

Hickory Grove church of Christ
1131 Hickory Grove Rd.
Almo, KY 42020-9332

Return Services Requested

Sunday Services:
Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.
 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

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demeanor, recreation, language? Perhaps if we are better, it is at covering up sin, or just generalizing about it.

Are we smarter than others? We act like we think so. We imply all other people are ignorant of the Bible. And some are, however, it is hard for them to out do the ignorance of some of our folks. Besides, some religious people are good Bible students, we know it. Examine our libraries filled with prized books which they wrote.

No difference then? Oh, no. There are great differences; they are just not the ones we expect.

We know some things, important things, necessary things, things essential to eternal salvation which many others do not know. In this, we are blessed. We know about Jesus; pagans do not. We know how to become a Christian which many do not know. We know things about how to worship God acceptably that some others do not. That's not grounds for haughtiness, though. Other people know things we have yet to learn. Besides, what do we know that we were not taught? We did not invent truth.

We are not "better" than others, but we are surely "better off."

In my estimation, this article by Joe Fitch is meaningfully provocative. I do not know him nor his address. I do appreciate his insight.

Listening, once, to a sermon that did a good job of painting a disgusting picture of the state of morals in our country, I came away frustrated at the fact that the sermon was not turned to bear upon the congregation itself. Much that was said about dress, recreation, et al sorely needed to be applied to the church. I must agree with Joe Fitch that in this regard our *betterness* may well lie in our ability to "cover up" and/or "generaliz[e]"; or, flat out ignore. —AA

FOR YOUR ADDRESS Book

EDITOR'S EMAIL: wpiggbot@myshadetree.com
ELECTRONIC BOT: *Via David Lemmons' website*
BOT.LemmonsAid.net
DAVID'S LEMMONSAID E-MAIL:
LemmonsAid-Subscribe@YahooGroups.com
EMAIL: dlemmons@netscape.com



Mary — The Mother Of Jesus

That God accorded Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus, a place of high honor and respect as a most important link in His plan of salvation for man is clearly evident from the biblical record. However, the undue exaltation of Mary, even to the point of worshipping her, as is done by Catholics and others, is a most serious offense against God and Mary's Savior-son. We should not allow this tragic error to dissuade us from giving Mary the honor due her or from learning any valuable lessons from her.

Of the several Marys of the New Testament, none rank in importance with the virgin mother of Jesus. The annals of inspired history nowhere treat any other woman with the singularity accorded Mary as the mother of our Savior. No other woman "found favor with God," or was "highly favored" as was Mary, as stated by the angel of the Lord, Gabriel

The great favor extended to Mary began to be realized or find fulfillment when Joseph and Mary left their home in Nazareth and journeyed to Bethlehem where the virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus, as the Messianic prophet had foretold. God's plan of salvation, first alluded to in Genesis 3:15 where it was said the seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent, was now becoming a reality. God's promise, as brought forth through Abraham and the seed of woman as stated in Genesis 3:15.

The prophet Isaiah pointed to Mary' special place in God's plan when he said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). The inspired writer, Matthew, clearly identifies the fulfillment of this prophecy as that of the birth of Jesus by "a virgin" (Matt. 1:18-23).

The narratives of both Matthew and Luke deal with the birth of Jesus, giving a good picture. While Matthew emphasizes the more public aspects, Luke relates more of Mary's personal feelings and experiences. Some valuable lessons can be learned from these inspired writers as they inform us about Mary.

It seems to me that we have been distracted in a general way from the good and profitable things which can be learned from a serious study of Mary, the mother of Jesus. I say this because I'm unaware of much being written or ↑

BANNER OF TRUTH

Published by the
Hickory Grove
church of Christ

1131 Hickory Grove Rd., Almo KY 42020

Elders:

Jimmy Lockhart (270) 753-4460

Mike Smith (270) 437-4616

Preacher:

Tim Hester (270) 767-0625

Editor

Walter W. Pigg (270) 753-3675

164 Coles Campground Rd., Murray, KY 42071

Assistant Editor:

Alan Adams (850) 937-2460

1653 Pine Lane Dr., Cantonment, FL 32533

Published monthly and sent free to interested persons. Made possible by the contributions of congregations and individuals. Our 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."

Continued from Page 1

spoken about her by our brethren over the years. A lack of teaching about her has been noted in the past. In fact, the only entire lesson that I can recall on this important subject was one that I delivered at the Garfield Height Lectureship in Indianapolis in 1991. I must admit that I had not given much attention to what is said about the Lord's mother until asked to prepare a lesson. Just a casual mention of Mary is about all I can recall from the past. There are lessons to be learned from the woman whom God knew and whom He chose to be the mother of His Son. We shall call attention to some of those lessons.

Perhaps the main reason Mary has been to some degree neglected is due to the erroneous teachings and practices of the Catholic Church and others, to which we shall give attention later. Some of the more egregious teachings as noted above have, I believe, caused us to react too strongly by virtually ignoring a study of Mary. In order to profit most from what we can learn, it is in order for us to consider:

I. THE EARLY HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF MARY

Mary, a virgin, was "espoused" to Joseph. Both were residents of Nazareth, a city considered by some as of somewhat ill repute. It was in Nazareth that the angel of the Lord, Gabriel, was sent by God to inform Mary that she had "found favor with God." This "favor" was that she would conceive in her womb and bring forth a son named "Jesus" (Lk. 1:26-31).

