). This version contains outright error, yet it is now preferred by many. One who truly loves the truth wants it to be set forth as accurately as can be. Within the past few decades there has been a proliferation of new Bibles which contain error, and all of them find buyers, as evidenced by their ready availability.

Receipt of the truth with readiness of mind. Paul said of the Bereans, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). *Readiness* is defined by *Vines* as "eagerness, willingness, readiness" (p. 932). How many are ea-

ger and willing to receive God's truth? It is significant to note that Paul said the Bereans received the word with "all readiness of mind." Not only were they eager to receive the truth, but "they searched the scriptures daily" to determine whether what they heard was actually the truth. How commendable. There is no question but that these people loved the truth.

If one actually loves the truth, would not he be inclined to emulate the Bereans? Who would say, No? From my experience over the years, I say we need more Bereans. We are seeing today considerable indifference toward receiving the truth and searching to make sure that what is heard is the truth.

Many people could care less about "a thus saith the Lord." Often the only readiness (eagerness) some have is to take what the preacher or teacher says without any search of the scriptures to determine if what they hear is so. The detrimental results of this are seen in the many problems we now face within the church. There were some problems fifty years ago, but nothing like what we face today.

In Bible classes it is evident more than once in a while, that people have made no preparation whatsoever. The sad thing about this is that it is to the hurt of those who fail to study. Why are people this way? It cannot be because they love the truth.

A readiness to obey the truth. On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of Christ's church, as recorded in Acts 2, the apostles preached the gospel. Many of those hearers were ready to obey. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (v. 41). People asked what they should do, and when they were told, about three thousand did it.

Christ is the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9), and by His words we will be judged (Jno. 12:48). He said, "If a man love me he will keep my words..." (Jno. 14:23). We have noted earlier that the gospel is the use of another term to mean the truth. Since the gospel is Christ's, then obeying Christ equals obeying the truth. A failure to obey the truth is to show a disregard and lack of love for it.

A true love for Christ's church. If one truly loves the truth, he will love that which upholds the truth. Writing to Timothy about how he should →

behave himself in “the house of God,” Paul calls that house “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Tim. 3:15). The church does not create any truth, but it is to uphold and support the truth, which God has made known to man. We sing, “I love thy church oh God,” and this is true when the truth is loved.

People in the man-made religions consider the church of little or no importance. This is hard to understand, since the importance of the church is emphasized so strongly in the New Testament, but that is the way it is. Unfortunately, this lack of love and respect for the church has made its way into the Lord’s church. This is seen especially in the failure to set forth the church as the distinctive, one church, purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). When man-made churches are upheld and fellowshiped, it implies that the church of which we read in the New Testament is not distinctive.

Let us now turn our attention to characteristics of those who do not love the truth.

Love of the world. Christ speaks of those who “loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jno. 3:19). “Light” is used to represent the truth, but darkness represents the opposite of truth, and that which is evil. In general, people of the world love darkness because they want to engage in that which is sinful. This some times happens to those within the church. Demas forsook Paul because of his love of the world, or that which is sinful (2 Tim. 2:10).

Apathy and unwillingness toward the truth. On one teaching occasion, Christ’s disciples asked why He was speaking in parables, to which He explained, “this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:15). There are still people like that in our day. They simply do not want to hear the truth, and they are not going to do so.

Offended sensibilities. We see evidence of a lack of love for the truth within the church when people do not want to hear that which is contrary to their lifestyle or shows them to be guilty of some sin.

People guilty of wrongdoing do not like to have their “toes stepped on.” Many preachers, me included, have been fired for preaching truth which people did not want to hear. Those offended by the truth generally make no attempt to show that the offensive preaching is error; they just do not want to hear it. Preachers are sometimes forbidden to preach on certain subjects, simply because it might condemn some sin and those guilty do not want to hear the truth.

Unwillingness to study. Another example of a lack of love for the truth is when people do not take part in a study of God’s word in Bible classes and other worship services. Such people are rejecting that which is necessary to provide spiritual growth. The apostle Peter says that in conjunction with laying aside sins, we ought also “as newborn babes, [to] desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Pet. 2:2). Faithful and sound assemblies of the church are a great place to find spiritual food. Lukewarm brethren seldom have an appetite for spiritual food. Like the Hebrew christians, they are unskillful in the word, and not able to take the meat which is necessary for spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:12-14).

Supporting what is false. A sure sign of lack of love for the truth is when brethren fellowship and imbibe the teaching of man-made religions. This is a major problem today that was not much of a problem fifty years ago.

Let us now turn our attention to another very important matter, which should cause the God-fearing person to do some serious thinking.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO LOVE THE TRUTH

In the text which we are using as the basis of our discussion, Paul says of those who receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved: “for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

To be “damned” is to be judged and condemned, that is, to be lost. Said another way, it is the plight of those who “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.” If they had received the love of the

truth they would have been saved, but since they would not, they are lost. To not be saved is to be lost, and to be lost is the ultimate loss, that of everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46).

Some people do not like the idea of being lost and suffering eternal punishment, and they have come up with erroneous teachings which eliminate it. The New Testament constantly warns against false teachings, lies; yet, people fall for them anyway. How foolish are we if we think we can thwart God's plan by coming up with some teaching contrary to His word, the truth?

