Will America Suffer God’s Wrath?

Editor’s Note: This article was carried in the June issue of Banner of Truth in 1993. I have a request to run it again, and inasmuch as the moral conditions in America have worsened considerably in almost twelve years, the request is considered timely. When it was run in 1993 our mailing list was about 2,000, we now run more than 7,600. To many the article will be new.

In God’s revealed will, contained only in the Bible, there is overwhelming and irrefutable evidence that God’s wrath will be suffered by a nation or people which continues pursue the course which America is now following at such a rapid pace. It is not a matter of whether or not it will happen; it is only a matter of how and when it will occur. But there is a bright side for the God-fearing people. That is, God’s faithful servants can have an unfaltering courage in the Divine assurance that victory will ultimately be theirs as overcomers having “escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (Rev. 2:2; 2 Pet. 2:20).

A careful examination and consideration of the present deplorable moral state of our nation and the proper application of God’s word relative to the matter will clearly justify the above conclusion, and that America is a people now ripe for destruction. Consider:

I. The Moral State Of Our Country

The evidence showing the horrific moral decline in our nation is so extensive that we can only consider a small part of it. But we begin by reflecting upon history. From history we learn that the mighty Roman Empire into which Christianity was ushered, was in many respects very similar to today’s America, the most powerful nation in the world. The Roman Empire, due to the extreme moral corruption and decay permeating it, ceased to exist. In more recent times Alexander Solzhenitsyn is quoted as saying those who lived through the Bolshevik takeover in Russia, attributed the terrible tragedy to the following: “Men have forgotten God, that’s why all these things happened.”

We have just witnessed the breakup of the former Soviet Union after 70 years of Godless rule by atheistic communism. Cal Thomas, a syndicated columnist, wrote, “A common malady of many nations that collapsed internally before
reading the document naturally, the text is as follows:

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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.”

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Continued from Page 1

being conquered externally was a melting of the moral
residue.” Another writer, a former government offi-
cial, said, “There has never been a case in history in
which society is more dominated by the moral
condition which existed, existed and failed, in Eastern Eu-

trope. They now want the Bible taught to their people and
a strong element here wants to do away with the
Bible and its Godly influence. We shall consider a few
areas where that evidence is apparent.

The News Media. For the most part it is ultra liberal
with respect to God and Christian influence. A case in
point is the way the media often characterizes those who
uphold traditional family and moral values. They are
put down as poor, ignorant, uneducated radicals of the
‘Religious Right,’ or some times the “radical Religious
Gospel.” The bias media is so evident in upholding and/or
leaning toward that which is far-out morally speak-
ing.

The Entertainment Industry. Various surveys have
revealed that the grater majority of the Hollywood clan
are very moral standards, and their productions
are often at variance with the moral values of
that generation. Programs which do not run counter to God’s principles
are a pitiful few. Even country music has reached a new
low in upholding immorality and indecency. And, what of other so-called music?

The Printed Page. The Washington Times, 3/25/93,
reports that Janet Reno is expected to close down ob-
scene cases, with the exception of the most vile child
pornography. The lewd and lustful are often prominent in
today’s writings, magazines, etc. Pornography is a big
business as the demands of the amoral people are sup-
plied. Lewd literature is available to almost everyone
who wants it. Base and vulgar literature, pictures, etc.
are so commonplace today whereas not too many

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**Fifth Annual**

*Banner of Truth* advertise

*Lectures 2005*

Murray, KY., June 27-30

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*Lessons from Prophets of Old for Modern Man*

**Tentative Speakers:**

- Alan Adams, Richard
- Adams, Ken Burleson, Jimmy Bates, Jeff
- Curless, Lindon Ferguson, Richard Guill,
- Lloyd Gale, Rick Knoll, David Lemmons,
- Walter Pigg, Garland Robinson, Roger
- Scully, Joe Spangler.

**Tentative subjects:**


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**Readers’ Response**

“My prayer is that God will continue to bless your work. Your work of faith and love is being spread abroad. It has reached Pontiac, Michigan where I am privileged to preach the gospel of Christ. I would love to be placed on your mailing list for your free publication or if there is a fee please bill it to the Franklin Road church of Christ. Thanks in ad-

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to the fellowshipping of the Christian Church. Why in the world would Freed-Hardeman provide a sounding board for a rank false teacher, who may well influence some students to believe that the use of instrumental music is just a matter of preference? I used to say that Freed-Hardeman has not gone off as much as some of our schools, but now I'm seeing little difference as error is being upheld on a broader and increasing basis.