It appears that Mary and family spent much time in Nazareth and were generally known by the people. In response to the wisdom and mighty works of Jesus as demonstrated in "his own country," the people asked:

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas"? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him... (Matt. 13:55-57).

From this we learn that that Mary did have other children after the birth of Jesus, and did not remain a virgin as erroneously taught by many. Another fact brought out is that Joseph was carpenter. In Mark's account it is indicated that Jesus was also a carpenter (Mk. 6:32). Both Matthew and Mark reveal that the people were "offended" in or at Jesus. Though nothing is said relative to Mary's response to the people's reaction toward her son, Jesus, it would be a common reaction of a mother to have a feeling of great disappointment from such.

It appears that Joseph and Mary were poor people. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, and when the days of Mary's purification were finished, Joseph and Mary brought him to Jerusalem to be presented "to the Lord," and to thus "offer a sacrifice..." (Lk. 2:24). the sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" was for those who were "not able to bring a lamb" (Lev. 12:8). This apparent lack of wealth by Joseph and Mary should serve as a reminder to us that an abundance of material wealth is not necessary for one to serve a useful purpose in God's plan of salvation for man. To the contrary, there a number of warnings in God's word relative to the danger of material wealth.

In addition to being of humble means, Mary was

Some Thoughts on V. B. S. and Bible Classes

W. Justin Adams

Vacation Bible school is a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde affair. On the one hand, vacation Bible school usually has a festive air. The daily meetings allow children to run, play, and otherwise do what children do best while adults enjoy their children's enthusiasm and good conversation with fellow Christians. These are fine qualities and good traditions: we should enjoy one another's company and we should enjoy meeting together to study the Bible. On the other hand, this festive spirit too often degenerates into loud, obnoxious misbehavior as children, encouraged by adults, scream out answers, screech out vapid songs, and otherwise misbehave with official sanction – and all the while the adults in the congregation look on with adoring eyes.

This ugly side of vacation Bible school teaches bad lessons. Children learn that they may do things in a religious setting that would earn them swift punishment if attempted at home or in school. Not only may they misbehave, but the authority figures in their lives, their parents and teachers, encourage them. The scenario never changes: a teacher asks the children a question and the children answer en masse; the teacher says, "I can't hear you" and on cue, the children again shriek out the answer. Children see the tolerance adults show for misbehavior in a religious context – and the intolerance for such behavior in the

secular context – and conclude that the study and worship of God is less important. Solomon advised that people should "fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccl. 12:13); adults teach children the opposite when the activities they organize and endorse equate the worship of God with buffoonery and misbehavior.

The riotous side of vacation bible school also teaches children that "regular church" is a bore. On Sundays, one must sit quietly as the preacher drones on about ideas and beliefs that are not nearly so funny as an entertaining puppet show. On Sundays, one must sing hymns whose lyrics (usually) do not include such turns of poesy as "that's why I am bananas for the Lord." On Sundays, services never end with yet another rousing rendition of "Booster." When adults teach children that learning about God revolves around entertainment rather than study, boisterousness instead of reverence, should they wonder when children grow older and find the sober tone of organized worship rather stuffy and dull? (Of course, some Christians sympathize with children who "just don't have fun in church," thus the degeneration of worship and Bible study into pep rallies and self-help sessions in many congregations of the church. Other more qualified writers have diagnosed this greater disease.)

— 1004 Montrose Ave., Nashville, TN 37204

Are We Better?

Joe Fitch

The Pharisee clearly thought himself better than the publican (Lk. 18.10ff). We've read it. He's not the last man to think "I am not like others." We also are not like others, and furthermore, we are surely better than they are. Right? It bears some thought. Better in what way?

Compare devotion with Mormons or Moslems? Are we different in this regard? Oh, yes. Are we better? Oh, no. Many other religious folks shame us with their devout use of their money, time, and abilities. We are not the most devoutly religious people in the world.

Are we more righteous? One preacher boasted:

"We don't have worldly problems where I preach." What planet is he from?, is he just plain blind?, does anyone believe that? We wrestle with the same weaknesses and sins as all other people trying to serve God. We sometimes do not put up such a good a fight. Don't tell me we are more righteous than all others. It is not so.

Are we more moral? Are we exempt from base sins like fornication? Do our ladies practice modesty? Put our young people together with some of the youngsters from some of the conservative denominations in town. Would you see a difference in dress, ↑

entitled to protection. One view is: Totally. Another view: Not all. In between there is the view that what began as a tomato after six months or so becomes more human than vegetable and only then entitled to protection.

Clearly, the most illogical of the three positions is the third; that being, that the "tomato," as it were, becomes human after six months of gestation within the woman's body. This is sheer lunacy. Yet, come to think of it, our society has in large part accepted, or at least acquiesced, to the Theory of Evolution. And one fantastic implication of this "theory" is that at some point on the Time Line of History a non-living thing simply "became" a living thing; and later, a non-human thing "became" a human.

No, that "fetus en route to birth" is either a human or it is a tomato. Let's put and keep the debate where it ought to be.