God has graciously set forth His truth and we can know when we are not abiding in it. Even Christians sometimes say they would be afraid to say that anyone is lost, even if God's word clearly says they are. While we are not *The Judge* we can make judgments, and we must. So often we hear people say, "I cannot judge," when they only have to look to God's word to make God-approved judgments. So often some go to Matthew 7:1, where Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged." They conclude, without even bothering to see what Jesus said in verses 2-5, that all judging is wrong. But we are even commanded to judge. Christ said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jno. 7:24). To say that those who receive not the love of the truth are lost would be righteous judgment.

In chapter 1 of Second Thessalonians, Paul makes it crystal clear that certain people are going to be lost. He says the "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (vv. 8-9).

Having already noted references to "the truth of the gospel," and that failure to obey that truth means one will be lost, we conclude that one can know that if an accountable person does not obey the gospel of Christ that person will be lost.

The picture of being lost is horrible beyond imagination. It is said of future punishment: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idola-

ters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). We note that the "unbelieving" are included in those who will inherit the lake of fire. Paul said of those who "received not the love of the truth," that they believed not the truth.

There is no cause for people to be lost; Christ said "the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32): free from the guilt of sin. But in spite of all that God has done to make salvation possible for man, most people will be lost. Christ urges entrance into: "the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13). It is indeed sad that most people are going to be lost eternally, but there is a much brighter picture to those who want to see it, and that is, salvation is available for those who are willing to love the truth and be obedient to it.

IV. BLESSINGS TO BE RECEIVED BY LOVING AND RECEIVING THE TRUTH

In this age of materialism people often measure blessings in terms of material things. Success is often measured in terms of: houses, lands, automobiles, clothes, and bank accounts. Our society is fraught with many problems due to gambling. People, often the poor, spend their needed money to buy lottery tickets, or other forms of gambling, for a chance to win a large amount of money. Our present time is one in which emphasis is upon material things and the here and now. The hereafter is the concern of fewer and fewer people.

Jesus poses a sobering question when he asked, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

The blessings of which we speak do have something to do with this life, but they have much more to do with the life that is yet to come, when the earth is no more. The life that is truly worth living today is one that has hope as an "anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19). That hope becomes real when the love of the truth is received, but not before.

It is a sad thing to see people depart this life without any true hope for the hereafter, but that is happening every minute of the day and night. It does not have to be that way. →

CONCLUSION

God's word clearly points out two eternal abiding places: Heaven and Hell. Christ said that the "sheep" on his "right hand" would go away "into life eternal," but "the goats" on his "left hand" would "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46). It is man that has come up with the idea of a place in between the two, or the elimination of hell. But that is like the lady who had been reading Jehovah's Witnesses literature. She said she "felt so good" since she learned there is no hell." It may have made her feel good but it was not and is not the truth. Hell is as real as heaven, and unless she learns the truth she will some day come to know the difference.

Though the New Testament is the repository for most truth about life beyond death, from early on, people have believed this precious truth. Father Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

When we come to the New Testament we find some clear references to heaven as the eternal abode of the righteous, those who receive the love of the truth in order to be saved. One of the most often quoted or read statements from God's word at funerals is something Christ said with regard to the life that is yet to come. "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (Jno. 14:1-3).

In Revelation 21, we find a description of both heaven and hell. Since we are discussing the blessings in store for receiving the love of the truth, we shall call attention to the former, heaven. John says of the former, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away" (v. 4). Can we fully fathom the blessings in store for those who receive the love of the truth? I do not think so, but one thing I do know, and that is, as we some times sing, "Heaven will surely be worth it all." That is, it will be worth a hundred times over, more than every effort we put forth in serving the one and only God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Let God be thanked that He made us creatures of choice. That is, we can make a choice in whether or not we will serve Him. Time after time, God's word encourages man to make the right choice in matters that pertain to spiritual things, which will determine our eternal destinies.

There is a good example of making the right choice with regard to serving God by Joshua of old. As he comes near the end of his message to Israel, he exhorts them to "fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth." And then he challenges them to make a choice. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served; that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). That is the only sensible choice today.

Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, illustrates a wise decision with regard to Christ's word, the truth. He said, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24). We know the rest of that story.

We have before us the choice between Heaven and Hell. Will we make a wise choice or a foolish one? Our Lord wants us to make the right choice. —*Editor*

A Huge Postage Increase

The postage increase which took effect May 14 is about a whopping 20%, when all increases are considered. One pound bundles sent to foreign countries increased from \$6.00 to \$10.10, a 67% increase. Foreign single copies of BOT now cost 90 cents. One pound bundles here in the U.S. increased from \$1.51 to \$2.02.

We have confidence that our brethren will continue to support BOT. — *Editor*

Does It Matter?

Marvin L. Weir

There seems to be no end today to what is *done* and *said* in the name of religion. Sad as that is, it is even sadder that multitudes believe anything they hear if it comes from a religious group. Does it matter? Christ knew that it mattered and thus admonished His disciples, “Take heed therefore how ye hear...” (Lk. 8:18). One who desires to please the Lord today will hear His Word humbly (Jas. 1:21) reverently (I Thess. 2:13), lovingly (I Jno. 4:19), and obediently (Jno. 14:15).

The mindset of the religious majority is that there are many different ways to get to heaven. This is the reason for the popular plea to “attend the church of your choice.” Everyone realizes that there are different churches that believe different doctrines but this doesn’t matter to most because they believe there are many different ways to get to heaven. Yet, Christ said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Does it matter or not whether one follows the way or just any way?