What Can We Do About the Status Quo? There is a great deal brethren can do, but a pressing question is: “How many are willing to do something?” The serious change which has come about did so, not because brethren could not do anything to stop it, but rather, because they were unwilling to do what they could do. When brethren are indifferent, when they lose their concern about spiritual things, a field left wide open for error is the result.

We have seen other schools, such as Abilene, Lipscomb, and Pepperdine become steeped in error because our brethren did nothing to stop it, and in a great many instances did things to encourage it. Those who want error to prevail, and the New Testament gives many warnings about error, can find nothing more to their liking than for those who are concerned to just keep quiet and do nothing.

The way to do something about the error is spelled out in one word: Money. As long as the money comes in error will prevail. This tells us something as to who is guilty of wrongdoing. It is not only the board members and the administration engaged in error, those who support the school are equally guilty. It is well within their power to change things, but there must be the desire to do so.

Several years ago a preacher in the general area of Freed-Hardeman responded to something I had written about our schools. With regard to Freed-Hardeman he said he was going to go along with it regardless of what happened. He then made a statement that sounded nonsensical. He said that by going along, if something happened to the school no one could say it was his fault. This is an example of how the undaunted loyalty to a school will cause one to follow it regardless of what direction it takes, be that into error or what not.

Another thing I can not understand is the number of brethren who claim to be sound who seem comfortable in being birds of a liberal feather.

Stream in the Desert Spiritual Renewal Weekend April 1-3, 2005

The above program is “Sponsored by Golf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland, Texas.” Registration is $30.00. Concert tickets are $5 for members, and $10 for the public. Box lunches: Adult, $7; child, $5.

This church sponsored program is billed as, “Celebrating 10 Years of Spiritual Renewal.” Even with all things being equal, in view of the featured speakers over the past nine years, how could this be a “Spiritual Renewal.” Beginning with 1996, they’ve had: Terry Rush, Joe Beam, Jim McGuiggan, Rick Atchley, Mike Copeland, Lynn Anderson, Chris Sedman, Jeff Walling, and Rick Atchley. Who could come up with a cavalcade of more liberal brethren? In past programs, there have been topics such as: “new and fresh understanding of the Holy Spirit,” “healing,” “the healing stream of God’s Spirit,” “a Spirit-filled performance,” and others. They have a clear infatuation with the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

More than one reference is made to “laughter,” with “Saturday Entertainment” including Mike Williams, of whom it is said, “If you can laugh until it hurts, you won’t want to miss Mike Williams.” In a sketch of the 2002 program it is said, “Once again Dennis Swanberg lightened the load with an evening of laughter.”

Brethren what are our brethren coming to be? Given what is openy known of most of these speakers and what they stand for and don’t stand for, by what stretch of the imagination could the above activities be a “Spiritual Renewal?” When did it become the work of the church to provide concerts, activities be a “Spiritual Renewal.” When did it become the work of the church to provide concerts, what stretch of the imagination could the above activities be a “Spiritual Renewal.”

Abortion is another black mark upon our society in that it is a reflection of the lack of respect for the sanctity of human life, which is seen in many today, beginning with the President of our country, who is committed to the murder of additional untold millions of innocent unborn boys and girls [President Clinton]. He has pledged his support of FOCA (Freedom of Choice Act). If passed, this will allow abortion on demand, at any point before birth, in all 50 states and territories, and will render void any state law which in any way restricts abortion for any reason. Euthanasia is being advocated by a growing number of people. We are very close to the conditions described in Romans 1.

C. Sexual Perversion Is Being Forced Upon Our Society

“Sin is sin” in the sense that breaking God’s law is sin (Jn. 3:4), but some sins represent a worse state than other, evidencing a lower state of morals. Sexual perversion is such a sin. Due to the fact that homosexuality and lesbianism represent the lowest moral states to which a nation can go, we are giving more attention to it, trusting that we might awaken some to the sobering reality of our condition.