ABORTION'S IMPLIED 'DISTINCTION' DOES NOT STAND SCRUTINY

Biblically, this either/or is easily answered: The Bible makes no distinction between prenatal and postnatal life. God said of Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee" (Jer 1:5). John the Baptist was certainly no "tomato" when he "leaped in [Elisabeth's] womb" when his mother heard the salutation of Mary (Luke 1:41). Did God view David as a "tomato," in Psalm 139:13-16? "For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst cover me in my mother's womb...My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my unformed substance; and in thy book they were written. Even the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was none of them." Even during that stage of David's existence described as being "curiously wrought," God recognized him as a human entity, a person. Compare Luke 1:41 and Luke 2:12. In both cases the word "babe" is translated from the Greek word, *brepho*. In one case, it refers to the "babe" inside the mother's body, and in the other case, a baby outside his mother's body. Mr. Thayer says that *brepho* means, "an unborn child, embryo, fetus; a newborn child, an infant, a babe."

One of the most heinous forms of abortion is called the "partial-birth-abortion." An infant, up to any point prior to a natural birth is extracted from the birth canal of his mother only far enough to allow the doctor to make an opening in the back of his skull from whence his brains are literally sucked out. Both Houses of the US Congress passed a bill outlawing such a procedure; President Clinton vetoed that bill; President Bush signed it. Frankly, I am sick and tired of weasels saying, "You shouldn't mix religion with politics." If politics happens to conflict with the Bible, I just don't see that a christian has any choice but to use any and every legitimate means to defeat that which is anti-biblical.

Nor, can the distinction between *in-the-mother* and *out-of-the-mother* "life" be philosophically established. The abortion rights people, many of whom also speak piously of Human Rights, need to come forth and put their finger down on the Time Line and say, "It is at this point that the 'tomato' becomes a human." Now let him explain why — Can't breathe on his own? Can't exist autonomously? Et al. — One could just as easily make the same points about people who are injured, infirm, or elderly; come to think of it, some already are. The time is much later than we think.

ON THE MATTER OF CHOICE

I eschew this use of the word "choice." Besides the woman, there is the man, the baby; and, there is also the One who "gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Ac 17:25). Does one party have the right to make a "choice" when three other parties to the "choice," have no voice in the decision?

As for the "woman's right over her own body." She fully exercised that right when she *chose* to engage in the activity that resulted in the conception of a human being. Even if she didn't so choose (e.g. rape which comprises less than 1% of all abortions), there is still the fact of another human life. Does it make any sense to anyone that our courts have declared that capital punishment for rape is "cruel and unusual," but to summarily execute the baby produced by the rape is not?

Let us resist this sin against the innocent; and likewise the sin against language which is being kidnapped and perverted to uphold ungodliness. — AA

not of a city of great renown. Nazareth was evidently looked upon by many with disfavor. When Philip found Nathaniel and told him they had found Jesus of Nazareth, about whom Moses and the prophets had written, Nathaniel's response was: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:45-46). "Nazareth" came to stand for contempt and derision when applied to Jesus by his enemies.

As God with his unlimited knowledge looked with favor upon Mary, who was from a city of no great repute, so does our Lord with favor upon those who do "the will of the Father" (Matt. 7:21) in obeying the "author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9); as is the case when a person, who regardless of where he lives, in truth responds to the call of the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).

II. MARY AND THE FULFILLMENT OF MESSIANIC PROPHECY

The scheme of redemption, first revealed in Genesis 3:15, would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary. The promise of fulfillment was given to Abraham and to his seed, as noted in Genesis twelve and twenty-two. God's promise of salvation would become a reality through Christ, the "seed" of woman, as set forth in Galatians 3:16.

Some seven hundred years before Christ, Isaiah makes a clear and unmistakable statement relative to Christ's virgin birth: "the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Matthew leaves no doubt that Isaiah's prophecy was to be fulfilled by a virgin conception and birth, and that the birth was Jesus was it:

Now this was all done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt. 1:22-23).

Both Matthew and Luke give considerable information relative to the virgin birth of Jesus by Mary. Luke offers considerable information regarding the virgin conception and birth of Jesus:

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man who

name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest: and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with here, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her (Lk. 1:26-38).

The "espousal" of Mary to Joseph was much more binding than an "engagement" in our present society.. The following statement by well known historian, Alfred Edersheim, brings this out clearly as he explains how Mary could be referred to as the "wife" of Joseph (Matt. 1:20) when the angel said unto Joseph, "fear not to take unto thee Mary they wife":

From the moment Mary was the betrothed wife of Joseph; their relationship was as sacred as if they had already been wedded. Any breach of it would be treated as adultery, nor could the bond be dissolved except, as after marriage, by regular divorce. Yet months might intervene between betrothal and marriage.

Mary couldn't comprehend the meaning of being "highly favored" and "blessed among women." But the angel explains: She shall conceive and bring forth a son, named JESUS. He would be given ↑

"the throne of David." Though Mary obviously believed in God, how could she have a son when she had never known man, that is, had never had sexual relations with a man? This is explained by the angel; the Holy Ghost would come upon her, and the child would be called "the Son of God."

As if to strengthen Mary, the angel relates the unusual conception by her cousin Elizabeth who had been "called barren." In response to Elizabeth's statement that "with God nothing shall be impossible," Mary's commendable and submissive reply was: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Mary's willingness to be used in accordance with the will of God, reminds us of the attitude which characterized the Cornelius: "Now therefore are we all her present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts 10:33).