The following advertisement is typical of the emphasis and appeal most religious groups are using to lure people to their services. A specific church is mentioned and the ad says: “So come as you are and enjoy or *mix* (emph. MLW) of upbeat worship and relevant teaching. (Name of church) — where the coffee is hot, the people are warm, and the donuts are, well, cold. (But still yummy!).”

I know someone is thinking, “Does it matter? What is wrong with hot coffee and donuts being made available to the congregation?” It is the attitude that is manifested toward things that is cause for alarm. There is nothing wrong with peanuts, popcorn, cokes, candy and coffee at a movie theatre. People attend movies to be entertained and to view a film that is appealing to them. Thus it may be that this explains why coffee and donuts are so popular in today’s assemblies — everything is geared toward entertainment and what is appealing to the audience.

It is God who is to be worshipped and not man or man’s “felt needs.” Acceptable worship must come from a heart that is filled with reverence, respect and awe for the Almighty. If the food, fun and games were no longer available in many churches the members would cease to attend. Is our assembling together on the Lord’s Day for

the purpose of pleasing ourselves or pleasing God? Does it matter?

The Saturday, March 23, 2002 Dallas Morning News carried the story of the new “all-female ministerial team” for the Woodhaven Presbyterian Church located in Irving. The headlines for the continued column said, “Women take helm at Irving church.” The newspaper stated a truth that they probably did not intend to state. These women took these positions of leadership — the Lord did not give it to them. Neither does the Savior give the right to one to be a member of some man-made religious body (Matt. 16:18). Does it matter? The Bible teaches that men are to assume the leadership role in the church. This principle is affirmed by Paul in saying, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3). The apostle taught the Corinthian brethren that women were to “keep silence in the churches” (I Cor. 14:34). To Timothy Paul said, “Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man but to be in quietness” (I Tim. 2:11-12). One will search the Bible in vain looking for examples of apostles, preachers or elders who were women. Does it matter?

Many people who are not faithful in their “church attendance” put forth every effort to attend on two occasions. Much ado is made by the religious world over “Christmas” because it alleged to be the birthday of Christ. Many folks attend some special “Christmas service” to honor the Lord that they refuse to honor throughout the year. Where in the Bible are we told that Christ’s birthday is December 25th? Where does the Bible authorize us to celebrate the birthday of Christ? The Bible is silent.

God’s word does authorize members of His body to remember the Lord’s death every week as they observe the memorial called the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:20-26). Man-made religion has decided, however, that celebrating what has not been commanded is more important than obeying what has been commanded. Does it matter? The Lord’s Supper was instituted to remember Christ’s death, but no such institution was instituted to remember his resurrection. So many choose to neglect what is in the Bible while emphasizing what is *not* in the Bible. Does it matter? Yes.

—1277 Brandon St., Paris, TX 75460

Rochester College Promotes Women's Leadership in the Church and in the Home

Chris Dawson

On April 7, 2007 Rochester College (formerly Michigan Christian College) held its 2nd Annual Diversity Dialogue and Luncheon in Richardson Theater on the College's campus. The theme of that seminar was "Bridging the Gender Divide." The dialog began at 9:00 a.m. and ended at noon with lunch following. The Keynote Speakers were Candace Cain (Vice president of Student Services/Dean of Students) and Glenda Thomas (member of the Rochester Hills Church of Christ. Her husband, evangelist J.C. Thomas, Jr. is the Director of Diversity at Rochester College). The last portion of the Dialogue was a panel discussion which included Rubel Shelly (Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Rochester College), Jimmy Hurd (minister of the Oakland Church of Christ in Southfield, MI, moderator of discussion), Carl Van Hooser (Assistant Professor of Biology at Rochester College), a minister from the Apostolic Church, and the two female Keynote speakers.

This was my first time visiting the campus, which is about 65 miles from my home. I attended the meeting with a fellow gospel preacher in this area. We arrived too late to hear the Keynote speakers give their presentations, but we were right on time for their panel discussion. The two issues of focus that morning were the woman's role in the home and the woman's role in the church. Some of the women on the panel related bits of their experience in breaking down gender barriers in their own congregations, and were encouraging others to be bold in doing the same. Reading Scripture in the public assembly, leading at the Lord's Table, leading prayer in mixed groups, and even women teaching and preaching to the church was promoted during this discussion. There was much feeling and emotion in the statements that were made, and very little Bible acknowledged.

It was eye opening to hear some of the things that were being said that morning. But first, what we saw there wasn't all bad. For one thing, there were very few in attendance that day. I counted approximately 25 individuals, including the speakers. Also, some

on the panel discussion said that there was fear in the hearts of the elders, preachers and members concerning the promotion of women leadership. Some of the women on the panel told how they received rebuke from some of their sisters in their congregations for engaging in leadership activities in the assembly. There are folks out there on the fence, but not wholly given to this idea yet. There are preachers who want to push their liberal agendas but are a little leery because of opposition. Brethren who have spoken out and continue to speak out against liberalism can take courage in the fact that their voice is doing something in the church. But then there was much to weep over as well.

If the leaders in this Diversity Dialogue represent the "scholars" in the brotherhood we are in a heap of trouble. First, if those panel members who are supposed to be members of the Lord's church don't know any better than to invite a preacher from the Apostolic Church to work with them, then we can see already that they have serious problems. The Apostolic Church is known for their belief in speaking in tongues and miraculous works for today, among other things.