Homosexuality was an abomination under the law of Moses (Lev. 18:22), and was punishable by death (Lev. 20:13). The Lord rained brimstone and fire upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their very grievous sin, which certainly included sexual perversion (Gen. 19). “The New Testament condemns it: ‘Professing themselves to be wise, they ...
became fools” (vs. 22), changed the truth of God into a lie” (vs. 25), were given up by God “unto vile affections” which are “against nature.” The “vile affections” were acts of homosexuality (vv. 26, 27). Paul says of those people who “did not like to retain God in their knowledge… who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such sins are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (vv. 28, 32). In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Paul says “ef-feminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind” shall not inherit the kingdom of God. These words of Paul should serve as a warning to people today just as they did to people when they were written.

Facing The Facts. The frightening facts of our moral state may be like or not. We can only touch the tip of the iceberg, we begin with the President of our country, Bill Clinton. It is a time for weeping on the part of God-fearing people when the President is so obsessed with sexual perversion that he is wholly committed to those practices the ungodliness and is putting forth an almost unlimited ef fort to encourage this sin and foist upon those who still believe in God and Christian principles. He has declared his determination to force the homosexuals upon the military of our country, against the advice of those men who have experience and who want this country to have a strong military force.

Clinton did an infamous first when he received a delegation of gay and lesbian activists at the White House. Clinton appointed Roberta Achtenberg to the post of Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity with the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Achtenberg is described as “A radical lesbian activist from San Francisco.” She is also said to be hostile toward those who do not accept her lesbianism. In her position she is expected to use her power to force the acceptance of homosexuals with regard to housing, which could mean property owners (including Christians) would have to rent to homosexual couples, unmarried couples, etc. This lesbian has in high positions in the homosexual community, such as Executive Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Inc.; Directing Attorney for the Lesbian Rights Project of Equal Rights; and Directors as leaders, etc. Clinton’s Inaugural Parade was infected with homosexuals. Homosexuals were invited to provide entertainment for the parade.

Lisa Strongin, president of the Lesbian and Gay Bands of America, was bursting with pride. “It is obviously historical, because it’s the first time any openly gay or lesbian group has participated at the invitation of the administration, Strongin said.” “Also, a lesbian couple from Dallas rode a float dedicated to American families in the parade, a symbol to show that Clinton accepts the homosexual standard that two homosexuals living together constitute a family and deserve the same benefits as the traditional family.” [This and above re Achtenberg, came from the AFA Journal, 3/93.] That the advocates of sexual perversion are in league with our low morals President with respect to the homosexual agenda is abundantly clear. As evidence of the fact, consider the following, which is only a small part of that which could be given:

New York Mayor David Dinkins has signed an executive order to allow unmarried couples—including homosexuals—to register as domestic partners with the City Clerk. He called it a “major step toward ensuring that the thousands of individuals involved in long-term committed and caring relationships are extended the same rights as individuals bonded through the traditional concept of the family unit,” [AP, 1/18/93, via AFA Journal, 3/93.]

According to a report by National Review (6/7/93, p. 52), the Hawaiian Supreme Court has legitimized homosexual marriages. Newsweek, 5/10/93, carries an article, “An ‘Explosion’ of Gay Writing, suggesting that there is an increase in the promotion of the practice through the printed page. AFA Journal, 6/93, reprints the following from the Princeton Alumni, 4/21/93: “Princeton University will no longer support Boy Scouts through the local United Way because the Scouts will not accept homosexual scout leaders.”

The degrading homosexual march, in April, which “took over Washington, D.C.,” for a few hours, though far short of what the homosexuals had boasted they would have, and which the media had given such a favorable billing, represents a new low in morals in America. Clinton was not present but he gave congregation at some place within driving distance of Freed-Hardeman. I quickly learned to appreciate most of my teachers. Brother Claude Hall was a very unique teacher, and I have many times said that I believe I profited more from his classes, especially Spoken English, than any others. There other great teachers as well.

There were some rather strict rules on the campus of Freed-Hardeman back then. Smoking was not allowed, period. There were some rules relative to court ing, though many found mates there.

After altogether spending about three years at FHC, I finally graduated in 1966. From that point, though already noticing some changes in the school, my wife and I were involved in raising financial support for it and I could no longer with a good conscience support the school in any way.

Rather than note the changes which took place from the 1960s onward, we shall give attention to what Freed-Hardeman are now. I have often wondered how Freed-Hardeman is now. I have often wondered how Clinton was not present but he gave

I must admit, that was the first time ever I’ve ever considered “Now.” The condition which now exists at Freed-Hardeman did not come about overnight. Change, as is often the case, does not come quickly. As with the proverbial tent, he doesn’t make a quick move to the center. But once the nose is in, he almost never back out. When it became apparent that changes were taking place at Freed-Hardeman which were not for good, my wife and I could no longer with a good conscience support the school in any way.