What a change, what a great blessing it would be, if the brethren who make up the Lord's church today had the same disposition of total submission to the will of God as did Mary. The seat of so many of the problems which are wreaking such havoc within the church is a lack of willingness to submit to God's will. More and more of our brethren are becoming "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18) as they help build up the religions among men and encourage thoughtless and unlearned brethren to turn away from the church for which our Savior died. Not a single one of the man-made churches, the denominations, are blood-bought or Christ-built. They never have nor will they ever have God's approval. Who could believe that God would have favored Mary as He did had she had the mind of so many of our brethren? God knew the mind of Mary, and let it not be forgotten that He knows the mind of those today who are unwilling to submit to him and let it be "according to thy word." Serving God was a serious matter for the mother of Jesus and so it should be with us.

III. MARY'S VISIT WITH ELIZABETH

When Mary learned from the angel that Elizabeth, "in her old age," would have a son and she herself would have a son, she visits her cousin Elizabeth:

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah;

And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And when is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of the salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that hath believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord (Lk. 1:39-45).

The words of Elizabeth to Mary that there would be a performance of the things which were told her from the Lord must have had a great influence. Mary breaks forth in what is doubtless an inspired song of great praise to the Lord and Savior:

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and exalted them of low degree. he hath filled hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her three months, and returned to her own house (Lk. 1:46-56).

Notice how Mary attributes greatness to the Lord and expresses great thanksgiving. We so need both of these attitudes. Awe at the greatness of the Lord has diminished among us, and our thanksgiving often reflects a lack of sincerity often seen in our actions. There is great emphasis now upon pleasing ourselves and others than pleasing the Lord.

Mary displays a great spirit of humility, as she refers to the "low estate of his handmaiden." What an honor that "all generations" would call her "blessed."

A One Party Choice in a Three — Four — Party Situation

In debating moral/social issues, the maxim seems to be: Whosoever shall capture the language winneth. Thus, Sodomy becomes Sexual Orientation; Drunkenness becomes Alcoholism; Fornication becomes Making Love; Nakedness becomes Fashion; Slothfulness becomes Welfare; and Abortion becomes Pro-Choice. Language is more than a mere convenience; it is a tool to be used, or misused. Unthinking people can be subtly lead to accept false, even damnable beliefs, on the basis of failure to analyze the carefully crafted words of others.

HUMAN OR TOMATO?

In the May 20, 1996 *National Review*, William F. Buckley, Jr. penned a column entitled "Las Vegas Fever." He tells of a debate between himself and liberal activist, John Kenneth Galbraith, which occurred 15 years ago on the campus of the University of Las Vegas. Buckley, a conservative, had argued the "usual case against government expansion and government intrusion, and government taxation..."

Galbraith responded, "I can't understand how someone who claims to object to government action should encourage government to get in the way of a woman's right over her own body."

Notice how the crafty Galbraith attempts to define the issue of abortion under the heading "a woman's right over her own body." Buckley would have none of it. He responded,

The role of government is to protect human rights. The great controversy today reduces quite simply to the question whether there is a third party after conception, effected by the man in the womb of the woman causing gestation of — what? That is the question. To quote from a letter printed in these pages only a few weeks ago, either it is a fetus en route to birth — a human organism — or it is a tomato.

Buckley rightly recognizes and differentiates between, on the one hand, talking about "a woman's right over her own [that is, *one*] body," and, on the other hand, a situation which involves at least *three bodies*, or parties: The woman, the man by whom the woman is impregnated, and last, but certainly not least, the child which the first two parties have conceived.

So, does it seem reasonable to reduce the whole abortion question to a "woman's right over her own body; when in fact the total situation involves three *bodies*?"

But now, even suppose the first two *bodies* (the man and the woman) mutually agree on an abortion. What of the third *body*? As Buckley said, the second party, the man "effect[s] [something]... in the womb of the woman which caus[es] the gestation of — what?" Herein lies the real issue. Truly, that which gestates, thrives and grows within the body of a female is either a "human" or it is "a tomato."

This is what finally brought the institution of slavery down; the recognition that Negroes are human beings, and as such accorded full rights under our Constitution, which states in its preamble: All men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights... Again, note Buckley,

As a percentage of the population, the abolitionists were fewer than those who now believe that fetuses are human beings. That does not mean that there will be a parallel development in thought and that a half-century from now an American Supreme Court is going to pronounce an Emancipation Proclamation for all fetuses. It does mean that, arguing back then with an abolitionist, it wouldn't have furthered intelligent discussion simply to say that Negroes were tomatoes, so what role has government to play.

Oh, that all debate and disagreement could be so focused and pointed to the issue at hand. *Roe vs. Wade* would never have happened if the cowardly justices involved in that *decision* had dealt with the question, Human or Tomato? Rather than, A Woman's Right Over Her Body

Is it true that that sentient, respiring, moving thing within the womb of a pregnant female is of no greater, or lesser value than a tomato? Buckley once again precisely pins the point,

What astonishes pro-life advocates is the refusal of so many, e.g., Professor Galbraith, to be guided by the hypotheticals in the discussion. If there are three parties, as biological objectivity would appear to certify, then the argument focuses on the extent to which the third party is ↑

Bring The Books

2Tim 4:9

Writing from prison to Timothy and with expectations of his coming, Paul asks his protégé to bring his “cloke,” “the books,” and “the parchments.” I think often on this passage and the circumstances wherein we find Paul. After a long life of service and suffering; and, now facing certain death (cf 2Ti 4.6), what is a primary concern?—Books.

I guess I’m amazed that a person in his circumstances was concerned about reading and learning. I say, amazed, because the sad truth is so many today, under the most favorable of circumstances, just about pitch a fit at the mere suggestion that they open a book and read anything, including even the Bible. A “mind,” as the advertisement used to say, “is a horrible thing to waste.”