Secondly, Carol Van Hooser, the biology professor from Rochester, admitted that she taught evolution in her classes, stating that students need to understand the theory. She also said that it didn't really matter if a student in her class believed that God created the universe in six literal days, or if He took eons of time to create it. She asked the question, what would be the big deal? This is just a sample of the type of faith destroying work that is going on at Rochester College, and we haven't even gotten to their position on the role of women.

Dr. Shelly (as he was addressed) actually made some Bible observation about the matter. First, during the panel discussion Shelly said that the church's understanding of leadership in the home was all wrong. He said that the church has been observing Bible texts through "dirty lenses." He made

reference to Gen. 3:16, where God says to Eve, “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” His commentary on this passage was that this is a “descriptive” statement rather than “prescriptive.” His idea was that after the sin was committed in the garden, women would be subjected by their husbands to the will of the husband throughout the history of degenerated societies. But he also stated that Christ would come and restore the woman to her honorable role when the New Testament era was ushered in.

After the session was ended, I took the opportunity to ask brother Shelly some questions about his comments. I asked, if Gen. 3:16 is descriptive rather than prescriptive, and if Christ restored the women’s original role in His kingdom, why does the New Testament also teach the headship of the husband in the home (Eph. 5:22-25; I pet. 3:1-6; I Cor. 11:3)? What he said indicated that he believed the husband didn’t have any authority over his home at all. He pointed out to me that the context of Eph. 5 shows a comparison of Christ and his church to the husband and his wife. And he said that the passage indicates that the authority the husband has is to give his life in place of his wife’s. He said the husband is not given to be a “boss.” I mentioned to Rubel that Christ was the one who gave commandments to the church and he said, “Yes, but not very many.” How ridiculous! Does the church have the right to tell Christ what He will do and what He will not do? Regardless of the how few or how many commandments Christ gave the church, He is the one over the church, and the husband in like manner has authority over the wife (Eph. 5:23).

We also discussed the leadership of women in the church. Shelly told me that he had no problem with women leading prayer, preaching or teaching. I Cor. 14:34-35 are verses that don’t mean a thing to these brethren. Neither does I Tim. 2:11-15. Rubel said that women teach in mixed Bible classes from the pews by comments and questions they raise, therefore we shouldn’t have a problem with a woman standing up before the class to teach. I suppose that if an infidel came into Rubel’s class and made a good point about working for a living, or loving your neighbor, that the infidel would be asked to lead the class. Why can’t we recognize a difference between making a comment from the pew and standing in front of the class to teach?

Is this where our “great scholars” are in the church?

Phebe was brought into the mix in order to prove that women could be deaconesses. Romans 16:1 says, “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.” The word “servant” is the Greek word *diakonos*, which according to Thayer means, “one who executes the commands of another” This could refer to one in an official church office, the office of a deacon (I Tim. 3:13). But this is not the exclusive meaning of the word. Jesus was also called a *diakonos* (Rom. 15:8). But I don’t think He was serving in the office of a deacon in the church. I Tim. 3:2 says the deacons are to be the husband of one wife, period. It is funny how liberals can use some passages in order to *prove* a point, but mock faithful brethren for “proof texting.”

Shelly did mention that he doesn’t agree with the idea of women elders. It seemed sort of odd that he would allow women to perform all of the other acts and positions of leadership but not an appointment to the eldership. Instantly I figured that he would say this because I Tim. 3:2 says that a bishop *must* be the husband of one wife, eliminating the option of women. He said this was not the reason, and I have a naive interpretation of the passage. Although the passage says that a bishop “must” be these things, I Tim. 3:1-7 is not a list of requirements according to Rubel. He cited the fact that brethren will appoint a man to the eldership when he has only one child, not “children” as the text says. How misguided. If someone were to ask me if I have children I would say yes, though I have only one daughter. Sarah said that she had “children” after giving birth to only one child, Isaac (Gen. 21:7). I never did understand his reason for disallowing women into elderships.

There was in the meeting an overall tone of arrogance and irreverence toward the authority of the word of God. There is a phony intellectual atmosphere among these folk. People in the assembly laughed at the idea that someone might be offended at a woman leading prayer in a public service. These are the “Christ-like” leaders at Rochester College, and this is just a sample of what is going on in our brotherhood schools. Should we not be moved by the thought that future leaders in the church are coming out of institutions like this. It reminds us of →

Will God Hear the Prayer of Sinners?

Isa. 3:12, “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”

Faithful brethren must not grow weary at this time. These false brethren are not going to give up easy. In fact, it seems that these preachers and professors are not coming back, but the next generation may still be reached. We need to continue to be fervent in our work and prayers to God that the liberal movement can be diverted as much as possible. The Diversity Dialog meeting at Rochester College was closed with a prayer lead by a woman, and the Director of Diversity told all of us that the same Dialog would be conducted next year, saying, “We will continue to champion this.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: When will we be awakened to the danger posed by our liberal schools? This danger has existed for so long, and already much damage has been done to the cause of Christ.