To the Nations: Judgment and Hope in Isaiah.” The schedule is of itself a reflection of the change which has come over Freed-Hardeman. There is need for nothing more to see the change.

The lectures were from February 6–11: We shall give attention to what Freed-Hardeman is now. I have often wondered how Freed-Hardeman is now. I have often wondered how Freed-Hardeman has served in high positions in the homosexual community, such as Executive Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Inc.; Directing Attorney for the Lesbian Rights Project of Equal Rights; and Directors as leaders, etc. Clinton’s Inaugural Parade was infected with homosexuals. Homosexuals were invited to provide entertainment for the parade.

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“Dear Walter: I resent your using the Lord’s money to promote a political point of view, as you have in the last two publications. We must learn the lesson taught in Luke 20 verse 25 and work for the Lord! Please remove my name from your mailing list! Thanks, Jim Whaley”

Dear Jim: Your note and request for removing your name from our mailing list have been received. We shall surely oblige you in removing your name. Banner of Truth is not for everyone.

We have had members of the church in our area who valued their loyalty to a political party more than their loyalty to the Lord. Let me pose one question. If my articles in the “last two publications” had been in favor of the political party which upholds abortion and homosexuality, would you have requested the removal of your name?

It is indeed a sad day in spiritual Israel when brethren will turn their backs against the Lord due to their political loyalty. A couple left the congregation where I preach because I presented lessons on the subject of “The Christian and Politics.” Not only did they leave, but a reliable witness reported that they contacted their political party to see if they could cause some trouble. We also had an older in the area who proclaimed his membership to the political party which upholds abortion and homosexuality, would you have requested the removal of your name?

You imply that I do not “work for the Lord.” Yet, most of my time is spent in encouraging people to stand up for the Lord and His truth and oppose that which is against Him, and this includes the political realm. In the day of judgment we will stand before our Lord, not some political party.

Jim, we sincerely encourage you to study further our responsibility to God and to the civil realm, and recognize that obedience to God most come first. For the cause of Christ, Walter W. Pigg

Freed-Hardeman Then And Now

In August 1953, I obeyed the gospel. My wife, son and I, moved from Memphis to Henderson, Tennessee, where for the Fall quarter I entered Freed-Hardeman college. I was 27 and had been out of school since I was sixteen. Brother H.A. Dixon was then President. As a new Christian I was favorably impressed almost beyond imagination. I quickly learned to respect brother Dixon as a man of knowledge in God’s word and an accompanying love for that truth. I saw him stand before the school assembly and respond to that which he did not believe to be in harmony with God’s word. He was clearly unafraid to contend for the faith, as should be the case of all Christians.

I will always remember the close association that existed among the students, especially the married students. We “preacher students” had much in common, and for the most part there was a great interest in learning God’s word and how to effectively present it to others. A great many of us had our first experience of preaching to a

the event his stamp of approval. Though the marchers numbered 300,000 or less, the event is a reminder of Sodom and Gomorrah. Joseph Farah, writing in the AFA Journal, 6/93, said, “The demonstration resembled not so much a civil rights march as a carnival sideshow. Nevertheless, the major print and broadcast media put the best possible spin on the event, downplaying the disappointing numbers, the vulgarity, the obscenity, the foppish stereotypical behavior, the public sex and the outrageousness of many of the speakers and performers.”

Concerning the homosexual march, Newsweek reported: During last month’s massive gay-rights march in Washington, 1,500 homosexual couples participated in a ‘wedding’ replete with ministers and rice. The vows weren’t binding, but the point was made... But more and more homosexual pairs are becoming parents, which creates a paradox: if gays can have children but cannot marry, what kind of bastardized definition of family is society imposing on its offspring? [May 24, 1993.]