Someone quoted to me B.C. Goodpasture (I can’t verify that this is the quotation’s origin) as having once said, “He who knows only the Bible, doesn’t know the Bible very well.” Upon analysis, I believe this to be a reasonable statement. So much of our understanding the Bible hangs upon learning things from geography, history, anthropology, sociology, et al.

And above all that is the fact that the Bible came to us in “words...which the Spirit teacheth” (1Cor. 2:13). That, of course, comports with the fact that people must “read” the “few words” Paul wrote in order to “perceive [his] understanding” (Eph 3:3-4). We need to know about the words the Spirit taught, the original languages, and we need to know the words smart people have used to translate the Bible into our language. Take for example such words as: choler, paps, brigandines, eschew, wot, propitiation. These words, and hundreds just like them are in your Bibles; but, some people will balk at picking up a simple dictionary to see what they mean. Silly people just pass it all off as “fifty cent words” going through life none the wiser. How sad.

Let’s have the attitude of Paul and just keep on saying, “bring me the books.”

—AA

Grayness With An Attitude

So many folks are experts from the negative perspective. They know what’s *not* right and are not a bit shy in pontificating their points of view. But, they generally evade telling us what *is* right. This kind of people finds offensive, even threatening, any person who speaks in objective, authoritative terms; that is, they abhor any person who talks or acts like he *knows* what he is doing and that of which he speaks.

Come to think of it, Jesus was hated and ultimately crucified, not because he was too kind and humble, nor because he was “mean-spirited” (the favorite ad hominem buzz-word of liberals). Rather, the ultimate cause of His being rejected was just that He was precise, clear and absolute in His teaching. For example, early on in His preaching work the Bible says He had gone “into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes” (Mk 1:21-22). As He expounded and applied the Scriptures He left the clear impression that *this* is what the Bible says, and *only* what the Bible says. While this was like a breath of fresh air to some people, it was offensive and threatening to others. When the Lord spoke, no one had trouble understanding as to what and to whom he spoke. This did not always endear Him with his audience as in, “when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them” (Matt 21:45).

Someone with “an attitude” refers to one who is skillful, but who struts and is conceited about his own abilities and even condescending toward the skills of others. “Grayness” refers to lack of clarity of precision, not absolute. “Grayness” is the opposite of “black and white.” When it comes to questions of moral values and their social implications, many people say, “Color my world mousy gray.” Ironically, some of the most militantly arrogant people around are those who admittedly “don’t know,” but they are absolutely, positively *sure* that no one else knows; or, they are sure that what anyone else knows is simply stupid.

Of course, let us be humble in our knowledge of God’s will. Let us also speak “as the oracles of God” and live our lives so as to speak with moral clarity and conviction.

—AA

That God had done unto Mary “great things” did not lessen her humility but rather increased her reverence for Him. Her display of humility is something we would do well to emulate. Mary’s son, the Savior, would later have much to say about the importance of humility as evidence of greatness. One of His classic statements is: “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12). We sometimes paraphrase, “The way up is down.”

Humility is noticeably lacking among brethren in our day. Even some preachers have an ego problem. A haughty spirit is common in some of our preaching brethren who have gone out into left field in their pursuit of liberal ways. It is as if they were afflicted with a bit of gnosticism, feeling themselves to far excel the more faithful brethren who still believe we should walk in “the old paths” of which Jeremiah spoke (Jer. 6:16). Such arrogant people often resort to casting aspersions upon those who believe in standing fast in the faith, as stated by Paul and Jude (1 Cor. 16:13; Jude 3). Come to think of it: This feeling of superiority is not all that uncommon in “sound” brethren.

IV. JOSEPH LEARNS THAT MARY IS WITH CHILD

At exactly what point Joseph learns that Mary is with child we cannot be certain. It may have been after the three month visit by Mary with her cousin Elizabeth. Matthew reveals some interesting details about the matter:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto the Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin

shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. The Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 12:18-25).

It is hard to imagine the stress and humiliation felt by Mary. Though she knew the cause of her condition of being with child, seemingly others did not know. According to Jewish law she could not only be “put away,” she could have been put to death. It is fortunate that Joseph, though a “just man,” nonetheless for his love sought to put her away “privily.” Not acting in haste he was informed by the angel as to the cause of Mary’s condition. Joseph was not of the mind of some today as to what Isaiah foretold long ago (Isa. 7:14). He accepted what the angel of the Lord said and immediately took Mary as his wife.

Joseph “knew her not” [Mary] until Jesus was born. This implies that he did “know her” after the birth of Jesus. Had it not been for the erroneous teaching of Catholicism, no one would ever have thought Mary did not have other children?

V. LUKE RECORDS THE BIRTH OF JESUS

As is often the case, each of the *Gospel*, when compared with the others, may contain additional information about a particular event. For this reason we call attention to the birth of Jesus as recorded by Luke:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn (Lk. 2:1-7). ↑

In giving birth to Jesus, Mary has played a very significant part in God's plan of salvation of man, the greatest blessing to which one can avail himself while on earth. How sad that so many spurn the gospel invitation, or disavow their commitment after having responded to the call of the gospel.

It is understandable that the angel of the Lord would announce "good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds in the field, that a Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in the city of David. That heaven was pleased by this great happening was indicated by the angel and a heavenly host, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk. 2:10-14).