When reading the above account of error at Rochester College, one may fail to see the true extent of this error and its influence in opposition to the truth. The people in charge at Rochester College represent only a small part of the evil. In the first place, just think of how much error will be spread by those who are students at the school. They represent various places and congregations, in which they will have an influence in days to come. In addition to the evil influence propagated by the students, think about those who make the school possible. Schools do not continue without money or financial support. It can be marked down that those who make the school possible with their support, are supporters of the error propagated by the school, by bidding it “God speed.” And, they will have an evil influence in the congregations where they worship

Rochester College is just one of our schools which uphold error. I don’t know of a single one of our sizeable schools which I could recommend as being sound. Fifty years ago it was very different. It used to be that parents could send their children to most of our schools and feel safe that their faith would not be shaken and that they would be influenced by error. Parents who send their children to these schools today, should stop and think, and I mean think *seriously*.

The word *sinners* generally means those who have not obeyed the Gospel of Christ. There is no evidence in the Bible that God will hear the prayers of such people. To expect God to hear a prayer, one must first be a christian. Christ, in the model for prayer (Matt. 6:9-13), begins with, “Our Father which art in heaven...” The person who is not a christian cannot in truth address God as “Father.” But the christian can do so, because he is a child of God.

Peter says, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and their ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (I Pet. 3:12). The “righteous” would be limited to those who are Christians. Those who do evil are those who are not christians. Christ said, “He that is not with me is against me...” (Matt. 12:30). Those who are not christians are not “with” Christ.

Some try to prove that God will hear sinners by going to the example of Cornelius, in Acts 10. Before that account can be used as an example of God’s hearing sinners, it must be shown that Cornelius was a sinner before Peter brought the gospel to him. Cornelius, however, had a good relationship with God before the gospel was offered to him. Of course, when the gospel was made available, he had a responsibility to obey it. Cornelius is described as: “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always” (v. 2). The angel told Cornelius “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God” (v. 4). He is also described as “a just [righteous, ASV] man and one that feareth God” (v. 22). It would be without evidence to suggest that such a man was a “sinner” in the sense we normally use the term.

The blind man, in John 9:31 said, “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.” The blind man was of course not speaking by Inspiration, but he was repeating what Inspiration had long said (cf. Prov. 15:29).

John says, “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (I Jno. 3:22). The non-Christian does not qualify.

—Editor

Through the Will of God

Readers' Response

“Will” [*theleima*] is the objective idea of design or purpose. As to the creation of “all things,” it is because of God’s “will they were, and were created” (Rev. 4:11). We are “sons through Jesus Christ...according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:5). Paul was greatly concerned that Christians be “filled with the knowledge of his will” (Col. 1:9). We sometimes entertain the idea of something being “God’s will” when it is not.

Paul was an apostle “through the will of God” (2Co. 1:1). “Through” [*dia*] means: in consequence of, by, on the basis of, by the agency of. This must have been an important matter, because no less than five times Paul makes it clear that his being an apostle was “through the will of God.” He served in this capacity in consequence of God’s design or purpose. Is it possible for people to do and be certain things, yet not “through the will of God”? Clearly so. Jesus spoke of those “that call themselves apostles and they are not” (Rev. 2:2); thus, they were not apostles through the will of God.

What about “preachers”? Can one call himself, and be called by others, “preacher,” yet not be so through the will of God? What about “elders”? Can one call and be called “elder,” yet not through the will of God? What about “teachers”? Would we not have to determine whether one is respectively preacher, elder or teacher through the will of God on the basis of “the knowledge of his will” (Col. 1:9)?

Is it God’s will that those called “elder” be incapable of teaching? be intemperate? have dysfunctional homes? be incompetent as leaders? be self-willed people? Is it God’s will that those called “preacher” not be full of the word and pure in life? Is it God’s will that those called “teacher” be novices? not be faithful in attending all assemblies of the church? When we call, or allow ourselves to be called something, we imply that we are such “through the will of God.” We had better make sure of that.

What about things we do, or not? “Which...did the will of his father,” Jesus asked (Matt. 21:31). Jesus spoke by experience; He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me” (Jno 4:34). His true family, He said, is comprised of “whosoever shall do the will of God” (Mar. 3:35). It is he who does the “will of God [that] abideth forever” (1Jno. 2:17). — P. 16

“It was a pleasure to speak with you Saturday. Please place our name on your mailing list and also the name of our good friends... Thank you for such a great publication and may God bless you & Mrs. Pigg for your service to Him, **Shirley M. Mathis, AR.** (*Thanks for the additions to our mailing list.* – Editor).

“Thank you for adding me to your mailing list for B.O.T. I love reading them.” – **Beth A. Foster, AR.**

“Your article ‘Leadership in Congregations without Elders’ was a great one and I am sure it will be very beneficial to many of our smaller congregations. I am going to make sure that all the men here read it. I hope you can find time to give us more of this vital subject. God be with you.” – **Ed Allard, Jr, GA.**

“Please change the address you have for us. We receive Banner of Truth and enjoy it very much. Our new address is...” – **Joshua Dement, AR.** (*Thanks for letting us know. Returns now cost us 41 cents.* – Editor).

“I have been getting Banner of Truth for some time and have enjoyed it. I am asking you to please put some one on your mailing list...”

“Thank you for the extra issues of BOT, Nov. and Dec, “Leadership in Congregations Without elders.” A very good article. Enclosed a check for... Thank You. Bless you & keep up the good works!” – **Royce E. Adams, CA.** (*Thank you for the favorable comment and the check to help us keep going in our work.* – Editor).

“My son Bill lives in Carson City, NV, which is a difficult area for Christians. Could you please put him on your mailing list for Banner of Truth.” – **Arthur C. Bensmiller, TX.** (*We are always happy to do so.* – Editor).