Sexual perversion is being promoted in the name of religion. Those who claim to believe in God, calling themselves Christians, are flying in the face of God by promoting that which God condemns. Garth Brooks, claiming to be religious, saying, “I love the Bible,” is at the same time a member of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and promotes homosexuality by his singing. United Methodist Bishop Melvin G. Talbert, joined the league of sexual progressives calling on Bill Clinton to keep his campaign promise to life the military ban on homosexuals. Michael Meyer and Kenneth L. Woodward, discuss the opposition to “gay rights” in Colorado Springs, via a Newsweek article, 3/1/93. The bottom line of their comments, which lean toward the sexual perverts, says that if the city wants to be the evangelical of America, the Christians must “get back to first principles,” which they define as loving their neighbors as themselves. But the love which God’s word upholds, opposes sin of every kind, certainly homosexuality.

Homosexuality Taught In School. Joseph Fernandez gained some prominence a few months ago due to his favored curriculum which taught first graders tolerance for homosexuals. As Chancellor of New York City Schools, Fernandez became known as “King C—” leading New York City to become the first city to distribute c----- (contraceptives) in schools. His contract with the nation’s largest school system ends this month, but the school board only voted 4 to 3 to dismiss him, and that was only after the Catholic Church became vigorous in their opposition to him. Cal Thomas, though not a New Testament Christian as far as I know, makes a great observation: “The open celebration of homosexuality represents the final disconnect from a personal God. If the barrier against societal acceptance of homosexuality falls, there will be no other that can stand.” Concerning the shameful “March on Washington” by gays and lesbians, he says, “The shameless promotion of sexual immorality in the streets of our nation’s Capital and the public blessing bestowed upon it by the president are the latest in a mountain of evidence that proves this nation has forgotten God and is exposing itself to the grave consequences that historically have followed spiritual amnesia.

II. God’s Wrath Upon The Disobedient

Paul lists a number of sins which are prevalent today saying, “For which things’ sake the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” He goes on to include that we are in line to be the recipients of God’s wrath. But there is much more.

As a Christian I am charged to “stand fast in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13), and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). If Caesar upholds something which is condemned in God’s will then I must “work for the Lord” in opposing such.

The idea that one can simply divorce civil affairs from spiritual responsibilities, and do that in the civil area which is in outright opposition to what God has said in His word, is not based upon God’s word, but rather upon the will of men. Christ says, “He that is not with me is against me...” (Matt. 12:30). I am not “with” Christ when I go contrary to His will, and that is true of others as well.

You imply that I do not “work for the Lord.” Yet, most of my time is spent in encouraging people to stand up for the Lord and His truth and oppose that which is against Him, and this includes the political realm. In the day of judgment we will stand before our Lord, not some political party.

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science is seared (1 Tim. 4:1-2). The “wise man” writes in
Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation: but
sin is a reproach to any people.” The reproach to
America has never been so great as at the present,
and conditions are worsening day by day. The apostle Paul
sets forth a principle which applies to all, “But unto
them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth,
but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” (Rom.
2:8). This includes America.

Not only will those in false religions, and the un-
faithful within the church, ultimately suffer God’s
wrath, those who make no effort at all to serve God
will suffer the same. From “him that sat upon the
throne,” John received the following words, “But the
fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and the
murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and
idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake
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being revealed from heaven, “In flaming fire
taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that
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be punished with everlasting destruction from the Lord
and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess. 1:6-7).

Whether or not God’s wrath comes upon our coun-
try as a whole in the fall of the nation, where the inno-
cent could suffer because of the deeds of the wicked,
makes little difference. That His wrath will come upon
every disobedient individual is a certainty which leaves
no room for question. This wrath, however, will not
keep the faithful servant from his eternal inheritance.

III. Victory For The Faithful Is Assured

Time after time God, who cannot lie, assures His
faithful servants of victory. For the Christian, this pro-
vides a true hope, which serves as “an anchor of the
soul” (Heb. 6:19) that is unshakable (James 1:7). That
is the “peaceful” hope which in God, willfully ignoring Him as one whose con-
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Another Letter of Criticism

Before responding to the letter let me offer a few
comments relative to criticism in general. I do expect
some criticism relative to the things I write, though the
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pared with the positive responses received. This should
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selves in a very, very small minority. If they care about
being in the majority they are losers by a wide margin.
I expect criticism and sometimes actually appreci-
ate it. Once wrote that Christ was born in Jerusalem.
A brother pointed out to me. On some occasions a
critic asks that their name be removed from our mail-
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er of Truth. Though we wish they would continue to
receive it and point out what they believe to be mis-
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In the above article, we described in some detail
the lowest moral state which has ever existed in our
society, and how it related to “God’s Wrath Upon
America.” Since the writing of that article, almost
twelve years ago, the moral conditions in several ar-
reas of our society have only worsened.