After Mary had fulfilled her part in God's plan by giving birth to Jesus, for which she had been favored by God, attention is focused more upon Jesus and less upon Mary. We shall note briefly some references to Mary after the birth of Jesus, her greatest part in God's plan of salvation having already been played. Though Mary was highly favored by God in giving birth to the Savior, it is significant that there is no evidence that she was exalted to state of the Divine. She, like other great characters of the Bible, was not worshipped or given a place as a mediator between God and men.

VI. OTHER NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE STOMARY

SHEPHERDS COME TO SEE JESUS. "And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." The shepherds spread the news of Jesus' birth, and those who heard "wondered" at the news. 'Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Lk. 2:16-19)

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE. In connection with the purification of Mary, the "just" and "devout" man Simeon had been directed to the temple by the Holy Spirit. Note what was said about Simeon and his words also:

And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through

thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed (Lk. 2:33-35).

WISE MEN COME TO SEE JESUS. Some "wise men" from the East came to see Jesus. How many wise men? No one knows.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh (Matt. 2:11).

VISIT TO JERUSALEM WHEN JESUS WAS TWELVE.

On their journey home from Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary missed Jesus. When they found him in Jerusalem he was sitting in the midst of doctors, both hearing and asking them questions:

And when they say him they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? ... How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (Lk. 2:48-49).

MARY WITH JESUS AT CANA OF GALILEE.

Mary said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Jesus responds, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (Jno 2:1-5).

MARY AT THE CROSS. John records the last words that Mary hears spoken unto her by her son Jesus before his death:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home (John 19:25-27).

MARY IN THE UPPER ROOM. It is said of the apostles, when they had come together in an upper room: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:13-14).

Mary continues as a disciple of Jesus with the faith-

ment and expediency should never be allowed to divide the body of Christ. One can stand on solid ground when it comes to the truth but possess the wrong attitude and lose his soul. Attitude matters, it shows, and it is contagious.

Brethren are to worship "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). At judgment, both attitude and truth will matter. Let us make sure we always strive to do the right thing in the right way for the right reason.

—5810 Liberty Grove Rd., Rowlett, TX 75030

Personal Notes:

PLEASE EXCUSE OUR MISTAKE. Perhaps you noticed that the pages of the May-June issue of Banner of Truth were not in order. All 16 pages are there but not arranged as they should have been. It is my fault that I did not make sure I was printing the pages in the order they should have been. When I discovered the mistake I realized that I would have to print four sides of sheets over, and that would have taken more than a day. Since I was so far behind in my work, I decided to just let it go. This will teach me to make sure what I'm doing the next time I go to print.

MY PHYSICAL CONDITION. In the last issue of BOT I mentioned the fact that I had been sick for two months. My lung doctor believes I have pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable disease. I am scheduled to see a doctor in Nashville August 12, who is a specialist in the field of pulmonary fibrosis. At present I am feeling much better and able to do a great deal of my work, though I do still have some problems.

Many people have inquired as to my condition and have been praying in my behalf. This is appreciated more than words can say. I will reach four-score years next month but feel that I should have several more years in which to carry on the work I'm now doing. Much more work goes into the printing and publishing of the paper than many realize. We appreciate so much those who help us, but some times we really need more help. A great blessing to the Lord's work we are trying to do would be the moving of some couple into our area who could devote some of their time to getting Banner of Truth out to the thousands who appreciate it and profit from its contents. Your continued prayers will be greatly appreciated.

—Editor

Reflections on Islam

True, God-ordained religion, Christianity, is the greatest blessing of all to the human race. On the other hand, false religions can and have been some of the great causes of evil. The "Crusades" of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries wrought great havoc upon multitudes as the Catholic Church proceeded to retake the Holy Land from the Muslims. Much evil has been done by other false religions.

The greatest religious threats to world peace today is that of Islam. In spite of all the evidence, there seems to be a reluctance to face reality. Terrorism, which is becoming more widespread day by day, can be attributed almost entirely to Islam. Until this is recognized and measures taken accordingly, things will only get worse. Even the leaders in our country seem not to realize reality, or either they don't want to speak the facts for political reasons.

We hear the expression, "radicalized Muslims." The fact of the matter is that "true Muslims" are radical. This is what they are taught and believed and practiced. The god they worship is not the God which true Christians worship. Their god is a god of murder, and teaches those who serve him to kill those who are not Muslims. All one has to do to learn the facts is to read the Koran.

One noticeable thing which is seldom mentioned in the news, is that those who are supposed to be "good Muslims" are very quiet in their opposition to those who are supposed to be "radicals." If they were very much opposed to the evil actions of the terrorists they would speak out and let it be known. The governments of those Muslim countries could do much, if they wanted to, to stem the tide of the growing evil of terrorism.

If one is of a mind to read from the history of Islam, it will be seen that the goal of this false religion is to rule the world. Islam is a great enemy of true Christianity.

—Editor

Attitudes

Marvin L. Weir

The Holy Scriptures teach us that God has always been concerned with the attitude of man. Cain's attitude toward God and Abel led to his infamous sin of murdering his brother (Gen. 4:6, 8). A Biblical attitude will keep us from committing sinful acts and horrible deeds.

Cain has many relatives today who desire to worship God according to their own whims and wishes. This is the downfall of those who give their allegiance to denominational churches. They believe that as long as they are pleased with their religion that God will likewise be pleased. Jesus addressed this very important matter in saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Mt. 15:7-9).