“We thank the almighty God for the good work of the Lord that you are part of. I have been receiving BOT and am very thankful for the great doctrinally [sound] articles. December I had four baptisms. These articles have been very useful in edifying the brethren. But I want to let you know that I have moved to another congregation where I am conducting school ministry. Going to different secondary schools on every Wednesday and studying with them. So I have changed the address from... I pray God will continue blessing the work you are doing.” – **Charles Ogutu Mwanga, Kenya.** (*Thank you for letting us know of your change of address. It now costs 90 cents to mail a copy of BOT to Africa. If the address is no longer right, it is a waste of money that is needed.* – Editor).

“Please remove our name from you mailing list. Thank you.” – **Rick and Karen Brehm.**

“Please remove our address from you mailing list. Thank You,” – **Julian Reynolds,** Minister for the church at Mayflower, AR. (*We’ve stopped the bundle* – Editor).

Readers' Response continued in July BOT.

A Truly Profitable Symbiosis

For many years, *Banner of Truth* has been a friend to and promoter of the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies in Pensacola, Florida. Though it helps that BOT's editor is also the father-in-law of one of the school's teachers, the paper's relationship to the school antedates the son-in-law's relationship to the same. Not a few BOT supporters are also generous supporters of NWFSBS. The Hickory Grove church of Christ, which sponsors BOT, is also heavily invested in the preacher training work in Pensacola. Editors, writers, and supporters of BOT have often spoken on the school's annual *Labourers together with God* Lectureship; and NWFSBS folks have been afforded the same honor at the annual *Banner of Truth* Lectureship. It is all in all quite the symbiotic relationship; we believe it is a meaningful one.

We usually think of a symbiosis in terms of biology: a mutually beneficial relationship between dissimilar organisms, though it also has come to mean cooperation between people and groups. In the world of nature, the goal of symbiosis is survival, life. In this relationship between BOT and NWFSBS, the goal is certainly no less, rather it is abundant and eternal life (Jno. 10:10, 28). Two works working together; what a thought. BOT's stated purpose is to: "1) Teach and uphold God's truth; 2) Encourage mission efforts to seek the lost; 3) Oppose that which is "contrary to sound doctrine" and not in harmony with the "doctrine of Christ."

Some — no doubt well-intentioned — people have thought and said that the BOT is only about controversy, negative stuff; training preachers, however, is about as positive a goal as one may pursue. As in other years, this year's *Banner of Truth* Lectureship (June 25 – 28) will spotlight the positive foresight of Banner of Truth, her editor, sponsor and supporters. Four of the speakers this year are graduates of NWFSBS. They respectively serve churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Tennessee. Other equally capable graduates could be added to the roster. How lovely and how positive it is that BOT supports in so many ways the production and promotion of preachers.

NWFSBS declares her vision and work in these terms —

Preaching and preachers are bound up in God's scheme of things. Preachers "announced" "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow them" (1Pet 1:10-12). "[T]hrough the "foolishness of the preaching," it is God's "good pleasure to save them that believe" (1Cor 1:21). Preachers, in the local assemblies of christians (cf. Acts 20:7; 1Cor 14:4) "preach" so as to "edif[y] the church." They are devoted to "preach[ing] the word [whereby they] reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and teaching" (2Tim 4:20). Preachers must be trained.

During the infancy of the church preachers preached "by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" (1Pet 1:12) through the means of such as the Spirit-given gifts of "prophecy" and "tongues" with "interpretation" (1Cor 14: 4, 23-24, 27-31). Yet, even then, the apostle Paul was very much involved in preacher training as evidenced by his God-breathed epistles to Timothy and Titus. He alludes to mental training—"give attendance to reading"—; moral training—"showing thyself a pattern of good works"—; and the mission of the preacher—"work of an evangelist" (1Tim 4:13; Tit 2:7; 2Tim 4:5).

With the cessation of the temporary Spirit endowed "gifts" (1Cor 13:8-13; cf. Rom 1:11), the need to train preachers has since that time become, and remains, even more significant. This need then is the mandate for the existence and work of the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies.

In the area of mental training, the school views deep training in the Scriptures as primary. Corollary to this supreme task are studies in geography, languages, history and philosophy. Moral training flows from emphasis on Bible teaching together with experience, wisdom, openness and consistency in the lives of those who have presumed to don the mantle of teacher. To help equip aspiring preachers effectively do their work and fulfill their mission, studies in English, public speaking, writing, logic and debate are a part of the curriculum, as well as opportunities for practical application of pulpit preaching and evangelism. —P. 14

SCHEDULE FOR BOT LECTURES — JUNE 25-28, 2007

MONDAY, JUNE 25

10:00 a.m.	<i>The Need and Basis for Optimism within the Lord's Church</i>	Alan Adams
11:00 a.m.	<i>Fight To Lay Hold on Eternal Life</i>	Roger Scully
1:30 p.m.	<i>Power To Overcome Temptation</i>	Rick Knoll
2:30 p.m.	<i>Overcoming the Influence of Busybodies</i>	Garland Robinson
3:30 p.m.	<i>Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord</i>	Guyton Montgomery
7:00 p.m.	<i>He That Winneth Souls Is Wise</i>	Roger Campbell
8:00 p.m.	<i>God's Faithful People Will Be Saved</i>	Ken Burleson