We cannot know what time may bring relative to
moral conditions. And while we may hope and pray
that respect for God may increase, it is some times the

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reader no longer wants to read what is carried in Ban-
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False Teachers Who Teach Some Truth
Lloyd E. Gale, Jr.

An honest and informed person will acknowledge that false teachers do teach some of the truth accurately. I have heard false teachers who do an outstanding job presenting the truth on a chosen subject. It is obvious that they have the ability to understand truth and to teach the truth. Is our Lord pleased when a false teacher speaks the truth?

Uninspired men offer various opinions on this question. Some say they are happy that there are so many religious choices for people. Some brethren are willing to form alliances with denominations because they have so much in common. Other brethren are willing to join hands with other “traditions” when there is a “common cause.” Yet, others are adamantly opposed to any cooperation of fellowship with those who teach false doctrine. So, we ask, what does Jesus say about the help of Satan’s agents in proclaiming the truth?

Mark tells us about the beginning of the preaching of our Lord in Capernaum. And they were astonished at his doctrine for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as one of the scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit: and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee thou art the Holy one of God. (Mk. 1:22-24)

This unclean spirit spoke the truth. He knew more about who Jesus was than most people of that day. This unclean spirit identified Jesus as the Only Begotten of God, having the same power to rebuke and put to silence their false doctrine. False teachers want to be left alone to do their own thing. The evil spirit correctly asked, “What have we to do with thee?” False teachers have nothing to do with Jesus. They only desire to use Him for their gain. Jesus did not “rush” because the evil spirit appeared to have some “common ground” in acknowledging who Jesus was.

On another occasion Jesus asked, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46). There is no virtue in knowing the truth if one is unwilling to obey the truth. A false teacher will teach part of the truth when it suits his purpose, but will not teach all of the truth. The person who will teach some of the truth but not all of the truth is a dangerous deceiver. Such a person is not the friend of God or of God’s people.

The inspired James wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10). That is, one becomes a transgressor of God’s law. How many false teachers have taught part of the plan of redemption but have stopped short of teaching baptism for remission of sins to become part of the Lord’s church? How many souls have been deceived into believing that they have obeyed God’s plan of salvation when in fact they have not? Or that they are Christians when they are not? Christ does not desire the “help” of false teachers and seeking the lost. Jesus said, “This people draweth near unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:8-9).

What was Jesus’ reaction to the evil spirit’s bold proclamation? “And Jesus rebuked him saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him” (Mk. 1:25). Then a few verses later, Mark records these facts: “And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak because they knew him” (Mk. 1:34).

Any time a servant of God is among false teachers he has the same obligation to rebuke them and to put to silence their false doctrine. False teachers want to be left alone to do their own thing. The evil spirit correctly asked, “What have we to do with thee?” False teachers have nothing to do with Jesus. They only desire to use Him for their gain. Jesus did not “rush” because the evil spirit appeared to have some “common ground” in acknowledging who Jesus was.

This addendum is due to the fact that the latter has happened. Looking Back Over Twelve Years. The lowest moral state of our society was reached under President Bill Clinton. Surrounding himself with two dozen homosexuals, he showed his affinity for this shameless God-condemned practice. As tragic as that was, worse was yet to come. The President, the most powerful person in the country, with a young woman, engaged in oral sex in the White House Oval Office. In addition to this shameful behavior, he was impeached by the House for lying under oath.

Not only was it a disgrace for our country that the numerous person act in an immoral way, but the fact that almost a majority in our society would go along with such, shows the extent of the moral decay which has fastened itself upon our country, which was built to a great degree upon belief in God and Christian principles.

The Anti-God Movement. During the past several years the efforts to remove every vestige of God’s influence from our society have intensified. We have a growing number of enemies of God who want to completely remove God from every facet of our society.

We are seeing now how we might do today what we did not think was possible just a few decades ago. The sad results of this anti-God movement is being reflected in the rapid increase of many ungodly activities which can logically be expected when people turn away from God. Where there is no Higher Power to whom man must give an account, why not do anything you want, as long your able to get by with it? Is not this reflected in such sins as: dishonesty, theft, drug use, adultery, fornication, illegitimate births, euthanasia, divorce, and a host of other things? Increased opposition to God is being seen even in so-called Christian religions. We’ve all heard of the many ungodly acts with the Catholic Church. Multiplied millions of dollars have been paid out to make up for the many cases of sexual sins. The Catholics are not the only ones to play the part of hypocrites. What about the ordaining of a homosexual bishop, and the upholding of the so-called marriage of homosexuals? The religion of a number of those who claim to be Christians is nothing more than a farce. In absence of true belief in God, what can be expected?