A proper attitude will always seek to do those things that glorify the Heavenly Father. Christians are to possess the mind of Christ. There is an urgent need to remind members of the Lord's body throughout the land of this truth. Paul admonished, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

Those who have the attitude that they can glorify God by following man-made doctrine are wrong. They are so consumed with how "they feel" and what "they think" that their attitude will not allow them to submit to and follow God's glorious truth. The Lord warns of this danger in answering the question of the offended religious leaders of His day. "The came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:12-14).

A bad attitude toward the Scriptures keeps people from obeying the gospel. If one truly loves, honors and respects God as he should, then he is motivated to become an obedient son or daughter. One with a proper attitude toward God will not quibble with the Father's commandments.

But what about those in the body of Christ who do not possess the mind of Christ? In other words, can a member of the Lord's church bring shame and reproach upon the cause of Christ by possessing the wrong attitude? Since the answer is a resounding "yes," we need to exercise great care that our attitude as a Christian is always that which promotes a Christ-like image of the Lord's church.

Why do members of the Lord's church want to act and live like those who are lost? Are the Lord's people not to be different from the world? Do Christians not have the obligation to come out from among worldly people and be separate (2 Cor. 6:17)? Do Christians please the Father when they try and dress like, look like and act like those who refuse to follow the Master? Surely not. Brethren at to be distinct, different, pure and holy in all they do. Children of God are to be exclamation points and not question marks.

Christians are to do "nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). This attitude would strike dead in their tracks many needless contentions among men. The faith must be defended and earnestly contended for (Jude 3), but matters not of faith must not be allowed to cause harm to the Lord's church.

Pride has always been the chief culprit in corrupting the attitude of man. Solomon reminds us of several great truths we would do well to remember regarding pride. "By pride cometh only contention; But with the well-advised is wisdom" (Prov. 13:10). And again, "A man's pride shall bring him low; But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor" (Prov. 29:23). Perhaps the most remembered and least heeded warning is this: "Pride goeth before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18)

Pride keeps brethren who know better from admitting they are in error. Pride keeps brethren from admitting they made a mistake. Pride causes brethren to continue fanning the flames of a fire that should not be fanned. Pride causes brethren to be inconsistent as they condemn some brethren for sin and then refuse to call the hand of certain brethren for sin. Pride is a spiritual killer.

Doctrine must be defended and false teachers marked. That which falls wholly into the area of judg-

ful. Though she has given birth to Jesus, God's Son, she has given him up on the cross to be the Savior of mankind. In giving up her fleshly son she has gained God's Son, the Savior of the world. What a great honor.

VII. DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF ERROR CONCERNING MARY

Many great things can be said of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her example is outstanding in a number of areas. She is worthy of imitation in several areas: her example of humility; her complete submission to the will of God; her faith in God which was pleasing to the God of heaven. The very fact that omniscient God highly favored Mary to be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ speaks very highly of her. Inspired history records nothing of a negative nature concerning her character.

With all the above said, Mary was still a woman, not God. In no sense of the term was she ever Deity or worthy of worship.. There is no semblance of proof that Mary was without sin. The fact that she referred to God as "my Savior" (Lk. 1:47), implies that she was not without sin. Otherwise, why would she need a "Savior"? We reach these conclusions on the basis of what is said about Mary in God's word.

THE VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED FALSE TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES CONCERNING MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS. History is replete with claims of miracles worked, intercessions made, visual appearances, and virtually unlimited powers displayed on the part of Mary. Some believe these false and unrealistic claims, which originated within the Catholic Church, because they wanted a "goddess," which would fit in with their other elements of paganism. Though the error concerning Mary goes back many centuries, that error in many forms is still seen with the Roman Catholic Church and some other religions. We shall note a few examples, though others could be given.

The following are from a work by "Rev. A. W. Terminiello," with the imprimatur of the Archbishop of the Mobile-Birmingham area:

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION? By the Immaculate conception we mean that Mary was preserved from original sin from the very first

moment of her conception, by a singular grace of God, though the merits of Jesus Christ. It also means that she remained sinless throughout her life.

Needless to say, this is completely without any basis from God's word. The same could be said about many teachings of the Catholic Church and its many man-made doctrines.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF MARY? By the perpetual virginity of Mary is meant that Mary remained a virgin before, during, and after the birth of Jesus.

Not only does this lack any biblical basis, it is an outright contradiction of what is said in Matthew 13:55-56. The inspired record also says of Joseph, "And he knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son..." (Matt. 1:25).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY? By the assumption of Mary we mean that after her death, her body was 'assumed' or taken into heaven. Since she did not inherit original sin, God could not permit her to suffer the penalty of original sin, which is corruption of the body.

These are examples of error upon error. The idea of original sin is not taught in God's word (Ezek. 18:20), just as the false doctrine that Mary was taken into heaven is not taught there. It is so often the case that error multiplies error. The progression of sin is obvious in many instances.

ARE CENTRE REQUEST FOR ERROR BY CATHOLICS. An article in the Aug. 25, 1997, issue of *Newsweek*, reported that the Pope had received more than four million signatures from people in 157 countries, who wanted him (the Pope) to use his power of "papal infallibility" to set forth a new dogma of Roman Catholicism—that Mary, the mother of Christ, is "Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of All Graces and Advocate for the people of God."