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

10:00 a.m.	<i>Some Will Turn Away Their Ears from the Truth</i>	Roger Campbell
11:00 a.m.	<i>Being an Example of Believers</i>	Steve Baisden
1:30 p.m.	<i>Committing the Truth to Faithful Men</i>	Ken Burleson
2:30 p.m.	<i>Overcoming the Devil by God's Armor</i>	Caleb Campbell
3:30 p.m.	<i>The Blessings of True Unity in Christ</i>	Walter Pigg
7:00 p.m.	<i>A Crown Laid up for Me</i>	Garland Robinson
8:00 p.m.	<i>Overcoming Non-Contenders for the Faith</i>	Leon Cole

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

10:00 a.m.	<i>A Rest for the People of God</i>	Leon Cole
11:00 a.m.	<i>Beware Ear Ticklers and the Tickled</i>	Jacob Campbell
1:30 p.m.	<i>The Eyes of the Lord Are over the Righteous</i>	Jeff Bates
2:30 p.m.	<i>False Prophets in the World</i>	Lloyd Gale
3:30 p.m.	<i>Loyalty to Christ, Not People or Places</i>	Richard Guill
7:00 p.m.	<i>The Lord Is Not Willing That We Perish</i>	Virgil Hale
8:00 p.m.	<i>I Know Whom I Have Believed</i>	Alan Adams

THURSDAY, JUNE 28

10:00 a.m.	<i>On the Right Hand, Eternal Life</i>	Robert Alexander
11:00 a.m.	<i>Food To Prevent Spiritual Starvation</i>	Rusty Stark
1:30 p.m.	<i>Continued Forgiveness by Walking in the Light</i>	Jimmy Bates
2:30 p.m.	<i>Beware the Influence of Lukewarmness</i>	Paul Curless
3:30 p.m.	<i>The Lord Is with Us When We Take His Word</i>	David Lemmons
7:00 p.m.	<i>Victory for the Overcomers</i>	Roger Scully
8:00 p.m.	<i>No Death, Sorrow, Crying or Pain in Heaven</i>	Lenard Hogan

— from P. 12

NWFSBS is the work of the Milestone church of Christ. This church, out of “love [for] the brotherhood,” makes great sacrifices to provide this intense, two-year, tuition-free environment where qualified men can devote themselves to preparation in the areas mentioned above. We make no comparisons, but our claim is to offer comprehensive curriculum and competent teachers. There are already “out in the workplace” several graduates of NWFSBS whose work and ability testify to legitimate grounds for our claim.

Yet, the Milestone church cannot “go it alone.” Many sister churches and individual Christians give financial support to make this great work possible. Many help in recruiting prospective students. As our student body grows, our need for help in these and other areas grows. Will you help us?

For more information, write The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, 4051 Stefani Road, Cantonment, FL 32533; or, call 850-474-9257. See also our web page: www.nwfsbs.com

Making the paper/school symbiosis all the more symmetrical is this year’s BOT lectureship theme (see p. 13): The Need and Basis for Optimism within the Lord’s Church.

Jesus died and purged our sins (Heb. 1:3; Rev. 1:5). Jesus is alive and well; He reigns (Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:17; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:13). His church reigns through Him (Rev. 1:6).

The church is here (cf. Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:10,11); she is indestructible (cf. Dan. 2:44); she is comprised of the saved (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). She is blood-bought, rock-solid, Spirit-filled, Hell-proof, and Heaven-bound (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 5:27; cf. Matt. 25:1-13).

The word is here (2Thess. 2:1). It gives life and light (Phill. 2:16; Ps. 119:105). It is indestructible and enduring (1Pet. 1:22-25), as are people who live by it (1Jno. 2:17). We can read, learn, obey, and preach it (Eph. 3:4; Ac. 8:30; 2Thess. 1:8; Rom. 10:8).

The Banner of Truth; the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies; preaching graduates of the school; and, an uplifting realistic lectureship theme. The is truly a profitable symbiosis. —AA

Going Out and Coming In

In a great Psalm of Assurance, Jehovah promises the faithful that he will “preserve thy going out and thy coming in” (121:8). Going out and coming in is a vivid figure of speech describing the movements, the ebb and flow, of life in general; but, it is no wresting of the principle to apply it to our various efforts and works.

The Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies is multifaceted, but “going out and coming in” is particularly descriptive. By the time this issue of BOT is printed, made ready, mailed and received, NWFSBS will have had yet another crop of graduates going out. These are: Carl Bunn, Aaron Purvis, and Ben Vick III. They have each pretty well settled on where they are headed. Where has the time gone? It was surely only yesterday that they were coming in.

These are good men. They are imbued with a good balance of idealism, optimism, conviction and reality. Like so many before them, they have minds livelier than I. I have learned from them, and have grown to appreciate and admire each. My heart is happy at the thought of the good work of which they are capable; I bristle and flare at the thought of inevitable obstacles they will face, most of them sadly not from the outside.

As these go out, come the last of August, three others are coming in.

In addition to these three new students, we also have intentions of an instructor, not so much coming in as staying put. Brother *Tom Snyder* has been teaching classes here for several years; his tenure in fact antedates mine. Tom is a multi-talented teacher and an indispensable cog in our machine. He is a *known* factor here having a demeanor which melds well with the Milestone church and the NWFSBS faculty, staff, and student body. Tom has worked with local churches for years, but now we want him simply here. We intend on making this transition by the first of next year. Please be on the lookout for a packet of material Tom will be sending out.