UnGodliness Displayed In The Last Election. When a politician runs on planks in a platform which uphold and encourage homosexuality, even so called same-sex marriage, the murder of innocent unwanted boys and girls, the support of the lazy for political purposes, this should be an eye-opener for people of a moral persuasion.

A case in point of the above is that of Senator Kerry who ran for president. He said with regard to Vice President Cheney’s lesbian daughter, that she could not help being a lesbian. Just think about the implication of this statement. Kerry is a man who claims to believe in God, yet he pits God against Himself. You see, if one cannot help being a homosexual, one of the most severely condemned sins in God’s word, then God is contradicting Himself. If God contradicts Himself, then He is no longer God. Now, to consider the extent of such ungodly thinking in our nation, some 53 million people voted for this man to be a leader of our country. The time was that a man of such persuasion running for president of our country would not have received 53 thousand votes, much less 53 million.

The Positive Aspect Of The Last Election. It is a matter of fact that moral values were a determining factor in the outcome of the last election. This is indeed encouraging. It is evidence that people are awakening to the reality that the enemies of God are bent on doing away with moral values, the result of which would be a nation steeped in heathenism.

In spite of the progression of evil within the past several years, this is a time for God-fearing people to stand up and be counted. We can influence the future if we so desire, and we must influence it if we do God’s bidding. As we look back on the history of the Israelites, we see times when wickedness prevailed, but there was a remnant which assured that God’s plan for man’s salvation would not be thwarted. Many departures from the faith are predicted in the New Testament, but we can be among the righteous which exalteth a nation (Prov. 14:34). Let us “stand fast in the faith” (I Cor. 16:13), “Contend for the faith” (Jude 3), that God be pleased and our salvation assured.

—Editor

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Fishing For Unknown Causes

The Book of Acts is necessary to an understanding of original Christianity as it records for us the process and moment of conversion of different kinds of people and different kinds of circumstances. An examination of each of these conversion records will substantiate at least two points: (1) Granting the fact of outside forces and motivations, conversion is yet an active rather than passive process; something you do, not something that is done to you. (2) Conversion takes place according to an unvarying pattern of faith, repentance and baptism by which the heart, life, and relationship of the convert are changed. Somehow, however, we tend to think of Lydia’s conversion in a pattern-builder as the Bible explicitly says of her, “whose heart the Lord opened.”

CAUSES KNOWN TO BE PRESENT. The typical view of the matter is that direct, Divine, and abstract influence was brought to bear on the heart of this “seller of purple.” In modern parlance: She got saved; she got religion. Need it be so? In comments on this very matter, the inimitable J. W. McGarvey says, “when an effect can be explained and accounted for by causes which are known to be present, it is illogical to assume a cause which is not known to be present.” Mall over this principle; it is self-evident, sensible, simple, and profound. Luke says, and on the Sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and there we found Lydia the Egyptian, which worshiped God, and heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And...she was baptized... (Acts 16:14). How Lydia came to convert to the Lord. Finally, in the comprehensive sense, the Scripture wonderfully wraps up the whole affair into the sublime thought: “whose heart the Lord opened.” As per the axiom cited by McGarvey, there’s absolutely no need—it would in fact be irrational and illogical—to go fishing for some direct, Divine, and abstract force to explain the opening of Lydia’s heart, when right within the immediate context (Acts 16:15), the Holy Spirit all but indexes for the reader the sufficient cause for both What God brought about in the life of this devout merchant from Thyatira, and How He did it.

There is no reason for anyone to read: “whose heart the Lord opened,” and come away with some idea of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in this woman’s conversion. Yes: God was the ultimate designer, arranger, and cause by which her heart was opened; but, the marvelous account of her conversion explains all the pieces, put in place by God, resulting finally in her obeying the gospel.

The part in the matter which brought things to a head was Paul’s preaching to her the “gospel which is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). If you can understand and play the Mousetrap Game, you should be able to understand how it was that God “opened” Lydia’s “heart.”

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