This newly proposed dogma, if enacted, was said to mean that Catholics would have to accept three "extraordinary doctrines." They were: 1) Mary participates in redemption made possible by Christ; 2) All graces resulting from the death of Christ would be granted only by Mary's intercession with Christ; ↑

and, 3) All prayers and petitions would flow only through Mary.

Of course this new elevation of Mary would be in direct violation of I Timothy 2:5, which says: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This is just another example among many that the inspired word of God means little or nothing to Roman Catholics. But what can one expect in a religion which is completely man-made, and part of which is downright paganism? Just about anything.

The very idea that man can nullify what God has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ, is to assume a position of power and authority which is equal to that of God. By this I have reference to the fact that Christ came to earth and died as a sacrifice, in accordance with God's eternal plan, that he might be the only mediator between God and man. Yet, many of the Catholics want to take that power as mediator from Christ and give it to Mary. How ungodly can people become? The exaltation of Mary to positions which God has never given her is an example.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

That Mary, the mother of Jesus, played an important part in God's plan of salvation by bringing Christ into the world goes without saying. God used Mary to make Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin birth a reality. In view of her being "highly favored" by God, she deserves to be called "blessed" in every generation.

The examples of Mary: 1) Her willingness to be used in God's scheme of redemption; 2) the powerful display of humility, even when so highly favored by God; and, 3) her complete and abiding faith in God, her Savior, should serve as great examples for us to follow in serving our Lord.

The fact that the Catholics have taught and practiced so many absurd and ridiculous things about Mary should not be allowed to prevent us from giving her the honor that is due her. Neither should this prevent us from learning some good lessons from what is recorded about Mary.

The soul condemning error about Mary, which is believed by multiplied millions, should serve as a powerful example to us that people can and do fall for error of the most serious sort. There are many warnings

about false teachings in the New Testament, and that people will follow these ways of error, that we should always be on guard lest we fall.

Yet, in spite of the clear warnings in the New Testament, the number of our own brethren who are leaving the truth and following error is increasing at a very rapid rate. Just within the past couple of weeks I've heard distressing news in this regard. In an article by Royce Williams of the Fifth & Grape congregation in Abilene, I read of the "Walk to Emmaus" video being shown at the Highland church of Christ in Abilene. Communion was observed on a Tuesday night. There was a "full blown band on stage," and an "all woman quartet entertaining the audience." We also have Rubel Shelly bidding Godspeed to a Billy Graham crusade planned for the Spring of next year. The elders at Woodmont Hills are supporting Rubel in his encouragement of error. The Homewood congregation, where Wayne Kilpatrick is the preacher, scheduled a "Ladies' Conference" for Oct. 16th. The slate of speakers included denominational people. Other equally distressing news could be added.

[EDITOR'S NOTE] I wrote this article about six years ago; thus, the liberal activities just mentioned are somewhat dated. Nevertheless, many things have happened since then which are even more distressing than those.

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—Editor

Another "Last Crusade" for Billy Graham

A few weeks ago in New York, Billy Graham preached what was billed by many as his "Last Crusade." Within the past few years he has preached in a number of "last crusades," but due to his age and physical condition it is almost certain that his "crusades" are about over.

Quite a bit of attention was given by the news media to this crusade. It was reported that in 60 years he has preached to 210 million people in 185 countries. This is quite an accomplishment, both in the number of people hearing him and the countries represented. This is most likely a record for a preacher in this respect.

A great many people have lauded Graham for the good they believe he has done. One statement made regarding the crusade was: "Many went to the front of the stage to receive Christ." There is no doubt but that multitudes who have heard Billy Graham have come to the conclusion that they have received Christ and have been blessed with salvation, that they have been saved from their sins.

In the news that I have heard concerning the crusade, one thing has been conspicuously missing: the question of whether or not Billy Graham's preaching has resulted in true salvation for his hearers. That multiplied thousands have come away believing they have been saved, surely no one would deny.

The salvation of souls is of such great importance that it warrants a most serious examination of what the Bible teaches on the subject. It is a matter of fact that Billy Graham preaches "from the Bible," but a most important question is whether or not he sets forth the true teaching of God's word on the subject of salvation. He would most likely affirm that the Bible is the source of authority that men should accept in matters of religion, and that is certainly true. But it is most important that the

Bible be correctly applied. It is not uncommon for those who affirm their belief in the Bible as God's authority to make a misapplication when applying its teaching to important subjects such as salvation.

God made His word available to man in order than man might be saved. He sent His only begotten Son to die for man as a sacrifice for sin (John 3:16; Heb. 2:9). The process of obtaining the salvation which Christ has made possible involves "conversion," that is, a change from an unsaved state to a saved state.

By studying the conversions recorded in the book of Acts one can come to understand what conversion involves. A mass conversion took place on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. On that occasion multitudes of Jews had assembled for that feast. The apostles spoke to the people in their respective languages as guided by the Holy Spirit. When the hearers were told that they had by "wicked hands" crucified Jesus, who was both Lord and Christ, "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (v. 37). The inspired answer to their questions was, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (v. 38)

Has Billy Graham ever one time given people this same answer when they desired to be saved from their sins? Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). Has anyone ever heard Billy Graham tell people to do what Christ said in this case? Ananias told Saul to "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). How great it would be if all the millions had heard God's plan of salvation rather than that of Billy Graham. It is sad that many people have been left with a false hope, only to realize at the day of judgment that they will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12:48) and not by the words of men. It is the truth which will make men free.

—Editor