With the influx of new students, and our plans for Tom, we are — as always — in need of dollars. This is quite the enterprise and we are perpetually humbled by the inability of any one church, or even several, to make it possible.

Please mull our needs over, and see if you can at all assist us. For information, write: Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, 4051 Stefani Road, Cantonment, FL 32533; or call: (850) 474-9257. Pray that the Lord preserve our “going out” and “coming in.” —AA

Avoid a Piecemeal Life

A society where most people find time and opportunity to “curl up” on the couch is a prosperous one; yet, the preacher, Amos, linked it to a rather morbid scenario:

Thus saith Jehovah: As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch, and on the silken cushions of a bed (3:12).

What does curling up on a couch or leaning against nice soft bed cushions have to do with the remains of a sheep being snatched from a lion’s mouth?

Jehovah sent Amos to pronounce the imminent judgment and doom of Israel — “I will visit upon you all your iniquities” (3:2); “they go into captivity before their enemies” (9:4). He associated their prosperous and easy lives with their apathy and sin — “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and . . . to them that are secure in Samaria” (6:1ff). It is the same old story: People are blessed; they take it for granted; they get fat and sassy; and, they forget God and many become incorrigible.

The ruthless Assyrians were used by God to punish Israel. So many cities were looted, ravaged, and burned culminating in the utter decimation of the capitol, Samaria, in 722 B.C. Imagine going from a lifestyle of couches and silk pillows to merely surviving. The relative few who survived the onslaught were by comparison like a “shepherd” rescuing “out of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear.” There was good news and bad news in this simile.

The operative term here is “rescueth.” God did indeed preserve a remnant of the inhabitants of the Northern kingdom. The leftovers of this once powerful nation were scattered and many commingled with other peoples. The “two legs” and “piece of an ear” are a sober picture of the blending of the “goodness and severity of God” (Rom 11:22).

God sent his Son, “the good shepherd” (Jno. 10:11,14), to rescue us from jaws of a far worse “lion” (cf. 1Pe 5:8). Sometimes, however, the temporal

consequences of our sins are such that, though rescued, it is, as it were, “two legs or a piece of an ear.” All sin has temporal and abiding consequences. Think of the devastating and abiding consequences of so many of the works of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5:19-21; 1Co. 6:9-11). The blood of Jesus can assuage the guilt of any or all of these; yet, they are not inconsequential.

God will forgive sexual sins, but often all that’s left over are “two legs” and a “piece of an ear.” Sodomites — the “effeminate” and “abusers” — (1Co. 6:9) can be “washed . . . sanctified . . . justified” (1Co. 6:11), but more often than not they will destroy their health and heart. Other fornicators face disease and pregnancy and the temptation to abort babies. Fornicators and adulterers may ruin marriages, trust, and reputations and for the kingdom’s sake have to live the rest of their lives without a mate (cf. Matt. 19:9). Dancers and other dabblers in lasciviousness may open the gates of lust which when it conceives will bring forth sin they never intended (cf. Jam. 1:15). Many a young person began waving the white flag of surrender of their their purity on dance floor or in back seat of a car. Precious, priceless blood (1Pet. 1:18,19) can redeem them, yet theirs will forever be a life of what could have been; in other words, piecemeal.

Drinkers and revellers, having abandoned discretion, caution, and prudence, may cause damage and death to others. Not a few Christians have had to spend years of their saved lives behind bars.

Like a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, man has long longed for an autonomous life in a non-autonomous world; in vain he dreams and conjurers a life of choice without consequence.

I personally think that we generally piddle around at preaching on sin and its consequences. Read each of the catalogues of sin recorded in the New Testament. Look at each term; know what it means; think about the likely temporal consequences that arise from them.

Living as “two legs” or a “piece of an ear” and finally going to Heaven is far better than the alternative; but, better yet, is to avoid the temporal ravages of sin. Read about sin; learn to eschew it. —AA

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Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
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Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

From P. 11 —

Is it through God's will that we watch impure movies, and listen to impure music? Is it God's will that we wear skimpy and provocative dress? Is it God's will that we go out on the dance floor? Is it God's will that we do not pray and study our bibles? Is it God's will that we choose to be doing other things or elsewhere during the set times of "assembling ourselves together"—games, work? Is it God's will that we feel too bad to go to church, but not too bad to do other things and go other places?

Whether we say it outright like Paul: "through the will of God," or we imply it, claiming something is God's will when it is not is something that ought to give us pause. —AA

Update on Mark Brewer

Many BOT readers know Mark, or know about him. He is a graduate of — and I might add, a legend at — NWFSBS. He is a faithful and productive gospel preacher in Des Arc, AR.

Mere mention of Mark makes anybody who knows him smile. What Mark, however, has gone through and yet faces is no smiling matter. Months ago he learned that he has had hepatitis for years and it has virtually killed his liver. He must have a transplant.

To have the transplant, his body must be rid of every vestige of the virus. To do that, he is taking some powerful drugs which have about conquered the virus but are also taking their toll on Mark. With the love and support of his wife and family, this man is not only bearing up, but he is still preaching and teaching the word. Give us more like him.

Loving brethren — many of you — have made possible the financial resources for a transplant. The plan, Mark says, is to continue his present treatments until next Summer when the virus should be undetectable. Pray for this brother to stay strong, and pray for an available liver.

This is a good and decent man. —AA

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

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